

THE GALLERY OF  
**EVERYTHING**

**THE BOB PARKS  
LIFE-STORY SHOW**

24.09.2017 - 12.11.2017



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# THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

## LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

**BOB PARKS** is a work of art; and that work is **BOB PARKS**.

From the minute he walks in, to the second he heads home, **BOB** transports us. Granted, his is a rather unusual vibe. But it's also comforting and familiar. A place for the collective other to merge.

I hope I don't sound too esoteric. What I'm really trying to get to is that **BOB's** is a quest, and that quest is for the truth. That's why we brought him here to the gallery for his very first commercial retrospective.

As a performer, **BOB** knows no boundaries. As a painter, he is second to none. Not that I expect you to love everything you see, **BOB's** aesthetic is rarely less than intense. But scratch the surface and be rewarded.

For Brother **BOB** is 100% spiritual. Nor is his the kind of cod god you find on a yoga mat. It's the real deal, a spirit which grabs you by the shoulder blades and shakes you until consciousness makes itself heard.

Hence the gospel, the soul, the anarchic freedom to express, plus that phenomenal film of his life and his work, *The R&B Feeling*. Holy Moly Batman, this show has it all ... so come on a journey into what it means to be alive, to be here on the planet and to make art for no one but yourself.

Now is the moment for **BOB**. Please, take the time, let him in.

Finally, I give thanks to those who brought this gentle creative bedfellow into my worldview: the artist Nathaniel Mellors, filmmaker Marcus Werner Hed and co-curator and The Museum of **Everything** honcho Cody Ledvina. To all of you my gratitude, in honour of **BOB PARKS**, and of Marjorie, his mum.

James Brett

The Gallery of **Everything**, September 2017

# BOB PARKS

B 1947 (UK)



*Mum on the Cross (2010)*

Known for his provocative durational performances, British-born artist **BOB PARKS** is on a lifetime search for the truth. Ancient cultures, military dictatorships, method acting, gospel music and his own late mother form the heart of his all-encompassing *gesamtkunstwerk*. Yet it was last year's acclaimed BBC documentary, *The R&B Feeling*, which propelled the 70 year old wunderkind into the limelight.

Born in Southhall, **BOB PARKS** studied art at Leicester University before moving to Los Angeles in the 1970s. His immersion in West Coast performance art brought him to the attention of contemporaries like Chris Burden and Paul McCarthy; but it was his study of Konstantin Stanislavski at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute and Actor's

Studio which led him to fuse his daily life with a radical and pseudo-fictional version of himself.

In 1974 **PARKS** embarked on a series of citywide actions in the persona of an absurdist alter-ego, *Bignose*. Inspired by Indian mystic philosophy, the character alternated mundane rituals with verbal hysterias, while dressed in a yogic thong and playing an amplified fife. The performance was called: *The hypocrisy of clothed men, painting naked women in Renaissance times, behind closed doors*. It brought him to the attention of the infamous Chuck Barris, who invited him to perform on *The Gong Show*.

Holding down a series of menial jobs, **PARKS** became involved with South Central's *Starlight Church of God in Christ*, where the African-American community introduced him to gospel and soul music, inspiring him to produce a series of portraits which revealed **PARKS** as a profound painter and image maker.

Shows in Australia, Europe and the UK were to follow. Yet at the age of 40, **PARKS** left Los Angeles (pop. 18 million) and returned to his parents' home in Sway (pop. 3,448). He joined a local congregation, where his spiritual and creative practices became ever more interconnected.

In recent years, **PARKS** was included in *3rd Leggg* at London's ICA in 2011, and presented in a solo show at Grand Union in Birmingham in 2013. In 2016, **BOB PARKS'** life and work was profiled in *The R&B Feeling*, co-directed by contemporary artist Nathaniel Mellors.



*Bob (1987)*



*Mum and Dad (1984)*

*The most arresting solo exhibition I've seen this year.*

Morgan Quaintance, Frieze Magazine

*He was unique, he wanted to lose control and to see what would happen.*

John Duncan, artist

**BOB** is a great artist and impossible to emulate without living his life - but he is genuinely inspirational. At a time when there's an excess of influence and a lack of inspiration, **BOB PARKS** is a kind of antidote.

Nathaniel Mellors, artist

*The embodiment of extraordinary!*

Cheryl Jones, Grand Union (Birmingham)

*If performance art were a competitive team sport, talent scouts would recognise in the British performance artist, painter and musician **BOB PARKS** that most lucrative and rare of qualities: natural ability. In his impulsive, unsettling and rapturous work, there is an easy, unaffected pairing of art and everyday life.*

Morgan Quaintance, Frieze Magazine

*We began to think, I don't know, this guy is pretty weird.*

Barbara T Smith, artist



Bob Parks with Self Portrait (1975)

The Gallery of **Everything** is proud to present **BOB PARKS'** first commercial UK retrospective, with paintings, drawings, sculptures and screenings, drawing on his astonishing 40 year practice. The artist will be holding performances every Sunday afternoon in the gallery and daily throughout Frieze Week.



The Gallery of **Everything** is London's first and only commercial space dedicated to non-academic and private art-making. The gallery's roster includes historical master artists and newly-discovered authors and creators.

All proceeds from sales support THE MUSEUM OF **EVERYTHING**, a British non-profit organisation, committed to the advancement, integration and celebration of artists and makers beyond the cultural mainstream. Please visit [www.musevery.com](http://www.musevery.com).

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THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING



## THE BOB PARKS LIFE-STORY SHOW

SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER TO  
SUNDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2017

4 CHILTERN STREET  
LONDON W1  
[WWW.GALLEVERY.COM](http://WWW.GALLEVERY.COM)

TUE - SUN FROM 11AM  
AND BY APPOINTMENT  
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