



- 991343

CITY OF GAINESVILLE

Department of Cultural Affairs

Joan Bragginton
Florida Humanities Council
1725 ½ East Seventh Avenue
Tampa, Florida 33605-3708

May 1, 2000

Dear Ms. Bragginton:

Please accept this letter of application to the Florida Humanities Council for a \$2,000 mini-grant. Our project, "Saving Grace," is an in-depth study of five Florida folk artists. Curated by Gary Monroe, an exhibition will be developed which examines the creative process from a folk arts perspective. The artists to be investigated are "self-taught," otherwise known as "outsider" artists. These artists create without academic influences. The study will include five works from each artist, photographs of the artists in their personal environments, and essays that delve into their philosophical approaches and personal backgrounds. A catalogue/brochure will document the overall study and serve as an introduction to this fascinating current art movement, emphasizing its humanities context.

The exhibition will be installed in the Thomas Center Main Gallery from December 2, 2000 through January 28, 2001. A lecture by Gary Monroe will be scheduled during the show and the brochure will be available to the public throughout the duration of the exhibition (all free of charge). The Thomas Center is a City of Gainesville facility that houses the Department of Cultural Affairs. The building itself is a restored mansion built in 1908 in the Mediterranean Revival style of architecture. The Main Gallery is an attractive and professional space devoted to an ongoing visual arts exhibition schedule, with a few shows each year focusing on a more humanities oriented presentation.

Folklife, art criticism and cultural anthropology are the humanities disciplines integral to this project. The whole arena of folk art is tremendously powerful because it is primal and direct; antithetical to the gloss and hype that defines much communication today. The visual arts in general represent a barrier-free language. The creative process itself has been studied so little despite the vast amount of historical information available. The self-taught artist's process is especially relevant because being outside of the "normal" realms of training and indoctrination he struggles with his own degree of originality and nonconformity. The "outsider" approach is fresh and innocent, allowing us to really see the creative process in the work itself. Mr. Monroe's extensive interviews with over 65 self-taught artists throughout Florida add a more complete dimension to research of the creative process. Our focus for this project on only five artists allows us to delve into the specific reasoning and methodology of each artist.

Our humanities scholar is Mallory McCane O'Connor. Her background is custom-made for this project. Currently an Associate Professor of Art History with Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, she has also worked as a curator for many years. She holds both an MA in

Station 30 • P.O. Box 490 • Gainesville, FL 32602-0490
352.334.5064 • FAX 352.334.2146

American art form of quilt-making. She is currently assisting Gary Monroe by editing a publication of self-taught artists that he is writing, so she is closely involved with his research. As scholar, Ms. O'Connor will write an introduction for our brochure, and review the essay included. She will be involved in the exhibition as an advisor.

Our targeted audience is the greater Gainesville community, and visitors. The Thomas Center Galleries serve a broad spectrum of the public. The Thomas Center itself is a well-known public building with many visitors, both local and from far away, frequenting its programs daily. We had well over 100 people at our recent lecture on "The Highwaymen" by Gary Monroe. Like that topic, the self-taught artists subject is enormously popular now, and at least 2000 people are likely to attend this exhibition. We have an exhibition committee that is involved in planning the show, and represents the community.

The Thomas Center Galleries will contribute \$2,400 in cash to the project plus facility resources. In addition to resumes from Gary Monroe and Mallory O'Connor is included my own resume (Amy Vigilante Dickerson) as project director with extensive background in aesthetics, art criticism and art education. A rough version of the budget follows:

EXPENSES

• Curatorial Fee (Gary Monroe) select artists, choose works, write essays, conceptualize and write catalogue, deliver artwork and photographs, provide lecture	\$1,000
• Travel/Delivery expenses	\$400
• Scholar Honorarium (Mallory O'Connor)	\$200
• Catalogue/Brochure	\$1,400
• Postcard invitations and mailing	\$600
• Publicity	\$200
• Installation costs	\$500
• Public reception	<u>\$100</u>
	\$4,400

CONTRIBUTIONS

FL. Hum. Council Mini-grant	\$2,000
Cash from Thomas Center Galleries program	<u>\$2,400</u>
	\$4,400

Thank-you for your consideration of our project proposal. Please contact me if I can add any further information to our mini-grant application.

Sincerely,

Amy Vigilante Dickerson, Ph.D.
Thomas Center Galleries Coordinator