

Lonnie Holley

A voice from another time



NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS — Artist and musician **Lonnie Holley** recorded his first album in 2012 at age 62 after making home recordings for more than two decades. Holley's music, like his art, defies classification — haunting vocals, keyboards, and new renditions of songs with every performance. He has collaborated with musicians such as Dirty Projectors, Animal Collective, Bill Callahan, and Bon Iver. Holley's medium is the moment. On **Saturday, December 2**, at **8pm**, he's here with a new band, playing new arrangements and new songs: you'll only hear it once.

Currently featured in the exhibition *Thumbs Up For the Mothership*, Alabama-born artist Holley has devoted his life to the practice of improvisational creativity since

1979. Born in 1950 as the 7th of 27 children, his art and music came out of struggle, hardship, and, perhaps most importantly, furious curiosity and biological necessity. His art has manifested itself in drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, performance, and sound. Self-taught, he started carving sculptures from discarded sandstone when he was 29, eventually broadening his material to anything and everything, often collected on long rambling walks. These objects, already imbued with cultural and artistic metaphor, combine into narrative pieces that commemorate places, people, and events, often delving into issues of ecology and social justice. His sculptures exist almost as three-dimensional sketches for ideas and stories, influencing the songs he writes.

Similar to the spontaneous nature of his sculptures, Holley's music is somewhere between — and perhaps beyond — Sun Ra and spoken-word poetry. It has been described by *The New York Times* as "spacey [and] ethereal," full of "fragile, anachronistic beauty and...weirdness." Explaining the origins of this sound, Holley points to the time he spent as a teenager working at a drive-in movie theater: "I got a chance to hear the sound of sci-fi, the mystery sounds...or the sounds of Dracula and Frankenstein and the old Mummy, all those old movies, those are the kinds of sounds that were embedded in my brain" (*NPR*). After two decades of making home recordings, Holley made his record label debut in 2012 with the aptly titled *Just Before Music*. The follow-up, *Keeping a Record of It* (2013), featured guest appearances by Cole Alexander (Black Lips), Lillian Blades, and Bradford Cox (Deerhunter), and was called one of the best records of 2013 by *The New York Times*.

Holley's artwork has been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; The Studio Museum of Harlem, NY; and Prospect 2, New Orleans, LA; and is in collections of The Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, DC; The Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; High Art Museum, Atlanta, GA; and American Museum of Folk Art, NY. Holley lives and works in Atlanta, GA, and is represented by the James Fuentes Gallery, New York.

Lonnie Holley's otherworldly voice touches down in MASS MoCA's Club B10 for just one night, on **Saturday, December 2, at 8pm**. The evening will start with a screening of a short documentary about Holley, *The Man is the Music*, by filmmaker Maris Curran. Preferred ticket-buyers are invited to a gallery tour with the artist at 3pm. Lickety Split, MASS MoCA's in-house café, serves up fresh salads, homemade soup, and lip-smacking pub fare. The MASS MoCA bar is always well-stocked with local beer from Bright Ideas Brewing and Berkshire Mountain Distillery spirits. Concert tickets are \$10 for students, \$12 in advance, \$18 day of, and \$24 preferred. Tickets for all events are available through the MASS MoCA box office located on Marshall Street in North Adams, open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. Tickets can also be charged by phone by calling 413.662.2111 x1 during box office hours or purchased online at massmoca.org. All events are held rain or shine.

Images

High-resolution images of MASS MoCA's fall 2017 events are available through this link:

<http://bit.ly/mm2017fall>

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making, displaying, and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. MASS MoCA nearly doubled its gallery space in spring 2017, with artist partnerships that include Laurie Anderson, the Louise Bourgeois Trust, Jenny Holzer, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, and James Turrell.

Gallery admission is \$20 for adults, \$18 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is seasonal and currently on view through November 26. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.

Hours

11am to 5pm, closed Tuesdays