

# OKLAHOMA CONTEMPORARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Lori Brooks, director of communications  
405 951 0000 | [lbrooks@okcontemp.org](mailto:lbrooks@okcontemp.org)

## Sculptor and Pioneer Melvin Edwards

*Exhibition at Oklahoma Contemporary: Oct. 27 – Dec. 27, 2016*

Oklahoma Contemporary is thrilled to welcome Melvin Edwards, a pioneer in the history of contemporary African-American art and sculpture, back to Oklahoma with his first solo exhibition in the state in the last 25 years.

Originally from Houston, Edwards emerged onto the art scene in Los Angeles in the early 1960s. He became well-known for his *Lynch Fragments* series, begun in 1963 and continuing through today, in which objects such as chains, tools, and steel scraps are welded into compact, evocative forms. In 1970, he became the first African American sculptor to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. That exhibition showed, like *Lynch Fragments*, his interest in working within and against the boundaries of abstraction and minimalism, using materials with immense cultural and personal resonance, particularly in the context of the African American experience.

Over the past 50 years, his work has been complex and multilayered. His welded sculptures are abstract, though his materials and the titles move the works into the realm of the narrative. He was recently the subject of a 50-year retrospective at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, which toured nationally. His work is in the permanent collection of major institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Chicago Art Institute; and the Dallas Museum of Art. Recent shows include the Venice Biennale (2015), Art Basel Miami Beach (2011-2015), Frieze New York (2014) and Art Dubai (2012).

Dropbox for media kit with images: [bit.ly/OCEdwards](http://bit.ly/OCEdwards)  
More info: [www.alexandergray.com/artists/melvin-edwards/](http://www.alexandergray.com/artists/melvin-edwards/)  
From Carol Kino: [nyti.ms/1QccbQt](http://nyti.ms/1QccbQt)

**Representative works:** These images show works representative of what will be in the Oklahoma Contemporary exhibition. In addition to sculptures from his catalog, Edwards is considering a large, site-specific installation as well as new individual pieces, some including objects found at Oklahoma scrapyards.

**Curtain for William and Peter:** *Curtain for William and Peter*, 1969/2012. Barbed wire and chain.  
138.5 x 220 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © 2016 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

3000 General Pershing Blvd | Oklahoma City, OK 73107 | 405.951.0000 | [oklahomacontemporary.org](http://oklahomacontemporary.org)

**Law:** *Law*, 1990. Welded steel. 15 x 14 x 10.5 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © 2016 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Djeri Jef Fatou:** *Djeri Jef Fatou*, 2005. Welded steel. 17 x 15 x 8 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © 2016 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Grenada:** *Grenada*, 1983. Welded steel. 10.13 x 7.5 x 9.88 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © 2016 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

**Edwards portrait:** Melvin Edwards, 2012. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London

###

#### **About Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center**

Currently located at State Fair Park, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center aims to encourage artistic expression in all its forms through education and exhibitions. We endeavor to instill in the public a lifetime appreciation of the arts and enthusiasm for creative practice through a broad range of educational programs, exhibitions and cultural offerings, including:

- Youth art camps that help students begin a lifetime relationship with art and creativity.
- Art classes and workshops where students of all ages find the chance to learn and grow.
- Exhibitions that feature the work of emerging and mid-career artists.
- Free public lectures, artist talks and events that enrich Oklahoma City's cultural offerings.

Oklahoma Contemporary is in the midst of a capital campaign to create a spectacular new arts education and cultural resource on a 4.6-acre site at NW 11th and Broadway in Oklahoma City. The arts education campus will include:

A four-story, 50,000-square-foot building with classrooms, galleries, a dance studio and a black-box theater to promote learning about the artists of our time and educating those to come. Expanded classes in ceramics, fiber, painting, sculpture, drawing and dance, plus a new media curriculum with programs in filmmaking, animation, photography, web design and 3-D printing. A remodeled 10,000-square-foot building will house an Industrial Arts program, focusing on wood, ceramics, metal and jewelrGrounds with space for outdoor sculpture exhibits, children's art education activities and outdoor music, movie and drama productions.

Oklahoma Contemporary is a regional 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1989 by businessman and philanthropist Christian Keesee and Kirkpatrick Foundation Director Marilyn Myers. Marfa Contemporary is the organization's first regional extension.