

Beverly Buchanan: Shacks and Legends, 1985-2011

March 17, 2021 By Steve Rockwell

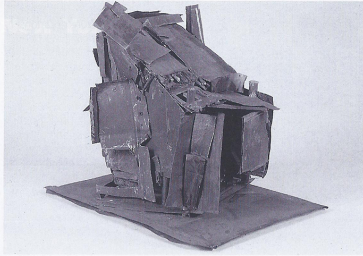
Opening at Andrew Edlin Gallery in New York, curated by Aurélie Bernard Wortsman

March 20 – May 1, 2021

An excerpt from the gallery press release: “A storyteller, Buchanan often attached to her sculptures handwritten or typed narratives, which she referred to as “legends,” that gave voice to a cast of characters, some remembered and others imagined. Sometimes she stapled them to the underside of a piece. In one of her favorite works, *Orangeburg County Family House*, 1993, Buchanan wrote in Sharpie on the outer sides of the structure the names of families from her hometown which she took from her high school yearbook and a calendar from her local church.”



Installation View *Beverly Buchanan Shacks and Legends, 1985 - 2011* Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York



Beverly Buchanan, *The House Near the Bull Swamp School*, 1995. Wood and mixed media.

Beverly Buchanan at Steinbaum Krauss

Hasting's House: Brunson Earthly Hastings lived by the rules of hard work, no liquor and one woman. His ten sons were smart, hardworking farm boys. But Anna, the only girl, was his heart. He was blind when she graduated but smiled proudly when he heard them call out, "Dr. Anna Hastings."
—Beverly Buchanan, 1989

Beverly Buchanan's obsession is her memory of growing up in Plainview, Georgia. The home that she refers to as a magnet was a shack. She lived in a community of shacks. If it's impossible to go home again, Buchanan comes extremely close in simulating the effort to do so. People who encounter her work are struck by the "truth" of her memories. They might have a vivid recollection of Dr. Anna Hastings, her family and her graduation. The truth is that Dr. Hastings doesn't exist. Someone like Anna, however, must be

real. In Buchanan's forge, story, photo, paint and wood are smithed into convincing nostalgic icons. We believe her anyway. We do so because Beverly Buchanan is her own truth, an embodiment and fruit of the soil that she portrays. We believe her because she possesses the gift of transporting herself to the place where the haziness of time generalizes events.

The shacks of wood, tar paper, tin and oil pastel serve as proof of the passage and are convenient emblems of her journey.

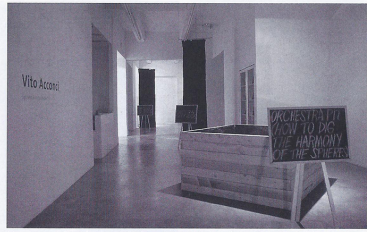
Vito Acconci at Barbara Gladstone

Vito Acconci spent most of the art opening on the street so he could smoke. Kate Linker was speaking with him and said as she was leaving "I'll do the big article on you, Vito."

Acconci was more than a little amazed that the pieces on view at Barbara Gladstone, refabricated from 1974 and 1975 work, would ever be rebuilt. At the time, the pieces would get knocked down like stage sets, two weeks after the show.

A tall, tanned brunette, with a broad *La Dolce Vita* smile came up to him with an outreached hand, "Vito, I'm Do you remember me from Milan? I have a gallery here, now."

He stood with his hands in his pockets, feet planted squarely on the sidewalk. Someone waved at him through the gallery window. Acconci returned the wave, smiling. He was having a good time.



Vito Acconci, *Plot (Chapter 9 & Chapter 8)*, 1975, installed at Barbara Gladstone Gallery, February 28–April 1, 1998. Courtesy Barbara Gladstone Gallery. Photo: David Regen.

Most likely it was the summer of 1989 that I took in the Beverly Buchanan exhibit at the Steinbaum Krauss Gallery in New York City's Soho district. At that point in time, *dArt International* magazine had barely rounded out its first six months of publishing life. What had impressed me about the work was Buchanan's "gift of transporting herself to the place where the haziness of time generalizes events."