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the work of folk and visionary artists who draw on the extremes of agony and ecstasy inherent in the Christian spheres of heaven and hell. Drawing on the apocalyptic scenario outlined in the book of Revelation, artists like William Thomas Thompson and Howard Finster similarly focus on images of dread, guilt, and retribution for the sinners who have failed to uphold the standards of their faith.

Although many folk artists' figures seem ageless, the apparel of Trotman's figures—suits and ties for men, 1950s-era dresses and sensible shoes for women—bring them into the modern world of corporate dress codes and rigid social roles. From this perspective Trotman offers a critique of capitalism that connects him to contemporary artists who share his discomfort with the psychological damage inflicted by capitalist power arrangements. One such artist is Tom Otterness, a sculptor who uses the language of cartoons and children's toys to create humorously scathing depictions of incidents in the contemporary class war. Trotman's precariously posed full figures also bear kinship to an iconic series of works from the 1980s by Robert Longo titled *Men in the Cities*. Part of a larger exploration of the regimentation of contemporary life, these crisply graphic works isolate images of elegantly attired women and men against a white ground, depicting them in ambiguous poses that suggest they might be falling, dancing, or recoiling from gunshot. Formally, the psychological effects of Trotman's manipulation of scale link him to Charles Ray, whose sculptures include *Fall '91* (1992), an intimidating eight-foot-high

*clockwise, from left*

Robert Longo, **UNTITLED**, 1981, charcoal and graphite on paper, 96 × 60 in., Courtesy of Metro Pictures, inv. no. MP# D-53

Howard Finster, **ONE DAY AT A TIME**, 1985–1989, enamel and marker on mirror, 30 × 26 in., Image © 2010 Skot Foreman Fine Art, New York, N.Y.

Charles Ray, **ARTIST WITH FALL '91**, 1992, mixed media, h. 96 × w. 26 × d. 36 in., Image © 2010 Charles Ray / Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, N.Y.

businesswoman who towers over viewers, and *Family Romance* (1993), a four-member family group in which all figures, from toddler to father, are presented naked and the same size, subtly altering their interrelationships.

Trotman has noted that one of his primary themes is the sense of alienation that permeates contemporary life. He suggests a corporate society requires submission to restrictive roles and masks that sever the tie between one's inner and outer realities. But in the end, one surmises, it is precisely that gap that may save us. Inside the frightened eyes of his alienated characters are sparks of inner life that refuse to be extinguished. These are not Benjamin's soulless automatons but suffering human beings. For them, and for us, redemption is still possible.