



13 N. Madison St.
 Quincy, FL 32351
 www.gadsdenarts.org
 850-875-4866

- EST. 1994 -

Find and circle all of the words you can find in the word search, and think about how they relate to Ruby Williams and her artwork!

WORD BANK:

Minister	Moral	Wisdom
Bible	Colorful	Vernacular

K Q K J X H I L D P
 I I C O M O D S I W
 K R E T S I N I M Y
 C G L U F R O L O C
 R A L U C A N R E V
 M O R A L C B K E N
 I N A I O E T P K P
 H H B Y V R A A E K
 R R T M R M I T H L
 H B E L B I B I D D



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Ruby C. Williams

Vernacular Artist

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Written & Designed by Zhiju Liu

Ruby C. Williams, a folk artist and produce vendor, was born and grew up in Beallsville, Florida. Beallsville was a community founded by freed Slaves in 1860s, one of them being Mary Reddick, Ruby's great-grandmother. Williams became a minister in New Jersey, before returning to Florida, to run a produce stand on State Road 60 in the early 1980s. She started making signs for her stand and eventually passersby would be interested in purchasing her signs as well as her produce, so she created a "walk in" gallery at her produce stand.

Williams is a self-taught artist. She says that she has been ministering all her life and that her artwork reflects that. Her paintings are about stories in the Bible and her own family, underpinning each work with a moral teaching. Besides serving as advertisements for her produce on scrap wood, Williams' paintings are also rich in folk wisdom and observations of human behavior.



Her career in folk art truly took off in 1991 when passerby Rodney Hardee noticed her artistic and brightly painted signs. With coaxing from Hardee and others who visited her stand, Williams embarked on a journey that led her into classrooms, museums and galleries not only in Florida but also nationally. In 2004, she showcased her charming children's book titled, *I am Ruby*.

Ruby was the recipient of the Florida Folk Life Award in 2005 and was included in the show "On Their Own-Selected Self-taught Artists" held at the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum in Washington D.C. Her produce stand and colorful venue has become a place where locals hold annual celebrations in her honor.

You would occasionally hear Williams say, “I’ve been ministering since I was a kid... I do everything from the bottom of my heart, whether shelling a bucket of beans or making a painting”. She says she likes when people look at her working environment and smile.

Links:

To learn more about Ruby C. Williams, visit:

<http://folkvine.umbc.edu/ruby/home.html>

vernacular artists - artists that are untrained, often living in isolated settings, who create art in response to their environment and experiences

permanent collection - a collection of artwork owned by a museum

painting - color mixed with water or other substances that is typically applied to a surface with a brush; specific mediums include watercolor, acrylic, and oil

plywood - a strong board that is made by gluing together thin sheets of wood

ambience - the mood or feeling of a specific place

Piano Playing Cow I Give Better Buttermilk



Ruby C. Williams, *Piano Playing Cow I Give Better Buttermilk*, n.d., paint on plywood, 48 x 24 inches, Gadsden Arts Center Permanent Collection, 2009.1.13

Above is an image repeated often in Ruby Williams’ work: an orange cow with black and white piano keys across its back, a small head and small utters. The cow stands in a grass field with a passage written in white above its head, “Piano Playing Cow I Give Better Buttermilk.”

Ruby’s Walk-in Gallery

