
WE SHALL OVER COME

Dr. Charles Smith (b. 1940) Remaking the World

Look long and hard at the things that please you, even longer and harder at what causes you pain.

— Colette, Preface to Renée Hamon, *Aux îles de lumière (In the Islands of Light)* (1940)

An awkwardness always signifies something.

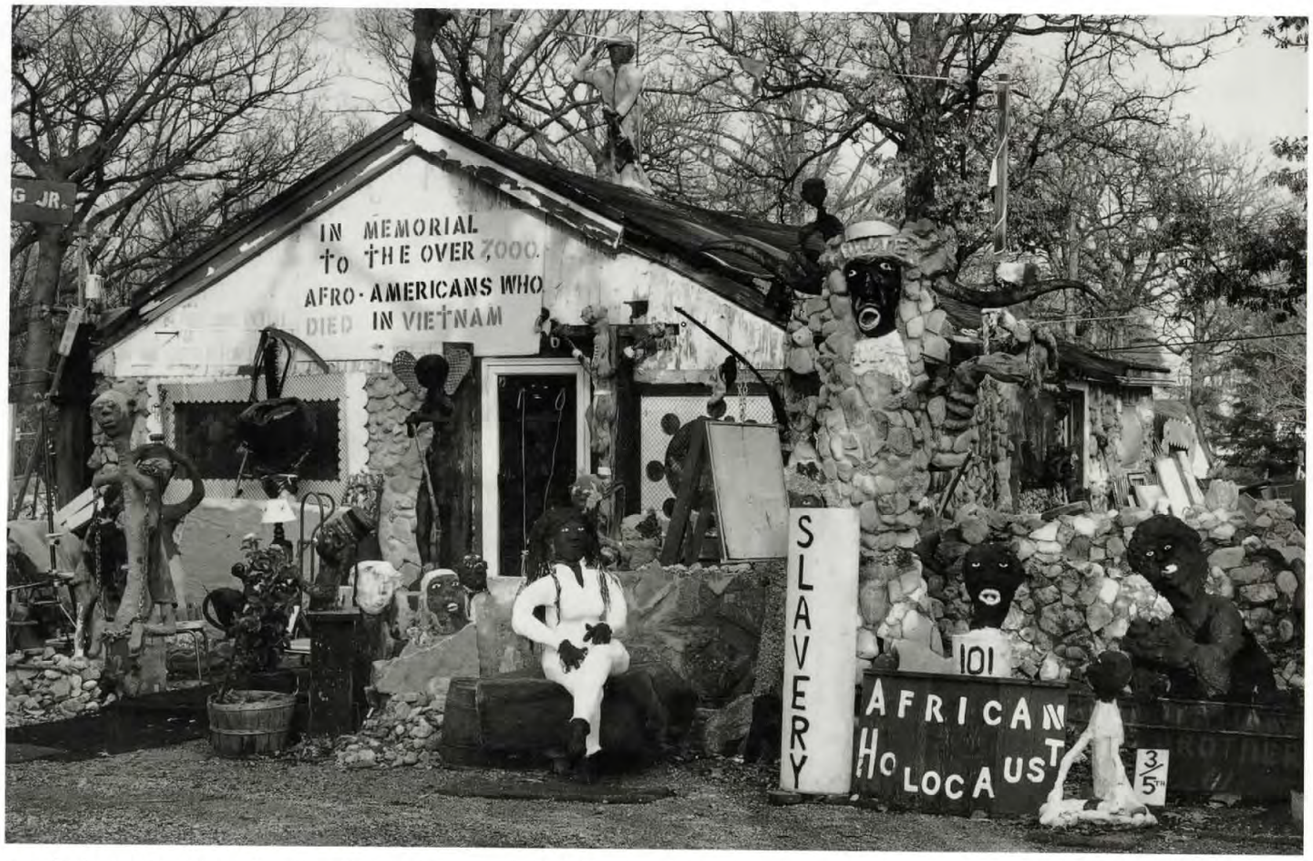
— Jacques Derrida, *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud* (1998)

Charles Smith has been on the battlefield for many years, never shying away from conflict, averting his gaze from trouble, or taking the path of least resistance. His battles have been aimed at exposing the harsh realities of racism and dismantling the weaponry of ongoing pain and marginalization. The art environment that he began in 1985 in Aurora, Illinois, "The African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive," has been the primary front of his soldiering.

Born in New Orleans, Charles Smith was fourteen when his father was killed in what was described by local officials as a "ferry accident." Yet as Smith recounts, "The papers showed it was a clear situation of some white folks who killed him—because we got copies of the police report; they drowned him in the river. It just wasn't a big thing at the time—you could drown two or three of us at a time—it wouldn't have even made the newspaper."[1] Working two jobs, Smith's mother, Bertha Mary Smith, raised him and his two sisters; her strength, courage, religious faith, and strong will left a powerful imprint on her son. About her, Smith wrote:

> *It was my mother's amazing love and devotion to God, church, and her parental responsibility to guide us in the way we should go, so that when we got older we would never depart from her training, and if somehow we did she always instilled in us:*

opposite: Dr. Charles Smith at his African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive. photo: c. 2000, Larry Harris.



Dr. Charles Smith, African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive (site view, Aurora, Ill.), 1985–1999. photo: 1994, David Kargl.

> *"YOU WILL ALWAYS KNOW WHERE CHURCH AND HOME IS." That's why it always hurt so bad when older African Americans pass this life, because it's like a library burned to the ground. The wisdom she possesses in every manner astounds me even today.*[2]

In the summer of 1955, less than a year after Smith's father was killed, his mother took her children to a funeral service in Chicago, Illinois. On the city's south side, at Roberts Temple Church of God, they attended the memorial service of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African-American boy who had been brutally murdered by white racists while visiting relatives in Mississippi. Till's mother insisted that her son's funeral service be open to the public, and that his horribly damaged body be displayed in an open casket to unmask the cruel realities of racism in America. Photographs of Till's battered body were published in major magazines of the day, including *Jet* and *Life*, and tens of thousands attended his funeral service, including fifteen-year-old Charles Smith.

The Tuskegee Institute outside Montgomery, Alabama, has recorded the lynching of 4,742 blacks in the United States between 1882 and 1968—a conservative figure based only on reported murders.[3] Emmett Till's murder had a particularly profound impact on Smith and on many other Americans as well; it fueled the already-mobilizing Civil Rights movement. Till's mother's insistence that her son's murder be publicly and openly memorialized brought the brutality of racism into the absolute center of American life; that, in turn, sparked numerous reactions aimed at fighting inequity in America, including the decision by Rosa Parks not to relinquish her seat to a white woman on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. The local Women's Political Council called for a citywide bus boycott, and a twenty-six-year-old Baptist minister named Martin Luther King Jr. was chosen to advocate the cause; the war for equal rights in America exploded.

Charles Smith's sculpture project in Illinois inherits the legacy of the civil warriors who blazed difficult trails and shares a similar insistence on showing racism's harsh realities, on bearing witness to its traumatic effects. A yard environment of layered metaphors and intermingled realities, Smith's immense visual project includes references to America's history of slavery and the larger impact of racist violence from the Middle Passage to the present

Dr. Charles Smith, African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive (site view, *Monument to Rodney King*, Aurora, Ill.), 1985–1999. photo: c. 1992, Lisa Stone.

day. It also frames the Great Migration, the Civil Rights movement, and the Vietnam War in terms of their core impact on America's national narrative. At the same time, it is personal; Smith deftly connects individual and collective experience. He insists that America's history—all of it—must be recognized and understood in order for any sort of social change to occur. If Emmett Till's murder has influenced Smith's conceptual understanding of art—and its social role—so too has his own dense biography.

Smith's mother moved her family from New Orleans to Chicago shortly after her husband's murder. Smith describes their move in historical context:

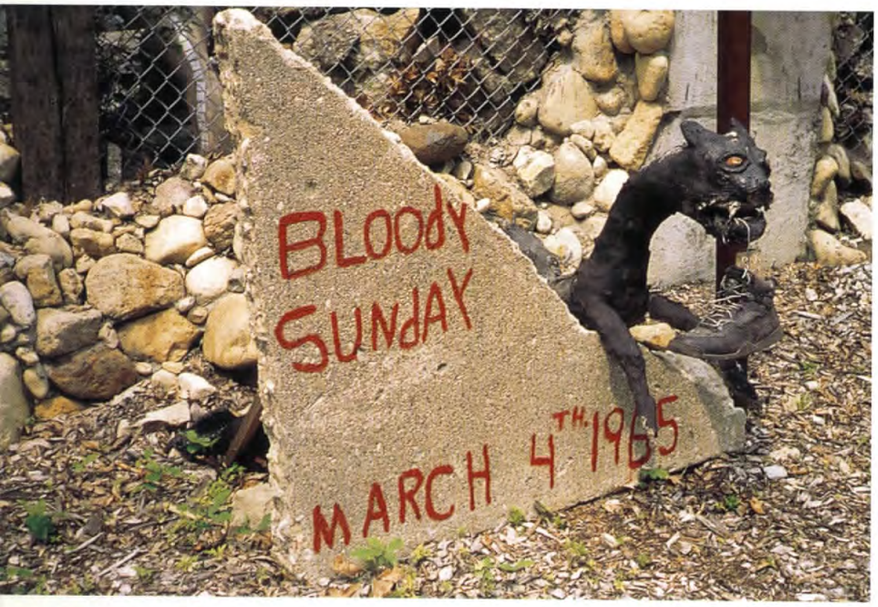
> *[It's] the same story with everybody black. For a better education, to escape racism, to escape living conditions, a better job—back in that time everybody went north. During that Great Migration period which my mother was part of, that was their reason—they all may say different things, but it's all the same—trying to escape that hammer down there the white folks were putting on us.*[4]

The family moved into a Chicago neighborhood that would later become known as the Maxwell Street district; the Smiths lived there for many years. The area featured an expansive flea market and an ethnically rich community still vivid in Smith's memory:

> *All of that was a black Mecca—black gold mine they called it. . . . The history was there because the French water market was there, bringing trucks from around the country with produce, and all of that area, from Roosevelt Road over to 15th Street, was African American—from Racine all the way up to Canal was African American. [There] we had the most wonderful relationships. We had one large building on the corner of 14th Street and Peoria where all the Mexicans stayed—in that one building. We had relationships with the Jews, we had relationships with the Greeks, with the Italians, with the Mexicans—because they all lived bordering that particular area. The experience of knowing what family was, and what community was, and what camaraderie was—it was a beautiful time.*[5]

Smith married in 1964 and worked as a postal worker by day and at Trans World Airlines by night trying to save money to buy a house. In January 1966, he was drafted into the Vietnam War, where he served as a Marine infantryman until 1968. His combat experiences generated physical, psychological, and spiritual wounds, as well as traumatic memories of brutality, suffering, and loss. After being injured in battle in 1968, Smith was honorably discharged with a Purple Heart.[6] Yet in many ways his battles had just begun.

Combat in Southeast Asia tested previous national and military assumptions about warfare and modes of fighting. Code-named for the colored stripes wrapping the drums that contained them, the herbicide known as "Agent Orange" and other harsh chemicals were put into use in the early 1960s;



Dr. Charles Smith, African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive (site details, *Monument to the Middle Passage* and *Monument to Bloody Sunday*, Aurora, Ill.), 1985–1999. photos: 1991, Lisa Stone.

it is estimated that during the height of the war, in 1967 and 1968, some nineteen million gallons of defoliant were dumped on South Vietnam and surrounding territories. The use of Agent Orange was discontinued in 1971. Since then, concerns about its harmful effects on humans have escalated: byproduct dioxins in the defoliant have been causally linked to numerous diseases, many of them debilitating or fatal. Lasting effects on the citizens of Vietnam and war veterans—Smith among them—are felt still today.

By his own measure, Smith was not the same man after Vietnam. He and his wife divorced, and he moved repeatedly in the Chicago area, living on the south and west sides of the city before moving to the surrounding suburbs of Maywood, Bolingbrook (where a sister lives), and Aurora. In 1968, he founded and became National Executive Director of the African American Association. Later that same year Smith chaired a committee for Vietnam veterans, a group to dialogue with the House Committee for Veterans Affairs. Still today, Smith continues to serve as spokesman for this group's ongoing interests.

Through his experience in these positions and work in the coming years with the Jesse Jackson–founded organization Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity) and the Congressional Black Caucus on Agent Orange, Smith became increasingly dissatisfied with many leaders of the African-American community and their strategies for political and societal improvement. He was equally frustrated by the pervasive disinterest—what Smith called "ignorance"—among many African Americans about their own history. Smith became active with various veterans groups, working arduously to educate legislators and other community leaders about the plight of black veterans who, Smith believed, were not receiving recognition for their service and ongoing suffering.

He pursued several avenues, hoping to find a way to activate and inspire others while also dealing with his own pain and anger. In 1969, Smith began his studies at the Virginia Black Training Academy, earning what he still believes to be his most significant title, that of Ordained Minister. In this capacity, Smith became pastor and counselor at a Maywood church's affiliate branch in Memphis, Tennessee—God's House of Prayer and Holiness—a penitentiary church, where he stayed for four years. In Smith's words, the interdenominational church was "not confined or boxed in to one perspective or deity, but to life character, deeds, word of honor."[7] A natural orator, Smith would retain his inner desire to preach, although his pulpit would become strikingly different in the years that followed.

In 1979 in Memphis, Smith met the woman he still calls his soul mate, Mary Golden. Returning to Illinois in 1984, Smith went

Dr. Charles Smith, untitled, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 95 × 31 × 25½ in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Slave in Chains*, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 34 × 15½ × 31½ in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

to work for the state's Department of Rehabilitation Services, where he continued to assist Vietnam veterans. He also enrolled under the GI Bill in a certificate program in rehabilitative counseling at the University of Illinois, Carbondale. In 1984, he fell at work and hurt his back and head, causing him to leave on permanent disability. His injuries were aggravated by the post-traumatic stress disorder he had suffered since leaving Vietnam and by drug abuse. Economic circumstances led him to 126 South Kendall Street in Aurora, a derelict property that Smith could afford and, unpredictably, also found inspiring. "I was a drug addict, I was lost and confused, full of hate from racist attitudes that drove me to this point. But then God came and gave me just what I needed. He gave me a weapon that is potent, powerful, and relevant."[8]

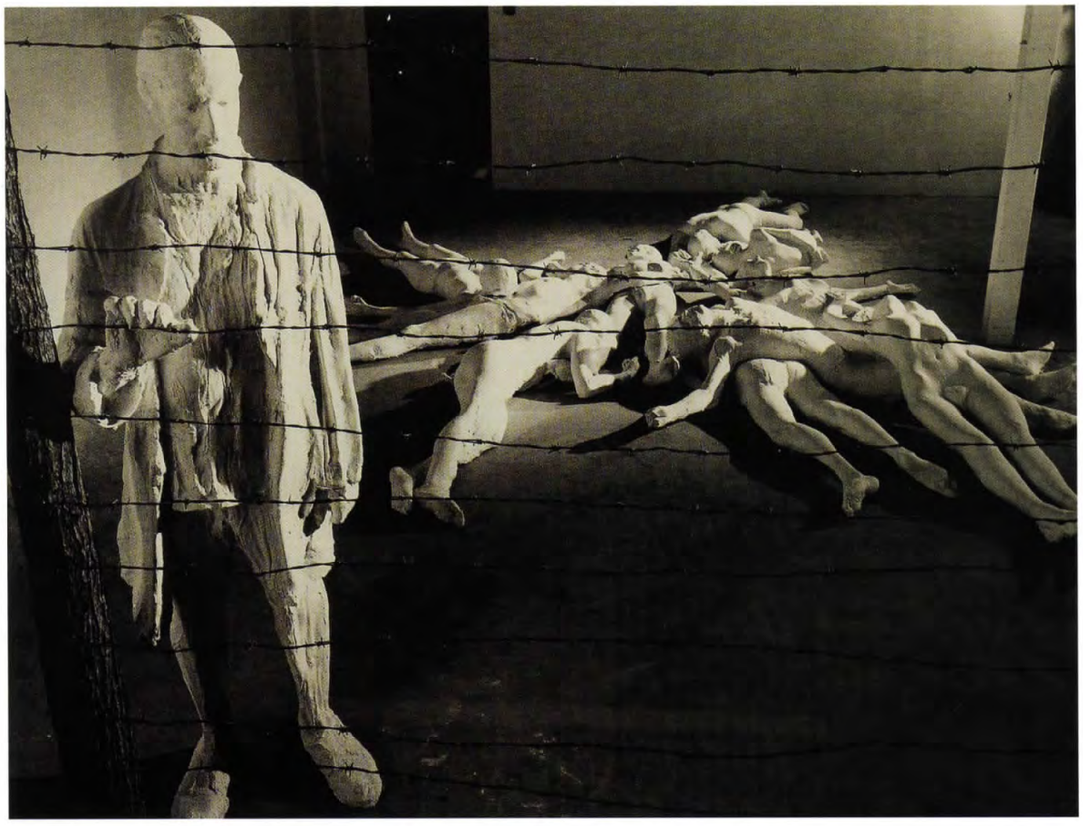
While fixing up the dilapidated house, Smith discovered that the building project could also be a vehicle for self-expression, and he began making his first monument, a commemorative arch inscribed with the words "WE SHALL OVERCOME." The inscription was accompanied by a painted figural sculpture of an African-American man in camouflage, seated with his hands bound. Working on this sculpture, Smith began thinking about how the lessons of Vietnam could reinvigorate the nation: "The country's attitude toward African-American veterans was still one of total shame because black veterans were never honored and [were] totally disrespected . . . and I wonder why? [The government] knew we were there . . . they sent us."[9]

Smith maintains that while suffering and sorrow are painful and unpleasant, their contrast with pleasure and joy helps to define the essence of those emotional states. Similarly, in her acclaimed *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World,* Elaine Scarry theorizes that "pain is exceptional in the whole fabric of psychic, somatic, and perceptual states for being the only one that has no object."[10] While one might be hungry *for food,* or afraid *of death,* pain simply *is.* At the other end of the spectrum is imagination, composed entirely of envisioned "objects" with no physical reality. Scarry proposes that pain and imagination might function as missing counterparts, affects linked to the physical world by creative productivity, by work. Her insights help to explicate the manner in which countless people make art as part of a healing process, Charles Smith among them. Scarry maintains that pain, in varying degrees and manifestations (including torture), "unmakes the world" of the individual, whereas imaginative and creative actions help to "remake" it.

These concepts illuminate not only the role of art in healing but also various modes of cultural survival. African slaves, for example, retained myriad elements of cultural heritage despite unfathomable suffering, devising ways to "remake their world," be it through music, language, or art making. Further, diverse artists who come to creativity as a means of resolving, or working through, pain and suffering share a fundamental impetus of change. They also share a unifying sense of purpose: that art must engage with the past through emotionally compelling visual means. Smith shares that sensibility.

Smith's painful imagery has perhaps been among the reasons his art has been held at arm's length by many viewers. His experience is not unlike that of Chicago painter Leon Golub, who, in the late 1940s, swam against mainstream trends of abstract imagery, insisting on content-driven art that addressed important and often horrifying issues rather than becoming mired in the comparatively trivial concerns of art-world fashion and style. Sculptor George Segal's ghostly, colorless sculptures—more haunting than shocking—chronicle the inhumanity of man from

Leon Golub, *Interrogation I*, 1980–1981; acrylic on linen; 120 × 176 in.; Courtesy of the Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, Calif., and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. Art © Estate of Leon Golub/Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y.



George Segal, *The Holocaust*, 1982; bronze with white patina, 11 figures, unique; 120 × 240 × 210 in. Art © The George and Helen Segal Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, N.Y. photo: n.d., Allen Finkelman.

Dr. Charles Smith, *⅗ of a Man*, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 33½ × 10½ × 15½ in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive (site view, Aurora, Ill.), 1985–1999. photo: 1993, James Zanzi.

Dr. Charles Smith, African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive (site view, Aurora, Ill.), 1985–1999. photo: 1993, David Kargl.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Memorial to an Unknown Slave,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, wood, paint, mixed media; 32 × 19 × 22 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

the Holocaust to homelessness, and like Smith, Segal shares the view that art must engage with the past through emotionally compelling means.

Although change is an age-old ingredient in art movements, by the 1970s, American artists were fed up with the status quo. The dominant art-world model of the white male artist, largely working in sync with art-world appetites, was being challenged by women and ethnic minorities, as well as artists whose work was dismissed by the art elite. Art made for the pristine white walls of the art museum was being reassessed, and alternative venues—including outdoor sites—arose and flourished. Public art gained momentum with state and federal mandates requiring newly constructed government buildings to include commissioned works of art. In 1976, the American Bicentennial commemoration sparked a widespread desire to rethink the nation's historical memories.[11] Artists viewed public forums for art on highly democratic terms, in direct opposition (at least on the surface) to more elitist art-world institutional settings such as commercial galleries and museums.

Such changes in the contemporary world of art were radical and highly visible. Regardless of the degree to which Smith was cognizant of this turning tide, powerful personal experiences showed him that representation—especially public representation—is central to power. He also began to recognize that the act of making sculptures not only helped him face his personal demons but also helped him tell stories that he believed must be told, particularly those of racial pain and suffering in the history of America. In some ways, he was cleansing festering wounds, remaking a world that had been "unmade" by the nation's legacy of racist violence, remaking a self undone by the Vietnam War and its ensuing challenges.

One early sculpture in his Aurora environment has great personal meaning to Smith: a portrait of an African-American soldier, Sergeant Ramey, who was photographed with Smith only moments before he was killed in combat. Ramey's death had immeasurable impact on Smith, who made several sculptures of him, including one he placed on the top peak of the house and called a "symbolic lightning rod." The house itself gradually became a huge sculpture, as Smith additively applied and combined concrete and found objects until it took on the look and feel of a war bunker or a mammoth cavern. Images of wide-eyed faces sculpted directly onto the dimly lit walls seemed to embody the spirits of lost soldiers.

Working on the art environment over the years, Smith began to take on African-American struggles in greater scope, connecting the dots of their history on this continent and tracing them

Dr. Charles Smith, *Mother Wilkerson—Light of the Community, But She's Tied Down: Underground Railroad Series*, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 38½ × 10 × 13 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

back to Africa. Smith believes he was divinely inspired to create art that could bolster the self-esteem of African Americans and other minorities. In his view, the act of making art is not something one can learn in school; while one might learn a skill or style, learning from other people removes the artist a degree from his own vision, particularly if that vision stems from faith, or God. "I'm going into the heart of mankind—blacks, whites, Hispanics—wherever ignorance separates us I want to be there," he remarks. "My act is that of Dr. Martin Luther King . . . having a dream, a vision, and a hope for our people and a place in this world with respect, where one is judged by character not color."[12]

With the understanding that each time "older African Americans pass this life, it's like a library burned to the ground," Smith explores all aspects of the African-American experience, paying particular attention to histories of struggle, sacrifice, and creativity.[13] The figures that populate Smith's yard are African-American heroes and heroines, spiritual leaders, artists and musicians, athletes, and personal friends. His subjects convey pride, celebrate talent, acknowledge despair, reflect endurance, and embody the ability to survive through resilience, humor, and joy. Exposing and challenging racism is Smith's primary goal; craftsmanship and "finished" works of art take a backseat to these concerns. Furthermore, Smith has vowed to chronicle and preach with sculpture as long as he is able. As site preservationist Lisa Stone notes, "[Smith's environment is] not finished, it's not supposed to look finished, and it will never be finished. . . . Visitors should be encouraged to see the site as a *work in progress,* where monuments and sculptures continually emerge, volcano-like, from piles of stuff."[14]

Smith's immense project reflects ingenious appropriation and reuse of disposed objects. By using discarded items from around his neighborhood, he incorporates many unwitting neighbors into the environment. He also believes that God has a hand in the look of each finished piece. His characters emerge from tree branches and found objects, establishing their oddly dynamic postures and exaggerated physiognomies. Flesh and bone emerge from substances such as plaster, concrete, and a wood-pulp substance he makes himself. A paint mixture that he concocted through experimentation adds color and life. In their nascent form, Smith's characters are left outside, exposed to the elements for up to six months. Metaphorically undergoing "life experience," the pieces endure or deteriorate, and emerge with the patina of time, as though the road they have traveled was long and hard. Smith senses when each individual sculpture has become adequately weathered, at which point he coats them with a final layer of his special recipe of "epoxy-rubberized paint."

Dr. Charles Smith, *Somalia,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 20 × 17½ × 8½ in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Working on the African American Heritage Museum for fourteen years, Smith especially focused his visual communiqués on ongoing elements and effects of racism in contemporary America, such as those articulated by curator Thelma Golden:

> *Some statistics claim that one quarter of all black men in their twenties are in jail. Black men consistently lead the unemployment and high school drop out statistics. The homicide rate for black men is seven times higher than that for white men. Many black boys don't make it to adulthood and most who die do so at the hands of other black men.*[15]

Golden observes that in the 1990s both biographies and autobiographies of African-American men emerged in greater numbers than in previous decades, including Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s memoir about growing up in the Jim Crow South. Journalist Greg Tate has called some of these stories "'new' slave narratives—about how people got out, up, and sometimes over,"[16] while cultural critic Clyde Taylor compellingly refers to this discourse as "the game":

> *The prize is precious. It is the soul, spirit, and creative energy of Black men themselves. The game is ironic. It is also oblique, since many of the Black men, players all, don't even know the object of the contest, have no clue of the rules, the stakes, or even that they are both in the game and the quarry. . . . The prize is the souls of Black men, but the contest is carried out on the body of the Black male.*[17]

Smith's sculptures are more often than not embroiled in "the game" that Taylor describes. Smith keeps records of black artists who, in his view, have been wronged by "the powers that be." His sculptures of jazz musicians, for example, simultaneously celebrate African-American artistic genius and cultural contributions and open the door for discussion about race relations in America during the 1950s and 1960s. His sculptures of African-American athletes similarly celebrate achievement while positing the historical specter of the minstrel show: men in blackface providing entertainment and perpetuating racist assumptions.

Smith's work in this vein is concurrent with that of other black artists such as Michael Ray Charles, David Hammons, Adrian Piper, Glen Ligon, and Lorna Simpson. Jean-Michel Basquiat in some ways bridges Smith and these highly polished artists. Despite achieving acclaim in the contemporary art world, Basquiat's work is still debated in terms of whether its content and style were intentional or intuitive. Golden observes that Basquiat's "trademark crown, which appears and reappears through much of his work, relates to James Baldwin's metaphor: 'African Americans need to reclaim their (lost) crowns and wear them.'"[18] If Golden's analysis is accurate, then the debate is resolved: Basquiat subtly asserted that he knew exactly what he was doing as an artist, yet coyly held that information at bay from his (largely white) audience.

One could argue much the same for Charles Smith. Indeed, some African-American self-taught and vernacular artists have been marginalized by African-American members of the art world, who may fear that white interest in their work is at the expense of trained artists and is ultimately another way of holding the trained black artist at arm's length. To a large degree, the art world has been willing to allow a highly educated artist such as Ligon to splatter canvases with racist epithets because his intentionality is clear and forceful, whereas Smith—whose intentionality with regard to his finished product is, perhaps, more ambiguous—is often dismissed as an untrained artist producing unsophisticated work. Smith has boldly taken on the self-appointed title "Dr."—like Basquiat's signature crown—to indicate his keen awareness that his status as an untrained artist has heaped another layer of discrimination onto his creative practices, and, importantly, to insist that his life lessons have been highly instructive.

In large, Smith sculpted an educational environment where *Martin Luther King Jr.* and *Malcolm X* testify while a black "drunk driver" elsewhere sits disgraced. In Smith's world, images of grandmothers were juxtaposed with those of violent gang members, slaves with bleeding welts, African tribal figures, and children playing games. Cultural ancestry is blended with details of American history: figures representing the nineteenth-century Underground Railroad stand next to African-American icons such as Louis Armstrong and Serena Williams. As Lisa Stone writes, "The African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive is equal parts memorial and mirror, commemorating and reflecting the complexity of late twentieth century life, and its elaborate, and at times bewildering, commingled histories."[19]

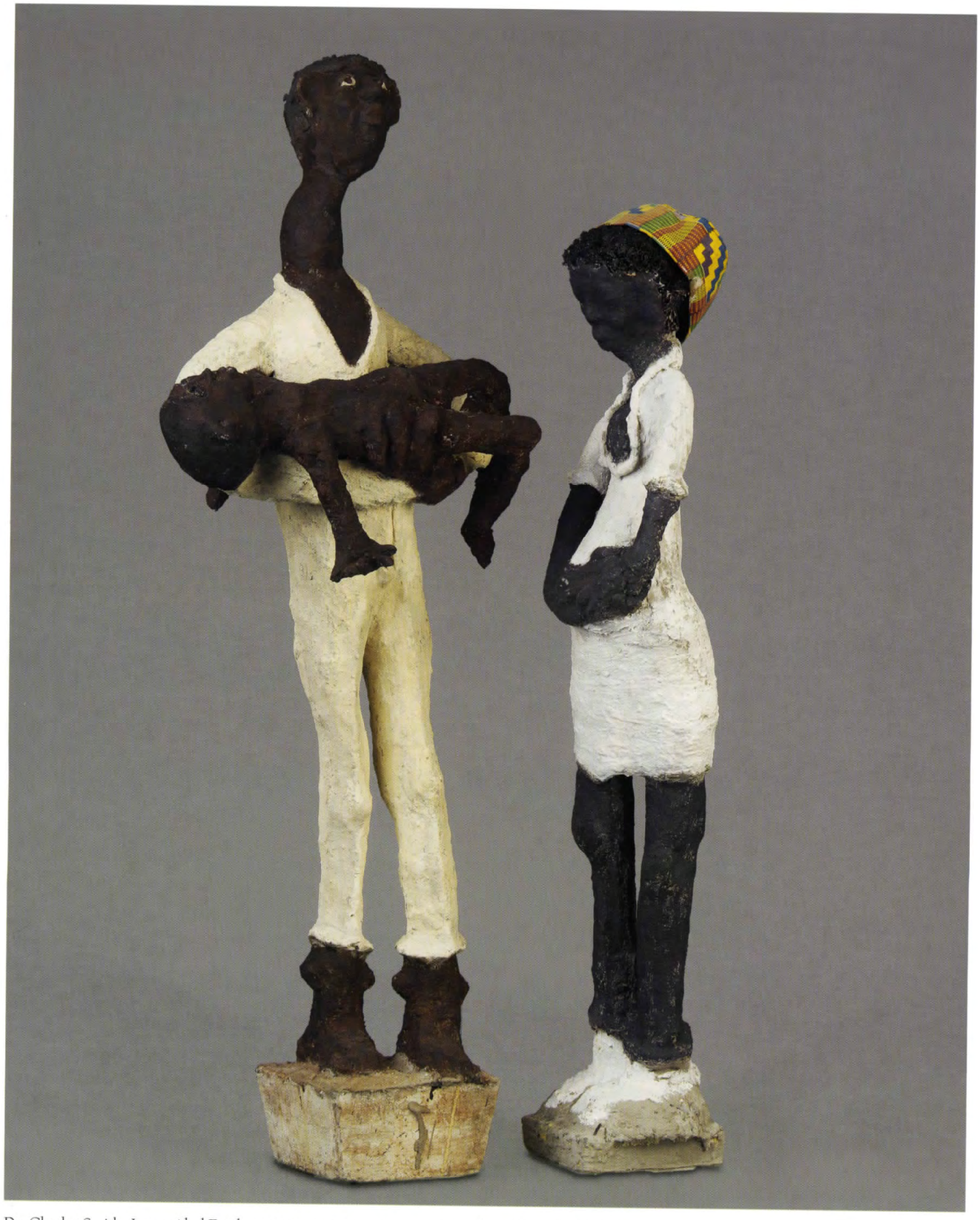
Smith himself described walking through his art environment as "being inside a collage."[20] In the tradition of African-American yard shows, Smith's complex environment exemplifies anthropologist Grey Gundaker's observation that such manifestations of home and identity are "aesthetically replete and pitched at a high level of intensity."[21] Visually preaching at a fever pitch, Smith's dense environment grew organically yet with determination; Smith found power radiating from what he himself had made. He allowed the site to generate its own power, to stay firmly rooted in history while insisting on the framework of the present. The site's flux and fluidity were central, and when Smith was not making new sculptures for the site he was rearranging others, such that audiences never had the same experience twice. Smith's outdoor museum was very much a living art form; indeed, Stone observes that the most constant element at the site was that of change.

Change also meant damage, and by 1999, with approximately six hundred works populating his environment, some of Smith's most important pieces were in significant need of repair and ongoing care. Smith recognized that many of his sculptures had deteriorated well beyond the desired stages of "weatherization," and that they needed help. After years of seeking assistance to build and maintain his project, Smith began working with the Kohler Foundation to preserve 448 individual works of art from the original African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Archive. Hoping to have his work safeguarded for the future, and wanting to begin new projects in the same vein, Smith asked the Foundation to move vulnerable pieces off-site for conservation, to be subsequently housed indoors, at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center and other institutions in the United States that would be able to offer his work to widespread audiences. Taking

Dr. Charles Smith, *George Washington Carver,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 31 × 16 × 15 in.;
John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Malcolm X*, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 30½ × 21 × 18 in.;
John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, untitled, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 37½ × 13½ × 18 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.



Dr. Charles Smith, *Impoverished Family,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 57 × 22 × 14 in. and 48 × 11½ × 8 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Dred Scott—Asked Supreme Court to Free Him,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 35 × 25 × 15 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Woman with Fancy Earrings*, c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 36 × 18 × 10 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Horn Players: Louis Armstrong Series,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 32¾ × 9½ × 13½ in. and 35 × 10½ × 15 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

Dr. Charles Smith, *Dancers: Natalie Cole Series,* c. 1985–1999; concrete, paint, mixed media; 43 × 20½ × 12 in.; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection.

a philosophical stand on the dismantling of the environment, Smith sees opportunity: "Each piece, to me, is like a seed planted and every place it goes it will tell the story of what I tried to share."[22]

With the Aurora site predominantly dismantled and new opportunities presenting themselves near his birthplace, New Orleans, Charles Smith (one of only three living artists discussed in depth in this volume), continues to work on more than one sculpture environment, all the while preaching about morality and history, suffering and healing.

NOTES

1 Dr. Charles Smith, telephone interview by Jane Bianco, April 2005 (typescript, John Michael Kohler Arts Center Artist Archives [hereafter cited as JMKACAA]).

2 Smith, quoted in Lisa Stone, "Dr. Charles Smith's African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Monument," 1999, 18 (unpublished site assessment for Kane County, Ill., JMKACAA). Stone's important and extensive study, conducted from May to September 1999, provides critical historical information and firsthand accounts of Dr. Smith's views and desires. Bertha Smith died in 2005.

3 Leon F. Litwack, "Hellhounds," in James Allen, Leon F. Litwack, Hilton Als, John Lewis, *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe, N.M.: Twin Palms Publishing, 2000), n.p.

4 Smith, interview.

5 Ibid.

6 Dr. Charles Smith, telephone interview by Jane Bianco, August 2006 (typescript, JMKACAA). Smith explains that upon being drafted, his group of recruits was divided for servitude in the Army and in the Marines; as a Marine, Smith served in North Vietnam, with missions in Dong Ha, Cam Lo, and "Hill 881" in Khe Sanh, where he was wounded during the seventy-seven-day Tet Offensive in April 1968. Smith received the Purple Heart for being injured in battle and was nominated for a Presidential Unit Citation Medal of Commendation, which he never received.

7 Smith, quoted in Stone, "Dr. Charles Smith's African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Monument," 20.

8 Ibid., 21.

9 Ibid., 22.

10 Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 161.

11 Public art, particularly that selected by government or other institutional committees is often highly controversial, often more so than that selected by a museum. Governmentally selected public art tends to be highly "on message," whereas the museum might not have such specific ends to meet. For further discussion see Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

12 Charles Smith in video documentary, *Dr. Charles Smith* (Sheboygan, Wisc.: Kohler Foundation in association with Grassland Media, 2003), JMKACAA.

13 Stone, "Dr. Charles Smith's African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Monument," 18.

14 Ibid., 76.

15 Thelma Golden, "My Brother," *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1994), 22.

16 Ibid., 35.

17 Clyde Taylor, "The Game," in Golden, *Black Male*, 167.

18 Golden, "My Brother," 39.

19 Stone, "Dr. Charles Smith's African American Heritage Museum & Black Veterans Monument," 100.

20 Smith, quoted ibid., 37.

21 Grey Gundaker, "What Goes Around Comes Around: Temporal Cycles and Recycling in African-American Yard Work," in *Recycled Re-Seen: Folk Art from the Global Scrapheap*, ed. Charlene Cerny and Suzanne Seriff (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, 1996), 75.

22 Smith, video documentary.