

PARALLEL ART UNIVERSE:

Selected Writings on Contemporary Folk, Visionary, and Outsider Art (1989-2006)

by Tom Patterson

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Tom Patterson has been writing about contemporary folk, visionary, and outsider art for forty years and established a reputation as an independently authoritative, critical voice in the field. He has authored definitive books about this art and curated major exhibitions that have had a significant influence on the field's development.

Patterson is most widely known for his lavishly color-illustrated biographies of Georgia visionaries Howard Finster and Eddie Owens Martin (*Howard Finster: Stranger from Another World*, Abbeville Press; and *St. EOM in The Land of Pasaquan*, Jargon Society, University of Georgia Press), both originally published in the late 1980s, and since then he has written extensively on the lives and work of other artists operating with relative autonomy on the margins of the academic art system. The phrase he coined and employs as the title of this book ironically references the historical tendency to distinguish the work of such artists from other contemporary art on the basis of its perceived otherness.

Parallel Art Universe brings together some of Patterson's most informative, insightful, and provocative writings on the field over the years since his books on Finster and Martin were published. These essays, artist profiles, and related reminiscences were originally published, in slightly different form, in various exhibition catalogs and in magazines including *Art Papers*, *Folk Art*, and *Raw Vision*.

Patterson writes informatively and in an accessible, often entertaining manner about a sprawling, dynamic, unruly subset of the art world that has drawn steadily increasing public attention since the 1970s. His *Parallel Art Universe* stands an important addition to the growing body of critical literature and art-historical scholarship related to the field.