

Thornton Dial

b. 1928 in Emelle, AL, d. 2016 in McCalla, AL



Thornton Dial in his studio, Bessemer, Alabama, 2006.

Selected solo exhibitions:

- 2026 Edel Assanti, London, UK (forthcoming)
- 2025 *Thornton Dial: A Gift*, Ricco Maresca, New York, NY
A Man Looking for Something, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL
- 2024 *Thornton Dial: The Visible and the Invisible*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, NY
- 2023 *Handwriting on the Wall*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, CA
- 2022 *I, Too, Am Alabama*, curated by Paul Barrett, Abrams-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts, University of Alabama, Birmingham, AL; traveling to LSU Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA, Samford University Art Gallery, Birmingham, AL and Wiregrass Museum of Art, Dothan, AL
Year of the Tiger, David Lewis Gallery, East Hampton, NY
- 2021 *Allegory and History*, David Lewis Gallery, New York, NY and Société, Berlin, DE
The Earliest Years, 1987-1989, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2020 *Dial World Part I: The Tiger That Flew Over New York City*, David Lewis Gallery, New York, NY
Trip to the Mountaintop, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH
- 2018 *Mr. Dial's America*, David Lewis Gallery, New York
- 2016 *Green Pastures: In Memory of Thornton Dial, Sr.*, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
We All Live Under the Same Old Flag, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY
- 2015 *Thornton Dial: Works on Paper*, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014 *Thornton Dial*, Independent Projects, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
- 2013 *Daybreak*, Bill Lowe Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2012 *Thornton Dial: Viewpoint of the Foundry Man*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
Thornton Dial, Virginia Union University and Art Gallery, Richmond, VA
Thoughts on Paper, Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC; Fleming Museum of Art at the University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
- 2011 *Thornton Dial*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA

- Disaster Areas*, Bill Lower Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 2005 *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
- 2000 *Drawings*, Ricco/Maresca Gallery, New York, NY
- 1999 *Thornton Dial: His Spoken Dreams*, Ricco Maresca Gallery, New York, NY
- 1995 *Abstraction in the Art of Thornton Dial*, Kennesaw State University, Marietta, GA
- 1993 *Thornton Dial: Image of the Tiger*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY;
American Folk Art Museum, NY; American Center, Paris, FR
- 1992 *Thornton Dial: Works on Paper*, Luise Ross Gallery, New York, NY
- 1991 *Thornton Dial, Sr.: Works on Paper*, Ricco Maresca Gallery, New York, NY
- 1990 *Thornton Dial: Strategy of the World*, Southern Queens Park Association/African-American Hall of Fame, Jamaica, NY
- Thornton Dial*, Fay Gold Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- Thornton Dial: Ladies of the United States*, Library Art Gallery, Kennesaw State College, Marietta, GA

Selected group exhibitions:

- 2024 *Edges of Ailey*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
- 2023 *Called to Create: Black Artists of the American South*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- Souls Grown Deep like the Rivers: Black Artists from the American South*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK
- 2022 *"I made this...": The Work of Black American Artists and Artisans*, Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA
- Anyone Can Move a Mountain*, Maus Contemporary, Birmingham, AL
- Recent Acquisitions: Additions to the Paul R. Jones Collection of American Art at The University of Alabama 2015 – 2022, Paul R. Jones Museum, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL
- Black Abstractionists: From Then 'til Now*, curated by Dexter Wimberly, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, TX
- Summer At Its Best*, Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, New York, NY

- The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse*, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, VA
- Circa 1989*, MARCH, New York, NY
- We Are Made of Stories: Self-Taught Artists in the Robson Family Collection*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.
- Old and New Dreams: Recent Acquisitions in a Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
- Called to Create: Black Artists of the American South*, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
- Drawers: Provocative Drawings*, curated by Laura Hutson Hunter, OZ Arts, Nashville, TN
- Us Them We: Race, Ethnicity, Identity*, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA
- Elegy: Lament in the 20th Century*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
- Living Legacies: Art of the African American South*, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH
- 2021 *Now Is The Time: Recent Acquisitions to the Contemporary Collection*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
- Another Tradition: Drawings by Black Artists from the American South*, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY
- 2020 *An Alternative Canon: Art Dealers Collecting Outsider Art*, curated by Paul Laster, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
- Pre-Renovation Potluck*, MARCH, New York, NY
- We Will Walk – Art and Resistance in the American South*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK
- Folk and Self-Taught Art*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C.
- Epic Abstraction: Pollock to Herrera*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- African American Art in the 20th Century*, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. and Dubuque Museum of Art, Dubuque, IA; traveled to Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL; Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA
- Vernacular Woman*, Ricco/Maresca, New York, NY

2019 *Cosmologies from the Tree of Life: Art from the African American South*, Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond, VA
Souls Grown Deep: Artists of the African American South, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
Home Is a Foreign Place, Met Breuer, New York, NY
Artists I Steal From, curated by Alvaro Barrington and Julia Peyton-Jones, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London, UK
Memory Palaces: Inside the Collection of Audrey B. Heckler, American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

2018 *Beverly Buchanan, Thornton Dial and the Gee's Bend Quiltmakers*, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
History Refused to Die: Highlights from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation Gift, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

2017 *Revelations: Art from the African-American South*, De Young Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA
Known/Unknown: Private Obsession and Hidden Desire in Outsider Art, Museum of Sex, New York, NY

2016 *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art*, Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, NC, Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, KY
Post Black Folk Art in America 1930–1980–2016, Intuit Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL

2015 *I See Myself in You: Selections from the Collection*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY
History Refused to Die, Alabama Contemporary Art Center, Mobile, AL

2014 *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination and the American South*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Social Geographies: Interpreting Space and Place, curated by Leisa Rundquist, Asheville Museum of Art, Asheville, NC
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2013 *Seismic Shifts: Ten Visionaries in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, National

Academy Museum & School, New York, NY

2012 *Thornton Dial and Lizzi Bougatsos*, James Fuentes, New York, NY
The Soul of a City: Memphis Collects African American Art, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN
Creation Story: Gee's Bend Quilts and the Art of Thornton Dial, The Frist Center for Visual Arts, Nashville, TN
The Soul of a City: Memphis Collects African American Art, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN

2004 *Testimony: Vernacular Art of the African-American South*, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library and Exhibitions International, New York, NY; traveled to Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI; Columbia Museum and Gibbes Planetarium, Columbia, SC; AXA Gallery, New York, NY; Tubman African-American Museum, Macon, GA; Terrace Gallery, Orlando, FL

2003 *In the Spirit of Martin*, Smithsonian Institution, traveling exhibition

2000 *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

1999 *African American Art: A Decade of Collecting*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

1998 *Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century: An American Anthology*, Philadelphia Museum, Philadelphia, PA

1997 *The Hirshhorn Collects: Recent Acquisitions 1992 - 1996*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
Since Hall: New Acquisitions of Folk and Self-Taught Art, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI
Bearing Witness: African-American Vernacular Art of the South, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
Human/Nature: Art and Landscape in Charleston and the Low Country, Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston, SC

1995 *Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; traveled to University Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, University of California, Berkeley, CA; San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; North

Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC

1991 The Dial Family, Ricco/Maresca, New York, NY

1989 *Black Art, Ancestral Legacy: The African Impulse in African American Art*, Dallas
Museum of Art, Dallas, TX

Selected public collections:

Ackland Art Museum, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

Aidekman Arts Center, Tufts University, Medford, MA

American Folk Art Museum, New York, NY

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD

Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX

de Young Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA

Flint Institute of Arts, Flint, MI

Georgia Museum of Art, Athens, GA

Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, MA

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.

Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, NH

Hunter Museum of American Art, Chattanooga, TN

Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, IN

Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago, IL

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Newark Museum, Newark, NJ

New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA

Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA

Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, FL

Pérez Art Museum Miami, Miami, FL

Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA

Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ

Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, IL

Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington D.C.

Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY

The United Nations, New York, NY

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA

Virginia Union University, Richmond, VA

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Selected publications:

2023 Anderson, Maxwell L. *Souls Grown Deep like the Rivers: Black Artists from the American South*. Texts by Paul Goodwin and Raina Lampkins-Fielder. London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2023.

2021 Jones, Phillip March, ed. *Thornton Dial: The Earliest Years, 1987–1989*. Los Angeles, CA: Parker Gallery, 2021.

2019 *Among Others, Blackness at MoMA*. ed. English, Darby, and Barat, Charlotte. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2019.

2018 Finley, Cheryl, Randall R. Griffey, Amelia Peck, and Darryl Pinckney. *My Soul Has Grown Deep: Black Art from the American South*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2018.

2017 Burgard, Timothy Angin. *Revelations: Art from the African American South*. San Francisco: de Young Museum; Munich: Prestel, 2017.

Life Go On: The Art of Thornton Dial. Richmond, VA: Virginia Union University, 2017.

- Moten, Fred. *Black and Blur*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.
- 2012 *Thornton Dial: Viewpoint of the Foundry Man*, catalogue, Andrew Edlin Gallery.
- Scala, Mark, ed. *Creation Story: Gee's Bend Quilts and the Art of Thornton Dial*, Nashville: Frist Center for the Visual Arts and Vanderbilt University Press, Print.
- 2011 *Thornton Dial: Thoughts on Paper*, edited by Bernard L. Herman, Chapel Hill: Ackland Art Museum and University of North Carolina Press, Print.
- Cubbs, Joanne and Eugene Metalf. *Hard Truths: The Art of Thornton Dial*, Prestel, Print.
- 2009 *Outsider Art Sourcebook*, Raw Vision, Print.
- 2007 Crown, Carol, and Charles Russell. *Sacred and Profane: Voice and Vision in Southern Self-Taught Art*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.
- 2006 Arnett, Paul, Joanne Cubbs, and Eugene W. Metcalf, *Thornton Dial in the 21st Century*, Tinwood Books, Print, 1 January.
- 2004 Fine, Gary Alan. *Everyday Genius: Self-taught Art and the Culture of Authenticity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 2002 Giovanni, Nikki, Gary Miles Chassman, and Walter Leonard. *In the Spirit of Martin: The Living Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2002.
- 2001 Anderson, Brooke Davis and Stacy C. Hollander. *American Anthem: Masterworks from the American Folk Art Museum*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- Conwill, Kinshasha and Arthur C. Danto. *Testimony: Vernacular Art of the African-American South: The Ronald and June Shelp Collection*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
- Russell, Charles, ed. *Self-Taught Art: The Culture and Aesthetics of American Vernacular Art*, Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- 2000 Arnett, William and Paul Arnett. *Souls Grown Deep, Vols 1 and 2*, Arnett et al, 2000 & 2001.
- 1997 Beardsley, John. *Art and Landscape in Charleston and the Low Country*. Charleston: Spoleto Festival.
- 1995 Griffin, Roberta T. *Abstraction in the Art of Thornton Dial*. Marietta, GA: Kennesaw State College.
- 1994 Hall, Michael D. and Eugene W. Metcalf Jr. *The Artist Outsider: Creativity and the Boundaries of Culture*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.
- 1993 *Passionate Visions of the American South: Self Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*, New Orleans Museum of Art, Print.
- American Self-Taught*, Maresca & Ricco, Print.
- Thornton Dial: Image of the Tiger*, Baraka & McEvilly, Print.
- 20th Century American Folk, Self-Taught, and Outsider Art*, Neal-Schuman Publishers, Print.
- 1990 *Museum of Folk Art Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century American Folk Art and Artists*, Abbeville Press, Print.



Thornton Dial, c. 1988, Bessemer, Alabama. Photo: Jonathan Williams, Jonathan Williams Collection at Yale University Library.

MARCH

PARKER GALLERY