



McArthur Binion, *DNA Study: XIII*, Oil paint stick, laser print collage, graphite on panel, 2014, 84" x 84".

## McArthur Binion

Until he came to install for the Biennale, the 70-year-old Binion had never set foot in Venice. "I told friends that I wouldn't go unless my work was in this show," he said, smiling, on opening day. The Chicago-based artist's work has received belated recognition in the U.S. over the past several years. But a room devoted to Binion's paintings in the Biennale's central pavilion marks his first major international outing.

It's hung with canvases from Binion's DNA Series (2013–ongoing). From afar, they look like pure abstractions. But the closer you get, the content embedded behind painted striations pushes through. Binion primed these canvases by first applying papers that contain intimate autobiographical information. In one, bits of his birth certificate can be glimpsed through black grids. In another, images of his childhood Mississippi home emerge from a patchwork of sepia squares. As elements of Binion's personal history reveal themselves, his painted marks look more like the quilts and jazz scores that surrounded him during his youth than pure geometric abstraction.