



Coming Home! Self-Taught Artists, the Bible, and the American South

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In the works of many famous self-taught artists, such as Howard Finster and Sister Gertrude Morgan, Biblical themes and imagery abound. How has the Bible inspired these southern creators?

Examining 125 works of art by seventy contemporary folk artists, *Coming Home! Self-Taught Artists, the Bible, and the American South* accompanies a traveling exhibition organized by the Art Museum of the University of Memphis. The exhibition features painters and sculptors of wide acclaim, including Finster, Sister Morgan, William Edmondson, Clementine Hunter, Joe Minter, Elijah Pierce, Robert Roberg, William Thomas Thompson, and Myrtice West.

In the South, Evangelical Christianity is predominant. Essays in this catalog explore this particular religious influence on the work of southern self-taught artists. The artwork is considered within the context of contemporary American art and history, literature, and music. Also included are brief essays on thirty-two of the artists along with biographical sketches of each, identifying denominational ties and providing relevant religious information.

Coming Home! offers new ways of understanding the rich meaning, theology, and history of this art and its stylistic approaches and various purposes. Essayists also forward a fresh appreciation of the cultural influence of Evangelical Christianity. They include Carol Crown, Erika Lee Doss, Hal Fulmer, Norman Girardot, Paul Harvey, Babatunde Lawal, Leslie Luebbers, Cheryl Rivers, and Charles Reagan Wilson.

Carol Crown is the curator of the exhibit *Coming Home!* and associate professor of art history at the University of Memphis. She is also the editor of *Wonders to Behold! The Visionary Art of Myrtice West*.

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