



Sam Gilliam
“I Adapt
to
Eatonville”

May 17–August 24, 2008

**Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts
Eatonville, Florida**



EXHIBITION CREDITS

Installation: Sam Gilliam

Gallery Assistants

Ed Conroy, Deborah Guglielmo & Associates, Inc.

Jimmy Scott

Benjamin Tyson

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Reception Hospitality – May 17, 2008:

Darden Restaurants

JR International Enterprises

Maye St. Julien, “All Things Beautiful”

Catalog Credits

Front Cover: Sam Gilliam, *Making Things the Same*, Acrylic on Nylon,
Size varies, 2007. Courtesy of Artist.

Back Cover: Sam Gilliam, *Retrospective Installation*, 2006, Corcoran Museum of Art,
Washington, D.C.

All images furnished courtesy of the artist.

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Design and Layout: Beth H. Douglas

Editor: N. Y. Nathiri

MUSEUM SPONSOR

The Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community

Incorporated in 1988 as a non-profit/tax exempt historic preservation organization, P.E.C. presents a year-round, multidisciplinary arts and humanities program. P.E.C.'s mission is to enhance the considerable cultural resources of Eatonville, Florida, which is the oldest incorporated African American municipality in the United States” and the hometown of writer, folklorist, and anthropologist, Zora Neale Hurston; to educate the public about Eatonville’s historic and cultural significance; and to use the community’s heritage and cultural vibrancy for its economic development.

Established in 1990, the Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts(The Hurston)is a program of P.E.C. Its mission is to provide a place “in the heart of the community” where the public can view the work of artists of African ancestry, who live in the United States or throughout the Diaspora.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

That this 2007 – 2008 season at The Hurston is outstanding is due to the efforts of Dr. Mary Jane Hewitt, our guest curator. She is a voracious intellect who has employed her gift to create compelling experiences for our museum visitors. During the time period, September 2007 – August 2008, Dr. Hewitt will have organized three exhibitions, each in its own right, spectacular. Truly, our organization is indebted to her. For almost twenty years, she has been a steadfast advocate, expending countless hours on our behalf and ever seeking out and bringing to us those whose genius is universally recognized.

Such it is with Sam Gilliam. How privileged we are to have Mr. Gilliam's work! An artist of prodigious talents, universally respected, he creates magnificent pieces. Yet, in our modest space, he consents to develop an installation. We are humbled at the magnitude of his commitment and grateful that he comes to Eatonville to install the work himself.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Kathy Johnson, who served as the graphic designer for all of the organization's publications from 1994 until her death this past March. She was a colleague whose work ethic and dedication knew no limits. We miss her.

Funding for the 2007 -2008 Exhibition Season is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding is provided by United Arts of Central Florida.



S A M GILLIAM

“I Adapt to Eatonville”

The installation starts before the door. In the room there are works that have meaning. Chance and memory are important. Give and take rules are in order. Although I make art and the frame is sturdy, it's easy to enjoy. Touch and sight are important. Controversy is more important than rules. Why? An installation is found not made. Its principles are everywhere. The rest is up to you.

Sam Gilliam



Untitled, 2000

Sam Gilliam is an artist who produces works that bridge the gaps between painting, sculpture, and environmental happenings.

*Samella Lewis,
Art historian, artist*

Color is the most important element in painting, but I'm very much involved with structure and shape.

Sam Gilliam

I see the most critical issue in painting today as one of continual renewal without repetition or imitation. It's really a matter of confidence and of gut instinct. I'll take a chance on losing everything in order to gain something else. As a result, I usually gain, because all of my experiences and methods are cumulative.

Sam Gilliam

He [Gilliam] has stated many times that speed is the best conduit for his creativity.

*Jonathan Binstock,
Curator of Contemporary Art, The Corcoran Gallery*



Retrospective Installation, 2006, Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, D.C.



My work is constructed painting in that it crosses the void between object and viewer to be part of the space in front of the picture plane. It represents an act of pure passage. The surface is no longer the final place of the work. It is instead the beginning of the advance into the theater of life.

Sam Gilliam



Gilliam's paintings pose questions just as they represent solutions, and any concept that animates their reason for being may be discerned in the works themselves.

Eleanor Heartney, Critic

Retrospective Installation, 2006, Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, D.C.



It is through an ongoing process of risking everything, as Gilliam is wont to say, that he has learned how to gain something else. That something else has been, and continues to be, uncertainty which is the only ferment for continuation, revitalization, and hope for the value of the creative endeavor. In lieu of boundaries, categories, safe havens and historical imperatives, Gilliam confirms what is arguably the only truth, or at least the one with the greatest meaning for us now, that the present is a moment and a site of pure potential.

*Jonathan Binstock,
Curator of Contemporary Art
The Corcoran Gallery*



*Bow Form Construction, 1968,
Collection Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY*



Fire Flies and Ferris Wheels Installation 1997, Magdeburg, Germany

BIOGRAPHY

Sam Gilliam was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1933, the seventh of eight children. The family moved to Louisville, Kentucky in 1942. Except for service in the U.S. Army from 1956 to 1958, Louisville was home until he earned his master of fine arts degree from the University of Louisville in 1961. He taught art for a year in the Louisville public schools, married Dorothy Butler, a well-known journalist, and they moved to Washington, D.C. where he has lived since then. By the end of graduate school in Louisville, his creative impulse centered on abstract painting, and he was strongly attracted to the art of the California-Bay Area--painters who were dominant in art news at that time. When he moved to Washington he was introduced by Thomas Downing to Washington's focus on color art. In 1965, Gilliam became the first painter to introduce the idea of the unsupported canvas.

By 1975, in spite of his popularity as the creator of the draped canvases, he moved on to collages influenced by the jazz musicians Miles Davis and John Coltrane. In time the restlessness urged him to seek new forms of expression, following his philosophy of "continual renewal without repetition or imitation." Selected awards and recognition, too numerous to include all of them, follow:

Selected Individual Exhibitions, Institutional Collections, Awards and Recognition

Individual Exhibitions:

1956 Solo exhibition, University of Louisville

1963 Frame House Gallery, Louisville, Kentucky

1964 Adams Morgan Gallery, Washington, D.C., where he shows his abstract art for the first time

1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1973 Jefferson Place Gallery, Washington, D.C.
Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

1968 Byron Gallery, New York

1971 Museum of Modern Art, New York

1973 New Gallery, Cleveland

Greenburg Gallery, St. Louis
 Howard University, Washington, D.C.
 University of California, Irvine
 Maison de la Culture, Rennes, France
 1973, 1975, 1976, 1978, 1989 Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
 1973, 1983, 1991 Gallerie Darthea Speyer, Paris, France
 1974, 1975 Linda Farris Gallery, Seattle
 Phoenix Gallery, Seattle
 1974, 1978, 1987 Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio
 1975, 1990 Philadelphia Museum of Art
 Collectors Gallery, Baltimore
 1976, 1996 J. B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky
 1976, 1979, 1981 Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, New York
 1976 Rutgers University Art Gallery, New Brunswick, New Jersey
 Pennsylvania State University, University Park
 Artpark, Lewiston, New York
 1978 University of Kentucky, Lexington
 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond
 University of Massachusetts, Amherst
 1979, 1980, 1981 Hamilton Gallery, New York
 1980, 1981, 1984, 1990 Middendorf/Lane Gallery, Washington, D. C
 1981 Nexus Gallery, Atlanta
 1982 Dart Gallery, Chicago
 1985 Monique Knowlton Gallery, New York
 Seuferer Chosy Gallery, Madison, Wisconsin
 1986 Davis/McClain Gallery, Madison, Wisconsin
 Alice Simsar Gallery, Ann Arbor, Michigan
 Dalsheimer Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland
 1987 Klein Gallery, Chicago
 1988 Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama
 1990 Koplín Gallery, Los Angeles
 1991, 1994, 2000 Galerie Simone-Stern, New Orleans, Louisiana
 1991, 1992 Nancy Drysdale Gallery/de Andino Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.
 Walker Hill Arts Center, Seoul, Korea
 American Craft Museum, New York
 1992 Smith Anderson Gallery, Palo Alto
 1993 Brandywine Workshop, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York



The Illustrious Kites Made in Boxing Styles, 2004, Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC

1994 Baumgartner Galleries, Washington, D.C.
 1995 Imago Gallery, Palm Desert, California
 44th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting,
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
 1997 Of Fireflies and Ferris Wheels Monastery Parallel, Kuntsmuseum
 Kloster Unser Lieben Frauen, Magdeburg, Germany.
 1997 Jaffe Bakery Gallery, Boca Raton and Baumgartner Galleries
 1998 Gilliam in 3-D, Kreeger Museum, Washington, D.C.
 2004 Sam Gilliam: Folded & Hinged, Louisiana Art & Science Museum,
 Baton Rouge, and the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel, Mississippi.
 2005 Sam Gilliam: A Retrospective, Corcoran Gallery of Art, organized by
 Jonathan P. Binstock and Marsha Mateyka Gallery.

Selected Institutional Collections

Baltimore Museum of Art; Carnegie Institute, Corcoran Gallery of Art,
 Washington, D.C.; Howard University, Washington, D.C.; Phillips Collection,
 Washington, D.C.;
 Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Modern Art, New York;
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Art Institute of Chicago; Walker Art
 Center, Minneapolis; Boymans van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam; Tate
 Gallery, London; University of Iowa Museum; Washington Gallery of Modern
 Art, Washington, D.C.; George Washington University, Washington, D.C.;
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Books on Gilliam

Art in Washington, Leslie Judd Ahlander, Washington, D.C. 1968.
Art and Ideas, William Fleming, New York, 1973.
The Great American Salt Works, Jack Burnham, New York, 1974.
Gilliam/Edwards/Williams: Extensions. Exhibition catalog, Hartford,
 Connecticut, 1974.
Sam Gilliam, John Beardsley, Washington, D.C., 1983.
SAM GILLIAM: a retrospective, John P. Binstock: Berkeley, Los Angeles,
 London: University of California Press; Washington, D.C.: Corcoran Gallery
 of Art, Washington, D.C.

Selected Awards/Commissions

The Norman W. Harris Prize, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1970;
 The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, 1971
 Workshop Activities Grant, National Endowment for the Arts, 1974-75
 Completes the public commission *Triple Variants* for the Richard B. Russell Federal
 Building, Atlanta
 Begins work on the public commission *Sculpture with a D* for the Davis Square
 Subway Station, Somerville, Massachusetts, 1980
 Installs *Dupont Circle Grand* at the Dupont Circle Metro Plaza in Washington, D.C.,
 1980
 Completes the public commission *Wave Composition* for the newly constructed
 Detroit Receiving Hospital, 1980
 Honorary doctorate, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Louisville, 1980
 A new Terminal opens at Hartsfield International Airport with Gilliam's public
 commission *Delta Wave*, 1981
 Completes *Tholos Across* for the San Francisco Art Commission installed at the
 Moscone Center, San Francisco, 1981
 Completes commission for Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C.,
 1985
 Received Order of Merit Award, Alumni Association, University of Louisville, and
 honorary doctorate, Atlanta College of Art, 1987
 Received honorary doctorate of arts, Northwestern University, Evanston,
 Illinois, 1990
 Completes the public commission *Blue Riders* for the New York Metropolitan
 Transit Authority's Parsons/Archer Station, Jamaica Center, Queens, 1991
 Honorary doctor of fine arts, American University, Washington, D.C. 1996
 Honorary doctor of fine arts, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1997
 Completed the public commissions *Color of Medals* for the U.S. General Services
 Administration, installed at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Philadelphia.
 1998
 Completed the public commissions *The Three Muses* for the College of
 Conservatory Music, University of Cincinnati, Ohio; and *Beyond the Blue Door*
 for the El Paso Museum of Art, Texas, 1999
 Designed stage set and costumes for *Journey Home*, an original work by the
 Washington Ballet, with Septime Webre as artistic director and music by Sweet
 Honey in the Rock, 2002



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