

## Artist Melvin Edwards Donates Works to Nasher Sculpture Center

by [Christopher Blay](#) November 20, 2020



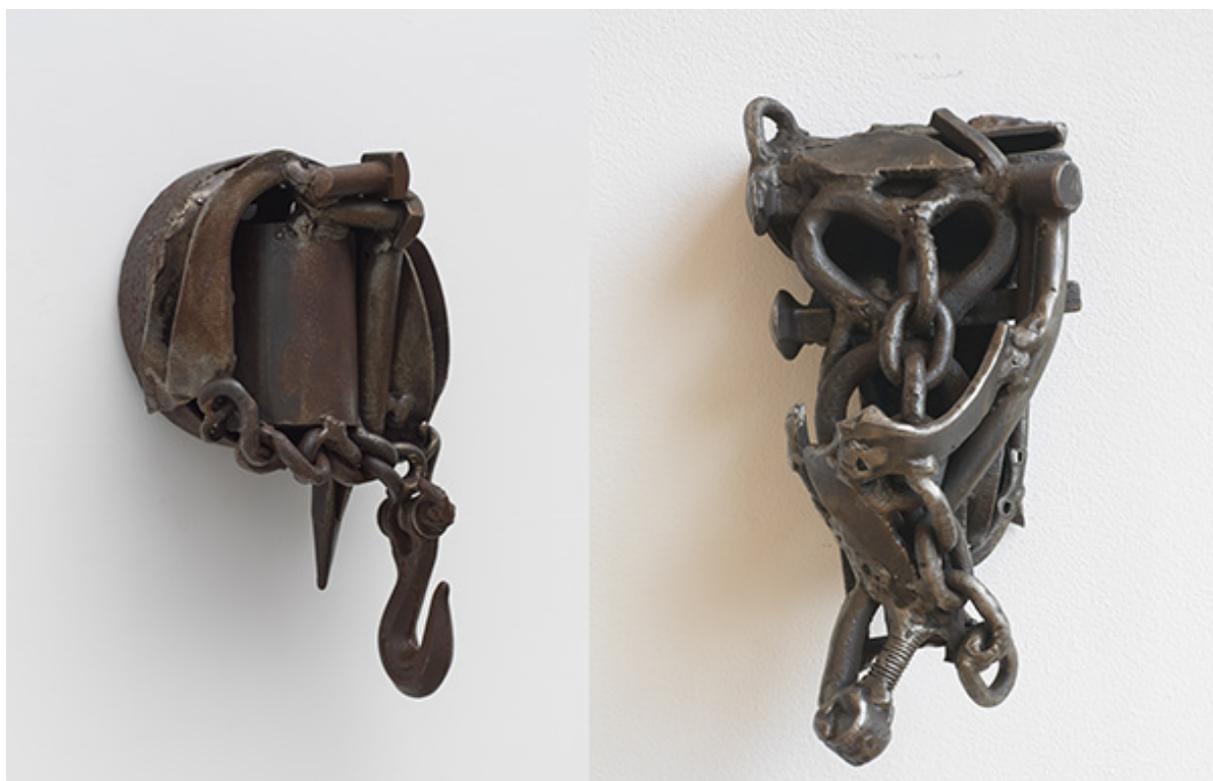
*Melvin Edwards "Five to the Bar," 1973. Welded steel and barbed wire. 14 x 20 1/2 x 20 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London © Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*

The Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas has announced that artist (and Houston native) Melvin Edwards has gifted the museum select sculptures and drawings. Edwards' 2015 Nasher retrospective, *Melvin Edwards: Five Decades*, was organized by the Nasher and Nasher Curator Catherine Craft, who worked with Edwards to select the group of newly donated works, which include four sculptures and two drawings. Edwards' gift honors his mother Thelma Felton Edwards, who died this year. Melvin Edwards lives and works in New York and New Jersey.

The works represent nearly three decades and encompass a variety of the artist's concerns, as well as his materials and themes. "This substantial gift from Melvin Edwards is a tremendous addition to the Nasher collection," says

Nasher Director Jeremy Strick. “These important works represent the full range of Edwards’s mastery as a sculptor, effortlessly uniting the material and conceptual in ways that resonate over time. This gift is especially meaningful to the Nasher, as it stands as a testament to the artist’s native ties to Texas, his friendship with the museum, and his spirit of generosity.”

Edwards states: “In honor of my parents, Melvin Edwards Sr. and Thelma Felton Edwards, and our family’s heritage and history in Texas, it’s meaningful to be able to commemorate their contributions to our better future.”



*Melvin Edwards, left: “Now We Know,” 1979. Welded steel. Right: “Iraq,” 2003. Welded steel. Both courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London © Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*

*Now We Know* (1979) and *Iraq* (2003) are two of four welded sculpture examples gifted from Edwards’ *Lynch Fragment* series. Some works from that series were part of Tate Modern’s *Soul of a Nation* major traveling group exhibition, which ended at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston last August.

The donation also includes a “rocker,” Edwards’ type of kinetic sculpture he created beginning in 1970. The work, *Five to the Bar* (1973) (pictured at top), includes barbed wire, a material Edwards used in installations from the late 1960s to early 1970s. Another sculpture, the grid *Beyond Cabo Verde* (2006), is a variation of the *Lynch Fragment* format, and is named after the Transatlantic route of the slave trade through the waters of the North Atlantic from the coast of West Africa.



Melvin Edwards *“Beyond Cabo Verde,”* 2006. Welded steel 19 5/8 x 19 5/8 x 6 5/8 in.  
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London ©  
Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

*Untitled* (c.1974) is a watercolor-and-ink work on paper that uses barbed wire and chain as templates for sprayed compositions. One such barbed-wire

work, *Curtains (for William and Peter)*, appeared in *Soul of a Nation*.



*Melvin Edwards, Untitled, c. 1974. Watercolor and ink on paper, 18 1/8 x 24 in. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London. © Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.*



*Melvin Edwards' "Curtains (for William and Peter) 1969-70."  
Barbed wire and chain Overall display dimensions variable Tate: Lent by Tate Americas Foundation  
2018.*