

# Andrew Edlin GALLERY

## Melvin Way

Born 1954, South Carolina; died 2024, South Carolina.

Melvin “Milky” Way was an Outsider Artist whose work occupies the uncharted border between art and science. Born in South Carolina in 1954, Way came to New York City in the 1970s to attend a technical school, earning a certificate to operate a power press. He played bass in local bands, and recorded a solo album with Encounter Records, which folded before the album could be released. Soon after, Way was diagnosed with schizophrenia, and following a string of unsuccessful relationships, became homeless.

By 1989 Way was residing in the shelter run by Hospital Audiences International, a nonprofit organization offering art workshops to people with disabilities. Lower East Side artist Andrew Castrucci, a volunteer workshop leader at the time, encouraged Way to make art, and acted as his advocate during subsequent years. Way soon began to produce small, exquisite ballpoint-pen and ink drawings on found paper. Despite the very straightforward of his chosen genre, Way’s drawings are strikingly complex. Rich hybrids of scrawled text, mathematical equations, astronomical shorthand, chemical formulae, and alchemical punning, each work is marked by the artist’s signature, thrillingly dense sensibility. Way engages both the eye and the mind, drawing viewers into exquisite mysteries that may never be solved.

- Jenifer P. Borum

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2024

*CO<sub>2</sub> Blues: The Art of Melvin Way (1989-2024)*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2023

*Melvin Way*, Salon du Dessin, Paris

2022

*Melvin Way*, Outsider Art Fair, New York, NY

2020

*Melvin Way: Recent Work and Drawings from H.A.I.*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

*Xerography*, Institute 193, Lexington, KY

2018

*The Cocaine Files Dossier (1989-2017)*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2016

*A Vortex Symphony*, Galerie Christian Berst, Paris, France

2015

*Gaga City*, Christian Berst Gallery, New York, NY

2012

HAI, New York, NY

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

2025

*Looking Back: 15<sup>th</sup> White Columns Annual*, curated by Elisabeth Kley, White Columns, NY

2024

*The Apex Is Nothing*, curated by John O'Connor and Ken Weathersby, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, New York, NY

*The Dictionary of Accepted Ideas*, CLEARING Gallery, New York, NY

2023

*Schema: World as Diagram*, Marlborough Contemporary, New York, NY

2021

*In Search of the Miraculous*, The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY

*Figure Out: Abstraction in Self-Taught Art*, Outsider Art Fair New York, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

*Small World*, Outsider Art Fair New York, Shin Gallery, New York, NY

2020

*Six Decades Collecting Self-Taught Art: Revealing a Diverse and Rich Artistic Narrative*, curated by Emelie Gevalt and Valérie Rousseau, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

*An Alternative Canon: Art Dealers Collecting Outsider Art*, curated by Paul Laster, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

*In Sickness and In Health (Online)*, Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY

2019

*HEALING ARTS! - work from the archives of Healing Arts Initiative / H.A.I.*, White Columns, New York, NY

*Summer Exhibition: Recent Works*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

*Atlanta Biennial: 'A Thousand Tomorrows'*, Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA

*Doors of Perception*, curated by Javier Téllez in collaboration with the Outsider Art Fair, Frieze New York, New York, NY

*Drawn Together Again*, The Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY

2018

*False Flag*, Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT

*The Museum of Everything*, Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

2017

*Outsider Art-Art Brut*, Art Absolument, Paris, France

2016

*World Made By Hand*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

*Once Something Has Lived It Can Never Really Die*, American Folk Art Museum, New York

2015

*Art Brut: A History of Individual Mythologies*, Oliva Creative Factory, Sao Joao da Madeira, Portugal

*Art Brut live*, DOX Center for Contemporary Art, Prague, Czech Republic

2014

*Self-Taught Genius*, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

*Le Mur*, Oeuvres de la Collection Antoine de Galbert, La maison rouge, Paris, France

2013

*The Alternative Guide to the Universe*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK

*Farfetched: Mad Science, Fringe Architecture and Visionary Engineering*, Gregg Museum of Art and Design, Raleigh, NC

2012

*Towards a Warm Math*, curated by Chris Wiley, On Stellar Rays, New York, NY

2009

*Approaching Abstraction*, American Folk Art Museum, New York

2008

*Communication Breakdown*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York and Galerie Impaire, Paris, France

*To Infinity and Beyond: Mathematics in Contemporary Art*, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY

2005

*Visual Glossolalia*, Luise Ross Gallery, New York, NY

2004

*Cryptic Communications*, Transformer, Washington, D.C.

1997

*a continuation of something else*, Bullet Space, New York, NY

1996

*Resistance of Memory*, Bullet Space, New York, NY

1991

*Art's Mouth*, curated by Connie Butler, Artists Space, New York

## **COLLECTIONS**

American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore Antoine de Galbert Collection, Paris

Collection abcd, Montreuil, France

Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne, Switzerland

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Transformer, Washington, D.C., WA

Treger Saint Silvestre, Porto, Portugal

Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., WA

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Edward M. Gómez, "Melvin Way Holds the Keys to the Universe," *Hyperallergic*, 2018.

Jerry Saltz, "Studying the Masterpieces of Visionary Melvin Way," *Vulture*. Alanna

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Maurizio Cattelan, et al (ed.), *Charley*, 2005.

Ken Johnson, "Of Signs and Wonders, Visionaries and Loners," *The New York Times*, January, 2004.

Weiss, Allan S., "Algebra is Drunkenness," *Cabinet Magazine*, New York, Fall, 2002.

Munro, Eleanor, "Where Postmodern Art and Schizophrenia Intersect," *The New York Times*, March, 2002.

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