

FRIEZE

Rivers, Ruins and Ritual: Land Politics at Frieze New York 2024

From models of Southern shacks to burning effigies in darkest Poland, Frieze New York has a wealth of work devoted to disputed territories, cultural abandonment and economic despair

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In a world riven by wars, disputed territories, ecological catastrophes and the continued marginalization of indigenous peoples, it's perhaps not surprising that land politics appear across Frieze New York in many different guises this year.

While the specific concerns of each artist differ, there are common themes: the significance of certain organic materials; a sense of archival responsibility; the distinction between the rural and the urban; and the capitalist exploitation of culture and landscape that results in obliteration or occlusion.



Beverly Buchanan, *Wooden Shack*, 2001. Wood and glue, 30 × 39.4 × 24.3 cm. Courtesy Andrew Edlin

One artist who embodies several of these strands is Beverly Buchanan at Andrew Edlin Gallery. A native Southerner, Buchanan (1940–2015) drew on memories from her childhood and the landscape of Georgia, plus the “yard art” of local self-taught artists. She created sculptures called “shacks” in tribute to the improvised, self-built homes of poor rural Black Southern communities. These are on show at Frieze along with works on paper, 1970s abstract expressionist paintings and cast concrete works for which Buchanan made her own “tabby” cement from crushed oyster shells. The gallery notes: “These sculptures are imbued with the unmistakable touch of the artist: her lines of red, blue and black paint remain after decades of weathering. Vertical indentations in the last stone piece are reminiscent of her *Wall Columns* sculpture from 1981, part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection.”