

FORT GANSEVOORT



Willie Birch: Chronicling Our Lives. 1987-2021

Until May 21

Fort Gansevoort / New York / Art

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Willie Birch, "Terror at the Towers," 1993–94 © Willie Birch.
Courtesy of the artist and Fort Gansevoort, New York.

The artist Willie Birch, born in Louisiana in 1942, makes colorful papier-mâché sculptures and paintings of great power. Birch grew up in New Orleans, but between 1978 and 1994 the artist lived in Brooklyn, New York, where he depicted city life in crisp forms and brash colors, using a folk art vernacular to tell stories about Black communities and cultural resilience. "Form and content are equally important for me," Birch told Artforum in 2021. "One is the story you're seeing, and the other is the narrative of the process, which is a reflection of my life. My current exhibitions are loaded with social questions: Who lives in my neighborhood? Why are they here? How are our surroundings changing? What does this mean in terms of lifestyle?" This exhibition presents paintings and sculptures from Birch's New York period, plus a new mural in black and white. —E.C