

FRIEZE

Seven Artists with Unconventional Art Journeys at Frieze New York

From self-taught Thornton Dial to Reverend Joyce McDonald's artistic discovery in detox, this year's fair showcases several pioneers who came to art via unexpected paths

IN FRIEZE NEW YORK | 02 MAY 24

The 2024 edition of [Frieze New York](#) spotlights alternative journeys into art, as championed by galleries such as **Ortuzar Projects**, **Andrew Edlin Gallery** and **Gordon Robichaux**. This focus is echoed in Venice at the Biennale's Central Pavilion Exhibition, "[Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere](#)", where artists from non-traditional art backgrounds and training take center stage.

Feliciano Centurión turned to the craft of his childhood while in exile; **Reverend Joyce McDonald** discovered clay in detox; and **Thornton Dial** rescued scrap materials from his workplace. While the circumstances that sparked these seven practitioners' entry into artmaking are wildly different—as are the techniques and themes they pursue—they share a boundless desire and freedom to experiment, and a clear sense of how their practice informs and is informed by wider sociopolitical concerns.

Andrew Edlin Gallery presents a dual exhibition of Beverly Buchanan and Thornton Dial: both artists of the American South, both making work in connection to the places and materials they knew best. Dial spent 30 years as a metalworker at the Pullman Standard plant in Alabama fabricating railroad cars. When the factory closed in 1981, Dial devoted himself to the assemblages he had been making on the side. He transformed discarded materials such as steel, copper, wire, wood, carpet, rope and rock into structures that spoke of the suffering and survival of workers in the Deep South.

Thornton Dial and Beverly Buchanan | Andrew Edlin Gallery, stand D2



Thornton Dial, *You Can't Get Away from the Shotgun House*, 1994. Found wood, cloth, tin, found metal, wire, enamel, spray paint and Splash Zone compound on canvas on wood, 169 × 102 × 24 cm. Courtesy of Andrew Edlin Gallery

Buchanan, unlike Dial, did receive formal training in the arts, but only once she had gained two graduate degrees in public health. Following a period of pursuing abstract expressionism in New York, she returned to the South in 1971, this time to Georgia, and began to make work rooted in the local landscape. Like Dial, Buchanan used unlikely vernacular materials to address notions of memory and decay. On display at Frieze New York are Buchanan's distinctive “shack” sculptures, oil pastels and photographs, to which she ascribed “legends,” telling of their inhabitants, real and imagined, alongside her minimalist sculptures, for which she made her own “tabby” concrete of crushed oyster shells, a technique used by enslaved workers in the 18th century.



Beverly Buchanan, *Untitled*, c.1980s. Cast concrete, enamel and nails, 23
× 33 × 36 cm. Courtesy of Andrew Edlin Gallery