

Intuit

INTUIT:
THE CENTER FOR
INTUITIVE
AND OUTSIDER ART

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Photo © Link Harper, Philadelphia

Welcome to the World of Mr. Imagination

CHICAGO, IL - Intuit: Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art is proud to announce a retrospective exhibition [*Welcome to the World of Mr. Imagination*](#). On view from **January 9 - May 25, 2015**, we invite the public celebrate with us at a **free opening reception on January 9 from 5-8pm**.

Curated by Martha Henry, this exhibition is the first Chicago retrospective for the artist known as Mr. Imagination (Gregory Warmack, 1948-2012) whose career spanned more than thirty years. Chicago was Mr. Imagination's hometown where he developed and matured as an artist and most of the artworks on exhibit will be borrowed from Chicago collections.

The exhibition title ***Welcome to the World of Mr. Imagination*** is taken from a hand-painted sign hanging in the artist's Chicago studio and reflects the curator's intention to present a survey of the artist's career. The exhibition will not only tell the story of his life in Chicago where he spent most of his career, but will include artworks made after he left in 2002. It will feature some early experimental pieces before he began carving sandstone sculptures and his signature bottle cap work, both of which the artist developed while living in Chicago, as well as some of his last works which are remnants from a 2008 fire. In addition, the artist's ventures in design - furniture, clothing, jewelry, and accessories - will be shown. Mr. Imagination was also a nationally recognized public artist, receiving commissions from cities, universities and corporations. This important aspect of his career began in Chicago, continued throughout his life and will be documented through photographs in an exhibition in Intuit's second gallery.

Flamboyant and charismatic, Mr. Imagination attracted many photographers who captured him at his home and studio throughout his life. Essentially a show within a show, the second gallery will

feature an exhibition of photographs of Mr. Imagination taken by Patty Carroll, Ron Gordon, Dimitre, Link Harper, and Cheri Eisenberg. There will be one of Mr. Imagination's iconic bottle cap thrones that visitors may sit in and pose for photos against a wall of small artworks, many of which were given by the artist to people who visited him in his studio.

About Mr. Imagination

Born Gregory Warmack in 1948, Chicago, IL to a single mother, he grew up in a religious home. As a child, Warmack painted religious paintings and signs on cardboard and rocks. While in his teens and early twenties, he carved wood and stone and made jewelry from castoff objects that he sold on the street. In 1978, he was mugged, shot and left to die. During his recovery he had an out of body experience that led him to dedicate himself to a new regenerative art for the people. In the late 1970s he began working on "sandstone" sculptures with African and Egyptian imagery that he had seen during his astral travels. Around 1980 he began to call himself "Mr. Imagination" as well as to use all kinds of throwaway materials, especially bottle caps. In the mid 1980s, he had the first of ten exhibitions at Carl Hammer Gallery in Chicago, IL. He participated in the groundbreaking exhibition on outsider art at the Terra Museum. After a series of successful exhibitions and commissions in the Lehigh Valley, Mr. Imagination left Chicago and took up residence in Bethlehem, PA. He had a retrospective at the Goggle Works Center for the Arts, Reading, PA and his first New York City solo show at Slate Gallery in 2007. A fire destroyed his studio-home and his life's work in 2008. He relocated to Atlanta, GA in 2009. In his process to heal from the loss of his home and art, he began to incorporate the surviving burned pieces into new sculptures. Mr. Imagination died in Atlanta, GA, in 2012.

About curator Martha V. Henry

Martha Henry has been working as a curator and art advisor for more than thirty years with a special emphasis on African American, Self-Taught and Folk Art. She is recognized throughout the United States as a leading authority on African American art. Ms. Henry is committed to nurturing American visual arts through advising and developing institutional and private collections, as well as educating the public through curating exhibitions in galleries, universities, museums, corporations and public parks. Ms. Henry co-founded and co-directed Urban Art Projects, a non-profit art organization in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, dedicated to providing the organizational framework for public art exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. She co-produced *Perform Williamsburg 2009*, a one day festival of performance art and video in East River State Park, and the *Williamsburg Waterfront Sculpture Exhibition 2010*, a one-month outdoor sculpture exhibition with invited artist Swoon and eight juried artists. As an independent curator for the New England Center for Contemporary Art, Ms. Henry curated exhibitions on contemporary and folk art at a variety of institutions including: Schick Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY; Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, Virginia Beach, VA; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE; Fullerton Art Museum, Fullerton, CA; Snite Museum, Notre Dame University, South Bend, IN; Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art Chicago, IL; New England Center for Contemporary Art, Brooklyn, CT; American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY (54th Venice Biennale); and Wiegand Art Gallery, Notre Dame de Namur University, Bellmore, CA. She lectures and has written numerous exhibition catalogues, including *Art from the Inside: Paño Drawings by Chicano Prisoners*; *Jay Milder: Adam and Eve on the IRT and Other Biblical Tales*; *Jay Milder: Urban Visionary, Retrospective*; *Robert Murray, Recent Works*; and *Roots of the Spirit: Lonnie Holley, Mr. Imagination, Charlie Lucas, Kevin Sampson*. She is a member of the American Association of Museums.

Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art promotes public awareness, understanding, and appreciation of intuitive and outsider art through education, exhibition, collecting and publishing. Intuit defines 'intuitive and outsider art' as the work of artists who demonstrate little influence from the mainstream art world, and who instead are motivated by their unique personal vision. This definition includes art brut, non-traditional folk art, self-taught art, and visionary art.

Hours: Tu - Sa 11:00 - 6:00, Th 11:00 - 7:30, 756 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL

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