

Art

Your Concise New York Art Guide for May 2021

Your list of must-see, fun, insightful, and very New York art events this month.



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1 hour ago



Melvin Edwards, "Song of the Broken Chains" (2020), presented by Public Art Fund at City Hall Park, New York, 2021 (photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY; artwork courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; © 2021 Melvin Edwards/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

Spring — and all of its pollen — is in the air. (Aren't you glad to be able to hide your runny nose behind a mask?)

Congestion aside though, there's plenty to **get excited about** in New York this month, from the return of the annual spring ritual of Frieze (here we go), to a glorious array of Melvin Edwards's sculptures in the Financial District, to the "feminist futures" charted at the Bronx Museum. Don't forget your mask!

Frieze New York



The Shed, New York (image courtesy Frieze; photo by Brett Beyer)

When: May 5–9

Where: online & The Shed (545 West 30th Street, Hudson Yards, Manhattan)

Held at the Shed for the first time this year, Frieze New York will be smaller than past editions at Randall’s Island, with a focus on local and US-based exhibitors (due to the pandemic, many international galleries canceled their participation).

“Frame,” a dedicated section for younger galleries among the sixty exhibitors, will feature solo presentations of work by artists including Ina Archer, Dana Lok, and Otis Houston Jr. A performance-activated artwork by Precious Okoyomon, winner of the 2021 Frieze Artist Award, will also be on view.

Miatta Kawinzi: Soft is Strong



Installation view of Miatta Kawinzi_ *Soft is Strong* at Cue Art Foundation (image courtesy the artist and Cue Art Foundation, photo by Adam Reich)

When: through May 12

Where: CUE Art Foundation (137 W 25th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan)

A warm, patient embrace of an exhibition, Miatta Kawinzi's *Soft is Strong* offers a balm for the frazzle and fragmentation of the present. Fittingly titled, the exhibition mulls ideas of belonging, hybridity, and regeneration across media, its references rooted in the literary traditions of Black feminism. *SHE GATHER ME* (2021), Kawinzi's video installation titled after a line from Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, is a particular highlight. Catch it before it's gone.

Maren Hassinger: We Are All Vessels



Installation view of *Maren Hassinger, We Are All Vessels*, 2021, Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC (image courtesy Susan Inglett Gallery, NYC)

When: through June 12

Where: Susan Inglett Gallery (522 West 24th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan)

Oversized vessels made from wire rope — **Maren Hassinger**'s signature material — covered with sheer fabric hang from the ceiling in *We Are All Vessels*, the artist's second solo show at Susan Inglett Gallery. Paired with wire structures on the floor, the suspended containers evoke expansive resonances with the human body, a theme that the Los Angeles-born artist has explored for over four decades of art-making, across sculpture, video, and performance.

Frank Bowling – London / New York



Frank Bowling, "Enter the Dragon" (1984), acrylic, acrylic gel and polyurethane foam on canvas with marouflage, 90 3/4 x 109 3/8 x 3 7/8 inches (© Frank Bowling; image courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth; photo by Thomas Barratt)

When: May 5–July 30

Where: Hauser & Wirth (542 West 22nd Street, Chelsea, Manhattan)

Frank Bowling is celebrated for his large, colorful abstract paintings, which are suffused with autobiographical and post-colonial references. Work from across six decades of the Guyana-born artist's career will be presented in concurrent exhibitions at Hauser & Wirth's New York and London spaces. Both cities are central to the biography of the 87-year-old painter, who joined the gallery just last year; Bowling attended art school in London before moving to New York in 1966, where as an artist and writer he played an important role in shaping the dialogue around the possibilities of Black abstraction.

Rowan Renee: That Day, We Looked Happy



Rowan Renee, Installation view of *That Day, We Looked Happy*, Five Myles, 2021; family photographs on kiln-fused glass, hand-woven linen and wool enclosure with screenprinted family and prison documents, American flag dyed black and re-woven with inlay (image courtesy the artist)

When: through May 30

Where: FiveMyles (558 St. Johns Place, Crown Heights, Brooklyn)

Meticulously crafted and intensely personal, Rowan Renee's latest exhibition plumbs the artist's family archives. Building upon the poignant body of work they presented in MoMA PS1's landmark exhibition *Marking Time*, Renee again employs delicately hand-woven forms, as well as fused glass, to work through familial trauma and grief. Needless to say, the results are deeply moving.

1:54 New York



Henry Mzili Mujunga, "Training day" (2020), oil on canvas (image courtesy of Afriart Gallery and 1-54)

When: May 17–23

Where: online

26 international galleries, including Fridman Gallery, Jack Bell Gallery, and Retro Africa, will exhibit work in the seventh New York edition of 1-54, an art fair that was founded in London in 2013 with an exclusive focus on contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora. This year's online edition will be accompanied by a program of virtual talks, screenings, and performances, as well as a curated presentation of textile work by female artists, *Knotted Ties*, on view at Christie's at Rockefeller Plaza from May 15 to 26.

Melvin Edwards: Brighter Days



Melvin Edwards, "Homage to Coco" (1970) presented by Public Art Fund at City Hall Park, New York, 2021 (photo by Nicholas Knight, courtesy Public Art Fund, NY; artwork courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; © 2021 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York)

When: through November 8

Where: City Hall Park (Broadway & Chambers Street, Lower Manhattan)

Public Art Fund, which first commissioned a public artwork from Melvin Edwards three decades ago, is holding the first thematic survey of the 83-year-old Houston-born artist's public sculpture. Edwards, who is renowned for welded abstractions that engage with themes of racial injustice and the African diaspora, will present five sculptures made between 1970 and 1996 and a new commissioned sculpture from 2020, all employing a chain motif. City Hall Park, where the exhibition will be held, was an African burial ground in the 18th century and has served as the site of numerous Black Lives Matter protests in the 21st.

Born in Flames: Feminist Futures



Chitra Ganesh, "Combing Hair on Balcony" (2021) (image courtesy the artist)

When: through September 12

Where: the Bronx Museum of the Arts (1040 Grand Concourse, The Bronx)

Taking its title from Lizzie Borden's 1983 intersectional feminist cult classic film *Born in Flames*, this group exhibition presents work by fourteen femme-identified and non-binary artists whose creations envision, or make space for, a more socially just future. The speculative fictions on view, many of which approach futurism through non-Western or anti-capitalist lenses, range from an experimental short film by Tourmaline to a twenty-foot-tall weaving by Clarissa Tossin to a shrine by Wangechi Mutu. The highly anticipated show is curated by Jasmine Wahi, the museum's Social Justice curator.

Deana Lawson, Centropy



Deana Lawson, "Axis" (2018), pigment print (© Deana Lawson, courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles)

When: May 7–October 11

Where: Guggenheim Museum (1071 Fifth Avenue, Upper East Side, Manhattan)

Deana Lawson, who has spent two decades taking potent photographs that explore Black collective memory and diasporic identity across the globe, became the first photographer to win the biennial Hugo Boss Prize in 2020, securing a Guggenheim Museum solo show. The carefully constructed, new and recent works on view draw on art historical and photographic conventions including the vernacular snapshot or family album, the staged studio portrait, and social documentary traditions.

Hearts and Minds



Installation view of Hearts and Minds, 2021, Carriage Trade (image courtesy Carriage Trade; photo by Nicholas Knight)

When: through June 13

Where: Carriage Trade (277 Grand Street, 2nd Floor, Lower East Side, Manhattan)

Co-presented by Carriage Trade and Brussels-based gallery Rectangle, this group show draws its title from Lyndon B. Johnson’s assertion that victory in the Vietnam War was dependent on winning over the “hearts and minds” of those who lived there (this public opinion campaign, which was directed at rural villagers, would of course fail). Works across media by 13 artists including Bodys Isek Kingelez, Chantal Akerman, and An-My Lê explore the relationship between consumerism, propaganda, and empire-building.

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