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MARCH

NADA New York
May 5–8, 2022
Pier 36
299 South Street
New York, NY 10002

Booth # 4.03

VIP Opening Preview (by Invitation):
Thurs, May 5, 10am–4pm

Open to the Public:
Thurs, May 5, 4–8pm
Fri, May 6, 11am–7pm
Sat, May 7, 11am–7pm
Sun, May 8, 11am–5pm

Joe Minter

Joe Minter

Joe Minter is an artist and cultural historian living in the Titusville neighborhood of Birmingham, surrounded by his magnum opus, a sprawling didactic artwork that he has dubbed the African Village in America. Built on land adjacent to both his home and the Shadow Lawn Memorial Gardens, a historically black cemetery, the environment is constructed almost entirely from discarded elements, a direct symbolic gesture reflecting his belief that African Americans have themselves been discarded throughout American history. Minter is constantly at work on this ever-evolving outdoor installation that recounts both immediately local and world events that have affected humanity, with a focus on the contributions and tribulations of African Americans. Individual artworks document the Civil Rights Movement, the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, American participation in various wars and conflicts, terrorist attacks, the legacies of slavery, and more recently, Trump's wall and Covid-19, all narrated with Minter's intuitive assemblage. There are, of course, moments of respite from the turmoil of the modern world with an implicit honoring of ancestors, loved ones, faith, and an essential acknowledgement of the power of love.

Minter began work on the African Village in America in the summer of 1989, in response to an announcement

that the city of Birmingham was planning to build a civil rights museum. He worried that the “foot soldiers” would be left out of the official narrative and got to work making a literal place for them. Specifically, Minter writes “When I heard that Birmingham was going to build a civil rights museum, that gave me what you call a stepping stone. From what I was hearing, the main players in the freedom struggle, the foot soldiers, was left out of the story. We need the leaders, but without the foot soldiers, the struggle and fight can't be won. But where is the recognition for the soldiers?” That recognition continues to come as Minter's works are shown in museums and publications across the United States.

Joe Wade Minter Sr. was born in Birmingham on March 28, 1943 to Lawrence Dunbar and Rosie McAlpin Minter, the eighth of 10 children. His father served in World War I with the U.S. Army's 366th Infantry Regiment, working as a mechanic in the segregated unit. Upon his return home, Minter's father found work as caretaker for Birmingham's Elmwood Cemetery. Like his father, Minter also served in the U.S. military and was drafted in 1965 to attend a “mech and tech” school learning skills related to engineering and mechanics. He would later operate generators across the Southern United States before being discharged in 1967.

After his brief, though impressionable military stint, Minter worked a variety of jobs in construction, disassembling and reassembling trucks, and, perhaps most importantly, building things out of metal—school furniture, exercise equipment, and truck beds. Minter's military experience combined with years spent doing metal work and construction would give him the knowledge and practical experience needed to create the African Village in America and the hundreds of works that populate its ever-expanding site.

In recent years, Minter's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Alabama Contemporary, Atlanta Contemporary, and James Fuentes Gallery. His works are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., the Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA, the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, the Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL, and the Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minneapolis, MN, among others. Minter was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, curated by Rujeko Hockley and Jane Panetta.

Joe Minter

- Solo Exhibitions
- 2022 *We Lost Our Spears*, Mana Contemporary, New York, NY
We Lost Our Spears, MARCH, New York, NY
 - 2019 *Joe Minter, Sculpture 1995-2012*, James Fuentes Gallery, New York, NY
 - 2018 *Once That River Starts To Flow*, Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA
- Group Exhibitions
- 2021 *In the Presence of Our Ancestors: Southern Perspectives in African American Art*, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN
 - 2019 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY
 - 2018 *History Refused to Die: Highlights from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation Gift*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Revelations: Art from the African American South, De Young Museum, San Francisco, CA
 - 2014 *When Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York
 - 2007 *Alabama Folk Art*, Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama
 - 2004 *Coming Home: Self-Taught Artists, the Bible, and the American South*, Art Museum of the University of Memphis
 - 1996 *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South*, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta, GA
- Selected Collections
- Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA
 - Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
 - Souls Grown Deep Foundation, Atlanta, GA
 - Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC
 - High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 - Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL
 - Minneapolis Museum of Art, Minneapolis, MN
- Selected Publications
- 2019 Joe Minter, *Joe Minter: To You Through Me : The Beginning of a Link of a Journey of 400 Years*, Institute 193
Jonathan Williams, *Walks to the Paradise Garden*, Edited by Phillip March Jones, Institute 193
 - 2018 C. Finley, R.R. Griffey, A. Peck, and D. Pinckney, *My Soul Has Grown Deep: Black Art from the American South*, Metropolitan Museum of Art
 - 2017 *Revelations: Art from the African American South*, Prestel, Edited by Timothy Anglin Burgard
 - 2015 Horace Randall Williams, K. Wilkin, S. Holland, W. S. Arnett, and B. Herman, *History Refused to Die*, Tinwood Books
 - 2014 *Coming Home: Self-Taught Artists, the Bible, and the American South*, Edited by Carol Crown, Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi
 - 2002 Kinshasha Conwill and Arthur C. Danto, *Testimony: Vernacular Art of the African American South*, Harry N. Abrams
 - 2001 *Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art of the South, Vol. II*, Edited by William Arnett and Paul Arnett, Atlanta: Tinwood Books



Joe Minter's African Village in America, 2022. Photo by Tag Christof.