



LaVon Van Williams, Jr.
Urban Folk Artist | Sculptor & Painter
Lexington, KY | (859) 948-6306

LaVon Van Williams, Jr. is a self-taught sculptor and painter whose work captures the visual spirit, movement, and cultural expression of Black life. Working in wood and on canvas, his practice preserves the humanity, rhythm, and identity that shape both personal and collective experience. His work reflects a deep commitment to storytelling-honoring what was, engaging what is, and imagining what can be.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2025–26 - *Everything Must Change*, Speed Museum, Louisville, KY
2025 - *Folk Relief*, John Hocker Gallery, Lexington, KY
2024 - Solo Exhibition, John Hocker Gallery, Lexington, KY
2023 - Solo Exhibition, Judy Hower Gallery, New Albany, IN
2020 - Solo Exhibition, Susan Morman Gallery, Louisville, KY
2020 - *The Lyric Bus-Stop Gallery*, 3rd & Elm Street, Lexington, KY
2019 - Solo Exhibition, Bus Stop Gallery, Lexington, KY
2019 - *Take My Seat and Sit Down*, Jeanine Taylor Folk Art Gallery, Sanford, FL
2018 - Solo Exhibition, Faith Lutheran Church, Lexington, KY
2018 - *RISE & FLY: The Carved Art of LaVon Van Williams*, Jeanine Taylor Folk Art Gallery, Sanford, FL
2018 - *Artist in Bloom*, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL
2018 - *Roots (Retrospective)*, Lyric Theatre, Lexington, KY
2011 - Solo Exhibition, The Artisan Center, Berea, KY
2009 - *When the Spirit Moves You*, Morehead State University, Morehead, KY
2006 - *Recent Woodcarvings*, Keny Galleries, Columbus, OH
2001 - Solo Exhibition, Wakefield College, Winston-Salem, NC
1993 - *Sculpture and Paintings*, Delta Arts Center, Winston-Salem, NC
1992 - Solo Exhibition, Diggs Gallery, Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC
1991 - Solo Exhibition, Seminole State College, Sanford, FL
1990 - *From a Place Most High*, Art on Main at Community Bank, Lexington, KY
1989 - *Jumping for the Sun*, University of Kentucky / Carnegie Center (Art Review: David Minton), Lexington, KY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2026 - Enlightenment, Eastside Library, Lexington, KY
2025 - Group Show, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY
2025 - Three Man Show, John Hocker Gallery, Lexington, KY (with Ed White, Yvette Stephen)
2023 - Five Man Show, Lyric Theatre Gallery, Lexington, KY
2020 - *Elijah Pierce & Historic Self-Taught Art from the Ohio Valley*, Kent Galleries, Columbus, OH
2019 - *Men and Women with Keys*, Castlewood, Lexington, KY
2019 - *Roots*, Lyric Theatre, Lexington, KY
2017–18 - Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC
2011 - Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center Gallery and Museum, Lexington, KY
2009 - Kentucky Folk Art Center, Morehead, KY
2007 - *Who Am I? Self-Portraits by a Self-Taught Artist*, Kentucky Folk Art Center, Morehead, KY
2003 - Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
2003 - *The Art of Leadership*, Fisher College of Business, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
1999 - *Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century*, The Art Exchange, Columbus, OH
1999 - *African Currents*, Southern Ohio Museum / Kentucky Art & Craft Gallery, Lexington, KY
1999 - *African American Folk Art: Rich Diversity in Kentucky*, Portsmouth, OH
1998 - *African American Folk Art in Kentucky*, Morehead, KY
1989 - Central Bank Gallery, Lexington, KY



AWARDS & HONORS

2025–26 - Phoenix Rising Recognition, Lexington, KY

2018 - Inducted, College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

2014 - Merit Award, Kentuck Festival of the Arts, Northport, AL

COLLECTIONS

Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center (LaVon Van Williams, Jr. Day), Lexington, KY

Kentucky Governor's Award Collection, Frankfort, KY

Kentucky Best in Show Collection, Northport, AL

Jeanine Taylor Folk Collection, Sanford, FL

National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.

International Black Theatre Festival Collection, Washington, D.C. / Winston-Salem, NC

Mayor's Office Collection, Denver, CO

University of Kentucky Hospital Collection, Lexington, KY

Ohio University Fischer Gallery, Athens, OH

COMMISSIONS

2019 - Public Art Installation, Duncan Park, Lexington, KY

1989–2019 - Logo, merchandise, and publication design, International Black Theatre Festival, Winston-Salem, NC

2011 - Book Cover, Nikky Finney, *Rice*, Lexington, KY

1994 - Sculptures, *Deep Cover* (Dir. Bill Duke), New Line Cinema, Los Angeles, CA

1992 - Book Cover, Dr. Stephen C. Wright Archives, *Out of the Wailing*, Sanford, FL

1991 - Commission, R.J. Reynolds Company for National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Winston-Salem, NC

1990 - Program Logo, New York Institute for Special Education, Bronx, NY

1989 - Program Design, National Black Theatre Festival, Winston-Salem, NC

PUBLICATIONS

2025 - *Everything Must Change*, Speed Museum, Louisville, KY

2020 - *Common Practice: Basketball & Contemporary Arts*, Milan, Italy

2017 - *Arts & Crafts Across Kentucky*, Lexington, KY

2016 - *When the Spirit Speaks: Self-Taught Art of the South*, Margaret Day Allen

2009 - *Rhythm in Relief*, Adrian Swain & Matt Morehead, Morehead State University

2009 - *When the Spirit Moves You*, Morehead State University

1999 - *Urban Folk Artist: LaVon Williams*, Ed Puterbaugh

1998 - *African American Folk Art in Kentucky*, Kentucky Folk Art Center

1996 - *Spotlight on Black Art*, Beth Turner

ART FESTIVALS & STREET FAIRS

1989–2019 - International Black Theatre Festival (formerly National Black Theatre Festival), Winston-Salem, NC

2019 - LaVon Van Williams, Jr. Day, Lyric Theatre & Cultural Arts Center, Lexington, KY

2000–2005 - Saratoga Jazz Festival, Saratoga, NY

1980–2010 - A Day in the Country, Morehead, KY

2009 - Foothills Folk Art Festival, Newton, NC

1979–2009 - Kentuck Festival of the Arts, Northport, AL

2009–2011 - New Orleans Jazz Festival (Congo Square), New Orleans, LA

2010–2011 - Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY

1999–2007 - Saratoga Jazz Festival, Saratoga, NY

2006 - Hilden Art Fair, Hilden, VT

1980 - Los Angeles Summer Street Fair, Los Angeles, CA

1979 - Harlem Week, Harlem, NY

1979 - West Indian Day Parade, Brooklyn, NY

1979–1981 - Gainesville Summer Street Fair, Gainesville, FL