



THE ART NEWSPAPER

REVIEW THREE TO SEE

Three exhibitions to see in New York this weekend

From Nicola Vassell's inaugural show devoted to Ming Smith to Huma Bhaba at Salon 94

COLONY LITTLE, WALLACE LUDEL and GABRIELLA ANGELETI

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Melvin Edwards, Untitled (1993) (left)
and Ukpo. Edo (1993/1996) (right)

Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London © 2021 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Nicholas Knight. Courtesy of Public Art Fund, New York.

Melvin Edwards: Brighter Days

Until 28 November at City Hall Park, Manhattan

The Public Art Fund has organised a landmark survey devoted to the contemporary American sculptor Melvin Edwards, who combines abstract forms with symbols evoking themes around race, labour and the African diaspora. The show includes the newly commissioned sculpture *Song of the Broken Chains* (2020) and five seminal works made in the last five decades like *Ukpo. Edu* (1993/1996)—a steel sculpture referencing Igbo tradition and the insidious history of the transatlantic slave trade (the latter was last shown in the public sector of Art Basel in Miami Beach in 2015 by the artist's long-time dealer Alexander Gray Associates). Each sculpture features a raw or stylised chain, a recurring motif in the artist's work that represents oppression, unity and liberation; some are welded while others are broken. The show opened this month after a yearlong postponement due to the coronavirus pandemic. It has new resonance at the Financial District park, a centre of the Black Lives Matter demonstrations last summer.