The William H. Thomas Art Gallery is a community based gallery dedicated to bringing the arts into the center of urban Columbus. Incorporated in 1978 as the Urban Cultural Arts Foundation, the gallery has hosted a variety of artists from both the local community and abroad. The gallery itself has been a part of the Bryden Road community for over 30 years and has received numerous awards and recognitions including the prestigious Governor’s Award for Ohio in 1994, the Olde Towne East Arts Award, the Arts Freedom Award in 2010 and special recognitions from the City of Columbus and the State of Ohio.

The William H. Thomas Art Gallery provides an outlet for both established and emerging artists along with being a unique resource for the patrons who hunger for authentic folk arts produced both locally and internationally. Along with workshops, Think Tanks, Productions and the annual African Village Arts Festival held since 2007, the Foundation presents three to four exhibits each year at the William H. Thomas Gallery. Each exhibit runs for ten weeks and is launched with an opening reception on the third Sunday of the named month from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

“I would like to thank those who have lent us art works for the Grandpa Smoky Show. Many wish to remain nameless therefore I will not mention any names but thank you none the less. There would not have been a show without your help. I just love it when people come together.”
Columbus, May 2011
Chief Shongo Obadina

The Gallery is open on Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. or by appointment.
**Grandpa Smoky Brown**

"I create images that are socially significant, or that have impressed me in some way. It is important to reach out to others through my art. My artwork touches a broad audience. As it flows through society, it extends itself to audiences and locations that I physically cannot.

Because art travels, it’s important that it’s travels carry a message that is significant."

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**THE ARTIST**

Smoky Brown is a native of Dayton, Ohio, born in 1919. He worked as a plasterer, stone carver, muralist, sign painter, and cartoonist. Known for working with found objects and junk materials, such as cloth, plastic, toys, paper, etc., Smoky created these materials into intricate sculptural compositions and into his paintings and drawings.

**THE CURATOR’S STATEMENT**

More often than not, he concocted painting surfaces, tools and mediums from what he could salvage from serendipitous finds.

Issues that are of social, political and cultural significance influenced Smoky’s work. His work always carried a significant message. Through his art, Smoky was able to stop time and shape into reality the issues of today.

Grandpa Smoky Brown, who died in 2005, is part of a rich legacy of outsider, self-taught and folk artists that Columbus has bequeathed to the larger art world.

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For **CHIEF SHONGO OBADINA** - curator of this show - Smoky Brown is a comrade over many years. "My friend Smoky is considered a "folk outsider" artist but he preferred to be called an urban street artist. He married in the back yard of our Gallery. Smoky bothered little about the practices and egocentricity of the art establishment and its marketplace. Through his works he could tell stories close to his heart and about his life’s many joyful and tumultuous experiences. For Smoky Brown art and life were inseparable, two faces of the same deity. He saw art as a recreation of something God has already created."