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What to do in Oklahoma on Nov. 3, 2016: Take in music, dance and art at Oklahoma Contemporary's 'Freedom Visible'



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Melvin Edwards' 1990 welded steel sculpture "Law" is included in his exhibit "In Oklahoma" at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center. Photo provided

Today's featured event:

Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center and the Ralph Ellison Foundation will celebrate Melvin Edwards' "In Oklahoma" exhibition with "Freedom Visible: Voices and Music in Motion," an evening of dynamic performance led by spoken-word and dance artist Candace Liger and West African percussionist Aboubacar Camara.

The event begins at 5:30 p.m. today at Oklahoma Contemporary's State Fair Park location, 3000 General Pershing Blvd. Tickets are not required, and the event is free to the public.

Combining poetic and musical expression with bodies in motion, the ensemble will respond to Edwards' site-specific sculptures. Performers will animate a dialogue about memory and heritage, bondage and liberation, and history and freedom that viewers can see in Edwards' works.

"It's definitely exciting for us to put a performance together that engages Edwards' work in a visceral way," said John Selvidge, communications director of the Ralph Ellison Foundation, in a news release. "I'm eager to see how our ensemble responds to his sculpture by animating the exhibition space with their voices, their bodies, their music."

Internationally recognized sculptor Edwards is known for his creation of powerful abstract sculptures from common materials, including scrap metal and barbed wire. He created many of the "In Oklahoma" works onsite, in Oklahoma Contemporary's gallery or in a nearby studio, from materials he found in Oklahoma City scrapyards. A dozen new pieces are displayed together with a group of works that he produced over the past 30 years.

The exhibition also includes 16 works from Edwards' "Lynch Fragments" series, in which objects such as chains, tools and steel scraps are welded into compact, evocative forms. While the title reflects the series' birth in the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, these works are also inspired by place. The older works in "In Oklahoma" show his connection to Africa, where he has often traveled and worked; the newer were welded during his time here.

"A performance that ties together the diverse media of poetry, dance, vocal performance and live musicians can help put some flesh on the bone, so to speak, for people looking to understand a kind of sculpture that might seem deceptively simple," Selvidge said in the release.

Jeremiah Matthew Davis, Oklahoma Contemporary's artistic director, said the performance speaks not only to Edwards' exhibition, but Oklahoma Contemporary's long-term goals.

"This project represents the future we're building toward at Oklahoma Contemporary: placing music, movement, spoken word and sculpture in conversation in the same space, bringing people together to share an experience and collaborating with local artists and organizations to present unique opportunities for creative exploration and the sharing of ideas," he said in the release.

For more information, go to oklahomacontemporary.org.

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Brandy McDonnell



Brandy McDonnell, also known by her initials BAM, writes stories and reviews on movies, music, the arts and other aspects of entertainment. She... [read more >](#)

