

# Critic's Guide: New York

The best shows to see across town during Frieze Week New York

BY EVAN MOFFITT



Melvin Edwards, *Agricole* (detail), 2016, welded steel and chains, dimensions variable. Courtesy: Alexander Gray Associates, New York © 2017 Melvin Edwards/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## Melvin Edwards

Alexander Gray

13 April – 20 May

There's an undeniable power to Melvin Edwards's welded steel assemblages. The artist has been producing them for half a century, at roughly the same size: compact boli of melted metal, scavenged from scrapyards near his studio. Hung at the level of the artist's own eye, some resemble African masks; scissor blades, car parts and mangled chains resolve themselves into sharp noses, eyes and fangs. 'In Oklahoma', the artist's fifth solo at Alexander Gray, features new work Edwards made during a residency in the Sooner State, and includes the monumental *Agricole* (2016), a hulking plough head suspended from weighty chains. A number of gallery corners have been cordoned off by lengths of barbed wire (think Fred Sandback for a prison yard). If such materials seem to refer to the conditions of bondage – from slavery to the prison-industrial complex – Edwards brushes off political associations: he is, above all, a master of abstraction.