

**Betye Saar: Call and Response**

February 11 and 18, 2020

4–5 pm

**Registration**

Smidt Welcome Plaza

**Sign-In**

LAUSD Salary Point Credit and PD Hours | Smidt Welcome Plaza

5–5:50 pm

**Lecture***Betye Saar: Call and Response* | jill moniz | BCAM, Level 1

6–6:50 pm

**Art Workshops**

- Symbolic Assemblages | Grades K–12 | Katy Unger | BCAM, Level 1
- Colorful Tree Spirals | Grades K–8 | Sofia Mas | Smidt Welcome Plaza

**Discussion-based Workshops**

- Unpacking Stereotypes | Grades K–12 | Katie Lipsitt | Resnick Pavilion
- (2/11) Exploring Race and Gender through Art | Grades K–12 | Liz Kleinrock | Resnick Pavilion
- (2/18) What is Racism? | Grades 6–12 | Kabir Singh | Resnick Pavilion

7–7:25 pm

**Reception**

Dinner | Smidt Welcome Plaza

7:30–8:20 pm **Art Workshops**

- Symbolic Assemblages | Grades K–12 | Katy Unger | BCAM, Level 1
- Colorful Tree Spirals | Grades K–8 | Sofia Mas | Smidt Welcome Plaza

**Discussion-based Workshops**

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8:20–8:30 pm **Sign-Out**

LAUSD Salary Point Credit | Smidt Welcome Plaza

## Teaching Artists & Scholars

### **jill moniz**

jill moniz's interests focus on building understanding, creativity and inclusivity through the arts. She worked in community engagement at Museum of Latin American Art before becoming head curator at the California African American Museum in 2006. moniz with Dr. Carlos Silveira founded Transformative Arts, a nonprofit with a mission to build citizenship and place through the arts. She served as curator to Dr. Leon O Banks, a founding trustee of MOCA before returning in 2013 to large-scale exhibitions in museums and galleries around the world. In 2016, she co-founded Quotidian, a curatorial investigative space supporting local artists and building visual literacy. Dr. moniz serves as an independent curator and an advisor on community engagement and programming to museums and galleries, and sits on advisory boards throughout California. Before moving to California, moniz conceptualized a contemporary art museum for the Efroymsen Foundation and taught social theory and discursive practice at the college level. She holds a doctorate in cultural anthropology from Indiana University and lives in Los Angeles.

### **Liz Kleinrock**

#### *Educator*

Liz Kleinrock is an anti-bias and anti-racist educator of both children and adults, and creates curricular content for K-12 students around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, specializing in designing engaging and accessible units of study for all ages of learners. She began her career in education as an AmeriCorps volunteer teacher in Oakland, California in 2009, and has since served as both a classroom educator and diversity coordinator in Los Angeles, California. Liz also works with schools and districts throughout the United States to develop workshops and trainings for adults that support culturally responsive practices that fit the needs of specific communities. In 2018, Liz received the Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching, and her lessons on teaching consent and personal boundaries to students have gained international media attention. Liz has written articles for numerous publications on destigmatizing privilege, trauma informed teaching, and cultivating relationships with students and families. Most recently, Liz is proud to share her 2019 TED Talk, "How to teach kids to talk about taboo topics" on building foundations of equity with young learners, and is working on her first book with Heinemann Publishing.

### **Katie Lipsitt**

#### *Teaching Artist*

Katie Lipsitt is a collage artist, illustrator and teaching artist at the LACMA On-Site program, where she introduces elementary and middle school students to

objects from the collection. She also oversees two constructivist-based middle school art programs at Environmental Charter, Inglewood, and Gardena. She earned her BA in Art History from Barnard College, Columbia University.

### **Sofia Mas**

#### *Teaching Artist*

Sofia Mas is a Los Angeles native and currently teaching full time as a visual arts teacher within LAUSD. As a toddler, she began studying art by defacing her parents' art book collection with crayons. She has spent the last 15 years working with various museums and galleries that include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Vincent Price Art Museum, Southern Exposure, de Young Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Today she uses her experiences to create installations, paintings, photographs, drawings and printmaking to tell stories of culture, feminism and gender-roles and social issues. Sofia teaches art as a tool for self-discovery, visual literacy, and building teaching 21st century skills.

### **Kabir Singh**

#### *Educator*

Kabir Singh (he/him) is an educator and writer based in Los Angeles. He has been teaching in art museums since 2008 and is dedicated to working towards greater equity in education and the arts. Kabir is a VTS Trainer for the organization Visual Thinking Strategies, where he leads professional development for educators nationwide in a constructivist pedagogy that teaches thinking through conversations about visual art. He also regularly teaches in the galleries of the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, California and supports teacher professional development at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles. Kabir serves as the National Art Education Association (NAEA) Museum Education Division Pacific Regional Representative and is the Editor-in-Chief of Viewfinder, the division's online journal that examines the intersection of museum education and social justice. Kabir holds an EdM in Arts in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a BA in Art History from Columbia University.

**Katy Unger**

*Teaching Artist*

Katy Unger received her BFA from the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, OR and experiments with processes in painting, mixed-media, and video art. Her work investigates themes of impermanence, altered states, and perception of place. In 2014 and 2015 she attended environmental-based art programs at Allenheads Contemporary Arts in Northumberland, England and the Nes Artist Residency in Skagaströnd, Iceland where she focused on elemental impacts of ice, fog, wind, and snow. Since 2015, she has been working as an arts and museum educator for institutions and organizations throughout Los Angeles which include the Hammer Museum, Eagle Rock Center for the Arts, Youth Moving On, and LACMA.

**Currently on View**

*Betye Saar: Call and Response*  
Resnick Pavilion

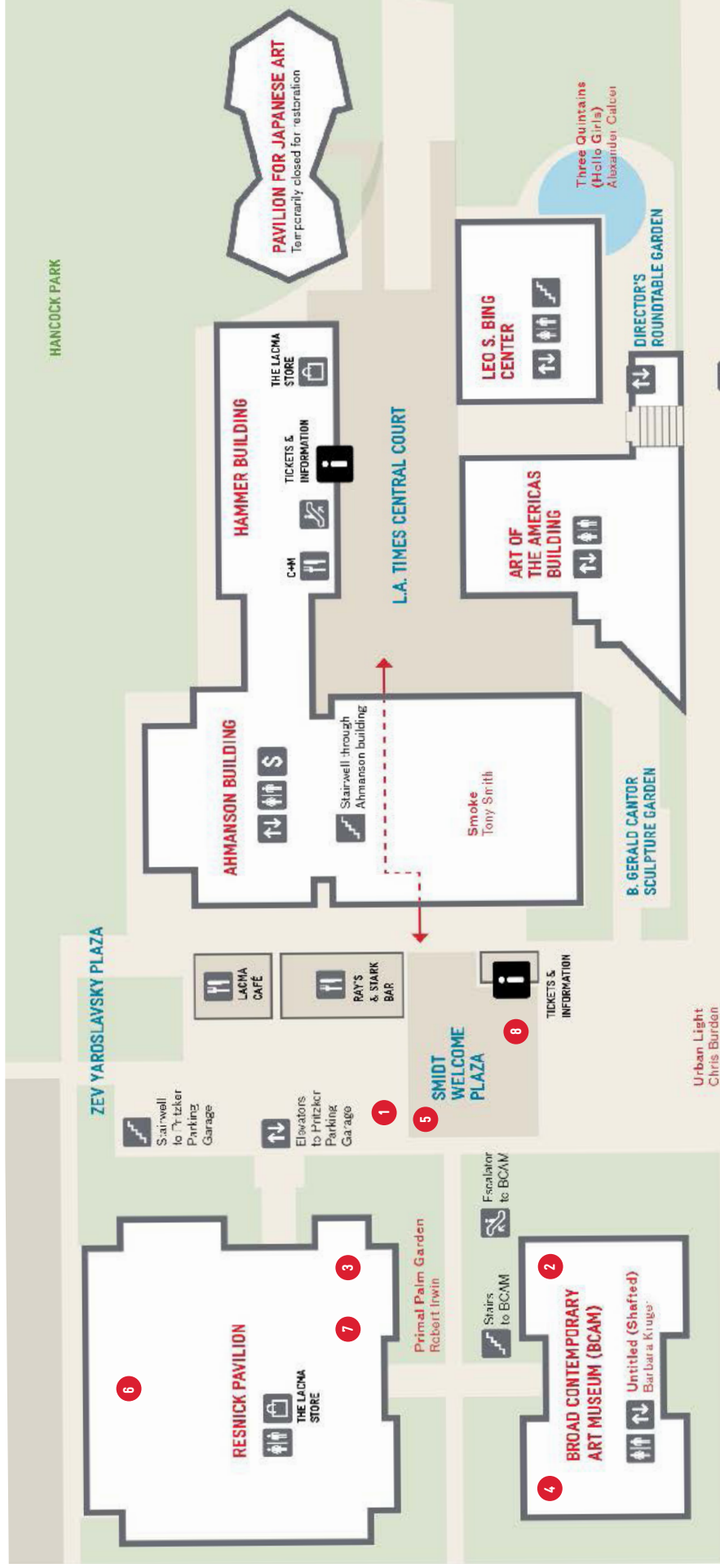
*Do Ho Suh: 348 West 22nd Street*  
Resnick Pavilion

*Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific*  
Resnick Pavilion

*Where the Truth Lies: The Art of Qiu Ying*  
Resnick Pavilion

*Julie Mehretu*  
BCAM, Level 1 and 3

# EVENINGS FOR EDUCATORS



- 1 Registration
- 2 Lecture
- 3 Exhibition—Betye Saar: *Call and Response*
- 4 Art Workshop: Symbolic Assemblages
- 5 Art Workshop: Colorful Tree Spirals
- 6 Art Workshop: Unpacking Stereotypes
- 7 Art Workshop: (2/11) Exploring Race and Gender through Art, (2/18) What is Racism?
- 8 Reception

## Betye Saar: Call and Response

“My work becomes an explorer,  
A tracer of forgotten tribes,  
A seeker of sanctified visions.  
These works are what I leave behind.”  
—Betye Saar<sup>1</sup>

“It is my goal as an artist to create works that expose  
injustice and reveal beauty.”  
—Betye Saar<sup>2</sup>

*Betye Saar: Call and Response* (Sep 22, 2019–Apr 5, 2020) spans California artist Betye Saar’s career, with work from her early years to the present. The exhibition also includes small travel sketchbooks that Saar kept while journeying around the world, with drawings that relate to leitmotifs seen throughout her oeuvre.

Betye Saar (b. 1926) is one of the most well-known assemblage artists working today. She was born in Los Angeles and has lived in Laurel Canyon for more than fifty years. Her African, Irish, and Native American heritage has influenced her work in many ways, as have the creative communities in which she has participated, including design, craft, theater, assemblage art, Latino art, black art, and women’s art.<sup>3</sup>

Saar’s artistic sensibilities were formed at a young age, when she saw artist Simon Rodia (1879–1965) constructing the Watts Towers (1921–55). Saar has said the towers “were where I learned how to be an artist.”<sup>4</sup> Rodia’s use of broken dishes, glass shards, rusty tools, and other cast-off materials was magical to her: “Everything that was thrown away, he recycled.”<sup>5</sup> Resurrecting old objects to create something new with them is a practice that underlies all of Saar’s work.

Racially segregated schools prohibited Saar from attending art school and led her instead to UCLA, where she specialized in interior design. After college she completed postgraduate work, developed a printmaking practice, and formed part of a community of artists that included Curtis Tann, William Pajaud, and Charles White. Saar’s artmaking went hand in hand with raising three small children.

A pivotal stage in Saar’s artistic practice came in the mid- to late 1960s. In 1967, she saw an exhibition of assemblagist Joseph Cornell’s work and felt inspired to make her own assemblages with utilitarian objects as well as symbolic, spiritual, and familial items. During this time she also continued adding to her collection, begun some years prior, of images and objects that depicted black people in a derogatory manner, commonly known as black Americana or black memorabilia.

It was the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, that inspired Saar to create assemblages incorporating the racist objects she had collected. Describing her feelings at that time, Saar says, “I felt such a rage. I was a young mother at home watching the television of people being hosed and chased by dogs [...] So I just thought about, ‘What can I do? How can I express this emotion that I have and also use it as a healing thing for me as an artist and as a person?’”<sup>6</sup> Saar’s seminal work, *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima* (1972), emerged from this context and established her as an innovative force in American art.

<sup>1</sup> Betye Saar and Sara Cochran, *Betye Saar: Still Tickin’*, exh. cat. (Scottsdale: Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 2017), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>3</sup> James Christen Steward, “‘Lest We Forget’: The Liberating Art of Betye Saar,” in *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*, exh. cat. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art; Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: The University of California Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>4</sup> Betye Saar, “Influences: Betye Saar,” *Frieze*, September 27, 2016, <https://frieze.com/article/influences-betye-saar>.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Saar and Cochran, 18.

As the title suggests, the artwork involves the transformation of a black stereotype—the mammy figure—into an empowered individual. Since then, much of Saar’s work has continued to explore black stereotypes and gender roles in a way that challenges viewers to reflect on the history of race in the United States and the negative, hurtful associations thrust on black skin. Saar describes her process as “recycling the imagery, in a way, from negative to positive, using the negative power against itself.”<sup>7</sup> Two artworks in the packet, *A Call to Arms* (1997) and *I’ll Bend But I Will Not Break* (1998), engage black stereotypes through the washboard and the ironing board, both tools of gendered domestic labor.

Saar’s lifelong interest in global spiritual iconography and esoteric practices like palmistry, mysticism, phrenology, and sorcery is equally evident in much of her work. She often combines elements of different spiritual traditions with family heirlooms or found objects to explore intuitive knowledge, ancestral links, and emotional power or energy. Objects are not neutral to Saar; they carry memories, emotions, associations, and histories that she untangles and then reconstitutes as art. The other artworks in this packet, *Eyes of the Beholder* (1994) and *Sanctuary Awaits* (1996) delve into these themes.

We hope that this resource packet will provide you the tools you need to confidently bring Betye Saar’s work into your classrooms. A significant American artist and Angeleno, Saar invites us to take our time when looking at her work and to be emotionally present when doing so. The rich references and materials she employs provide ideal jumping off points for creative writing projects and for teaching important Language Arts concepts like symbolism, themes, and the relationship between parts and the whole. Her works that deal with race and gender can give rise to open-ended discussions about stereotypes and American history. Children as young as five or six can recognize and talk about the harmful impact of bias on both an individual and societal level, historically and today.<sup>8</sup>

However you choose to bring Betye Saar’s artwork into your students’ lives, we are here to support you. If you would like to speak more with the Education department about how to engage your students with Saar’s work, you can contact us at [educate@lacma.org](mailto:educate@lacma.org).

## Works Cited

Eliel, Carol S. *Betye Saar: Call and Response*. Munich, London, New York: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2019.

Saar, Betye. *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2005.

Saar, Betye and Sara Cochran. *Betye Saar: Still Tickin’*. Scottsdale: Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 2017.

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Evenings for Educators is made possible by The Rose Hills Foundation, the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation, The Kenneth T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation, and the Mara W. Breech Foundation.

All education and outreach programs at LACMA are underwritten by the LACMA Education Fund and are supported in part by the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund for Arts Education, Annette Hochfeld in honor of Ernst and Hedel Hochfeld, The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Katharyn Alvord Gerlich, the Margaret A. Cargill Arts Education Endowment, the Rhonda S. Zinner Foundation, and Gloria Ricci Lothrop.

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<sup>7</sup> Saar, “Influences: Betye Saar.”

<sup>8</sup> Anchor Standards and Domains, Justice Standards 11–13, “Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework,” *Teaching Tolerance*, <https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-June-2019.pdf>.

***Eyes of the Beholder, 1994***

“My secret heart seeks the dusty, musty forgotten corners. It constantly haunts, hunts, collects, gathers objects, images, feelings. It mixes, matches, embellishes, simplifies, camouflages, fabricates to empower the ordinary, to invent artifacts.” —Betye Saar<sup>9</sup>

Betye Saar has “always been interested in objects and the stories that objects tell.”<sup>10</sup> Her creative process often begins with a specific found object, typically received as a gift or bought at a flea market or secondhand store. Often, the objects she chooses are weathered or patinated. She is drawn to ordinary objects that many of us would simply walk past, but which “beckon [to her] and say, ‘Take me home. I’ll be a piece of art for you.’”<sup>11</sup>

*Eyes of the Beholder* began with a drink tray, which is by most accounts a very mundane object. However, we can imagine that Saar may have been drawn to its unique shape, a sort of elongated hexagon with worn wooden handles on the narrow sides. The tray provided a strong frame, which Saar refers to as “protection for what’s inside,” leaving a blank canvas for her to fill.

At the center is a metal panel with a vertical line down the middle. On either side of the line are six painted brown eyes, which are raised, causing them to pop out at the viewer. Saar has described this imagery as “eyes looking up, eyes looking straight ahead, eyes looking right and left, eyes looking down...an eye chart in a way.”<sup>12</sup> The two sets of eyes looking directly at us pull us in, while the others create a strong sense of movement in every direction at once.

Saar’s sketch calls the artwork a “Tantric Tray,” evoking the Tantric practice of eye-gazing, or gazing deeply into another person’s eyes, which is used to move beyond the physical and into a more spiritual realm.<sup>13</sup> Like the painted eyes, the blue- and yellow-painted quadrants seem to have a distinct relationship with our eyes: the cooler blue appears

to recede and the warmer yellow moves forward, causing us to focus more on the centerline. The metal sun and crescent moon charms aligned on this axis suggest duality, a common theme in Saar’s work and a major tenet of Tantra. The charms also evoke Saar’s longstanding interest in mysticism, magic, and cross-cultural symbols.

The artwork’s symmetrical composition, opposing colors, and eye imagery have a mesmerizing effect, demonstrating Saar’s ability to appropriate everyday objects and completely transform them into artworks that pull viewers in with their otherworldly presence. No longer a drink tray, *Eyes of the Beholder* can be understood as a spiritual object that invites viewers to ascend to a different level of consciousness, if they wish it.

**Discussion Prompts**

1. How many different shapes do you see in *Eyes of the Beholder*? How many instances of symmetry can you find? Create an artwork that uses similar shapes and symmetry.
2. Why do you think Saar included a sun and a crescent moon in the artwork?
3. Saar has said, “A spiritually conscious person sees all aspects of life; day and night, light and dark, up, down, diagonal, left, right.” What do you think she means? How does her statement relate to *Eyes of the Beholder*?

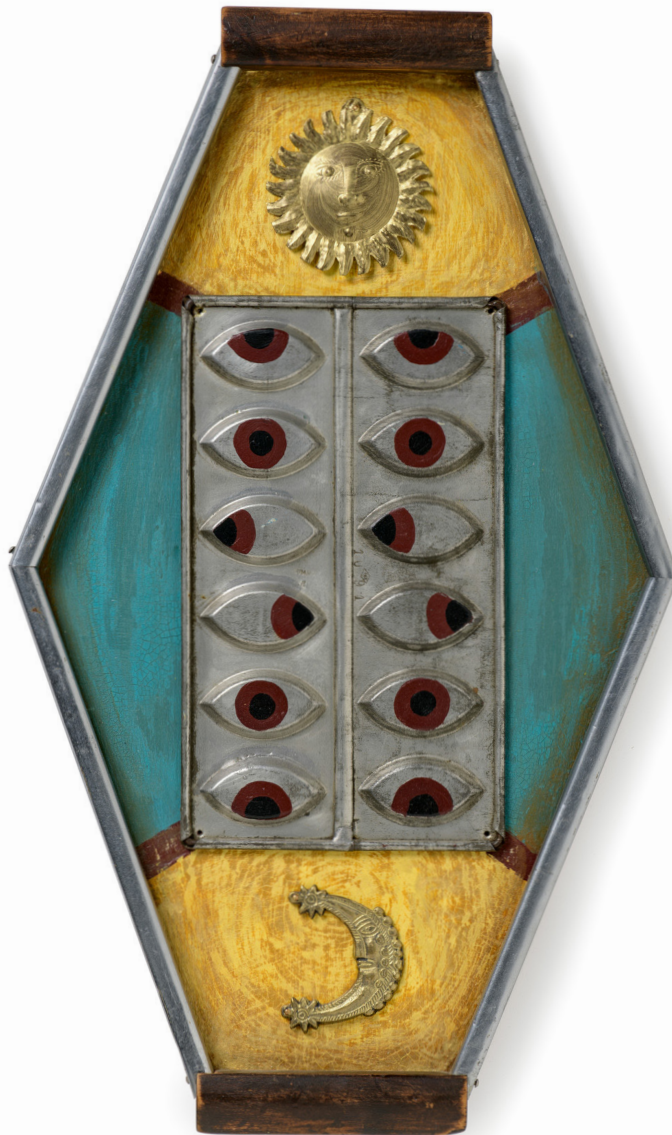
<sup>9</sup> Saar and Cochran, 244.

<sup>10</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, March 19, 2018, cited in Carol S. Eliel, *Betye Saar: Call and Response* (Munich, London, New York: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2019), 13.

<sup>11</sup> Saar and Cochran, 14.

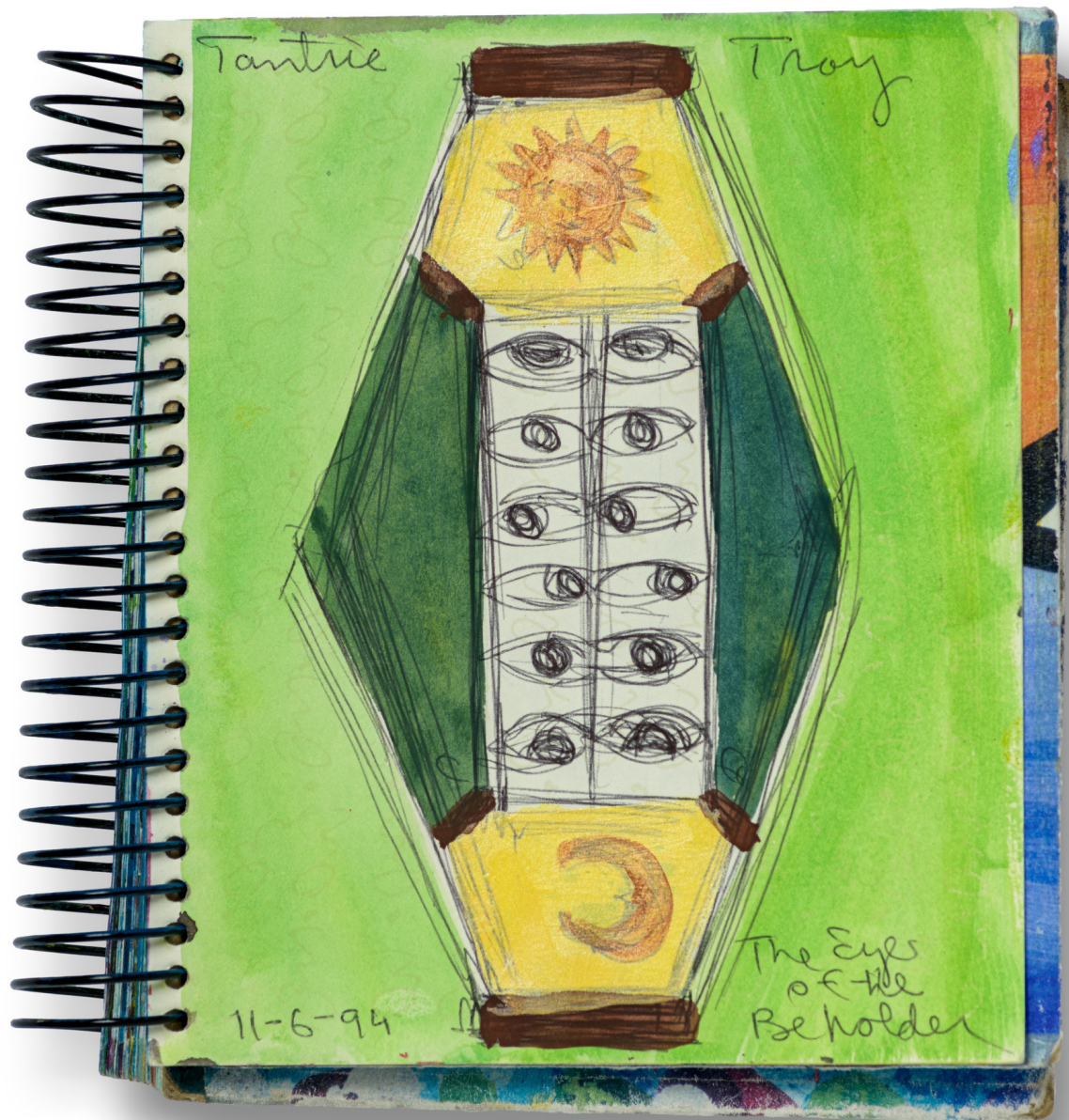
<sup>12</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, July 17, 2018, cited in Eliel, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Tantra refers to a range of South Asian ritual and philosophical texts and traditions that date to the 1st millennium CE and were first written down in Sanskrit. There are Tantric traditions in a number of different religions, including Hinduism and Buddhism. Tantra is usually considered mystical or magical. See “Tantra,” Oxford Bibliographies, last modified August 29, 2012, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399318/obo-9780195399318-0090.xml>.



Betye Saar, *Eyes of the Beholder*, 1994, mixed-media assemblage on serving tray, 17  $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  x 1 in., collection of the artist, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA





Betye Saar, *Sketchbook*, 1994, 1994, overall: 5 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.; sheet: 4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in., collection of Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, CA, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

***Sanctuary Awaits, 1996***

“My secret heart bridges memory and vision. It pays homage to lost rituals of unknown civilizations. It expands horizons only to condense them into a frame, a box, a room.” —Betye Saar<sup>14</sup>

“I cast a long shadow, backwards my spirits spiral from Willow Glen gardens to zigzag, to Louisiana, to Iowa, to Virginia’s shore. My spirits sail, some to Irish seas and some crawl deep into the belly of a slave ship. On ancestral shores my spirits cross the Bridge of Memory to become an explorer of lost legends of forgotten tribes and a seeker of rituals of fragmented cultures. I become a fabricator who empowers the ordinary to invent artifacts of my own Sanctified Visions.” —Betye Saar<sup>15</sup>

After visiting the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago in 1964 with fellow artist David Hammons, Betye Saar began to draw on non-Western symbols and cultures in her art, and to incorporate organic materials, such as bones, teeth, wood, and animal skins. With *Sanctuary Awaits*, Saar taps into a centuries-old spiritual tradition that lives on in the present and connects her to her African ancestors.

Saar created *Sanctuary Awaits* (out of found wood and found objects) in connection with the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. The first thing that draws the eye is a tangle of gnarled branches that climbs skyward and forms the back of a life-size, rough-hewn chair. Amber-colored glass bottles on the branches’ tips catch the light and seem to gesture at invisible forces in all directions.

*Sanctuary Awaits* is Saar’s interpretation of a bottle tree. Creating bottle trees is a custom that originated in the Kingdom of Kongo on the West African coast, and involves decorating trees with bottles, vessels, and other objects in order to ward off evil spirits. Brought to the Americas and the Caribbean by enslaved Africans beginning in the sixteenth century, the tradition lives on to this

this day. Drive across the American South and you will see colorful bottle trees in all shapes and sizes in people’s front yards and in cemeteries.

In Saar’s words, “the glass bottles reflect the sunlight to attract the good spirit and ward off the negative spirit.”<sup>16</sup> The artist has also noted that the reflective glass can attract and capture bad spirits, imprisoning them in the bottle. The artwork not only interacts with us, its viewers, but with unseen spirits in the atmosphere as well.

Near the bottom of the chair we see a compass, lying flat, which may be intended to help guide good spirits to the bottle tree, where they can “stop and rest.”<sup>17</sup> A large raised fist, a symbol used by the Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party, stands atop a pedestal. Protectively surrounding the wooden fist are dried palm fronds and agave leaves, possibly referring to Los Angeles, the artist’s lifelong city of residence. Like the bottle tree itself, this assemblage of objects feels full of spiritual power.

Saar intertwines spiritual, political, and personal themes in *Sanctuary Awaits*. Her bottle tree carries ancestral memories of the African continent as well as of the Middle Passage in it, creating a space for contemplation that connects black people across history.

<sup>14</sup> Saar and Cochran, 244.

<sup>15</sup> Saar and Cochran, 265.

<sup>16</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, July 17, 2018, cited in Eliel, 26.

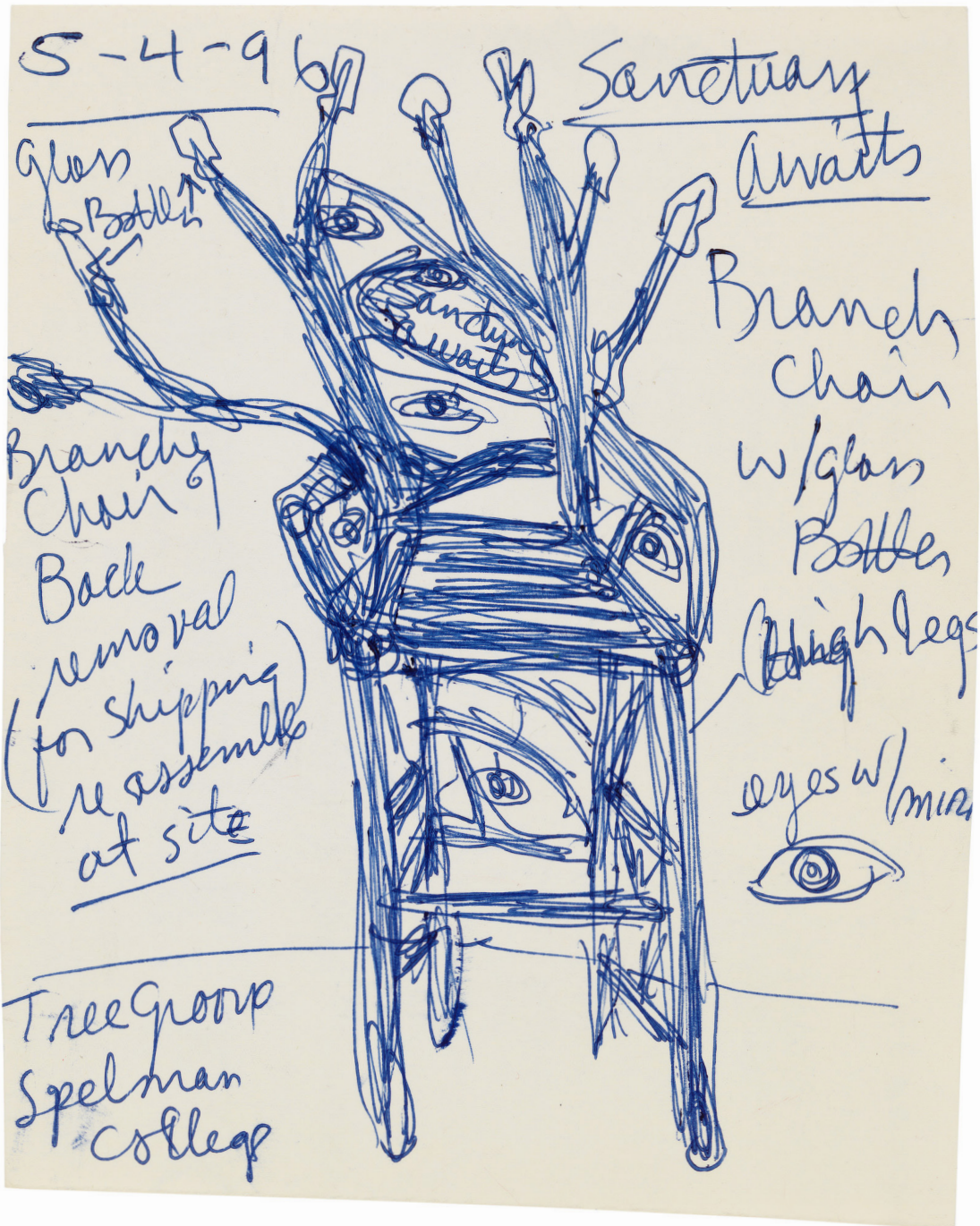
<sup>17</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, July 17, 2018, cited in Eliel, 30.

## **Discussion Prompts**

1. Why do you think Saar combined a centuries-old spiritual practice (the bottle tree) with a symbol of the African American struggle for equal rights in the 1960s and 70s (the fist)?
2. Compare and contrast the artwork with Saar's initial sketch. How are they similar? How are they different?
3. How would you interpret the artwork's title?
4. Think of a tradition that is important to your family or community and ask elders about it. Where does it come from? How many generations have carried it forward? How has it changed over time and what does it mean to your family or community today?



Betye Saar, *Sanctuary Awaits*, 1996, mixed media, 61 x 36 x 22 in., collection of the artist, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA



Betye Saar, Artist drawing for *Sanctuary Awaits*, 1996, ballpoint pen on paper, sheet: 5 3/8 x 4 3/16 in., collection of Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, CA, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

**A Call to Arms, 1997**

“My concerns are the struggle of memory against the attraction of forgetting. The washboard, a simple domestic tool has become my format. For years, I have collected vintage washboards and to me, they symbolize hard labor. By recycling them, I am honoring the memory of that labor and the working woman upon whose shoulders we now stand.”

—Betye Saar<sup>18</sup>

Betye Saar began collecting washboards in the mid-1990s, inspired by memories of a washboard her grandmother used on her back porch. She has since created numerous artworks that incorporate this utilitarian object and explore its many resonances. Symbols of Saar’s African American family lineage and of women’s strength, washboards are also historical reminders of the domestic labor carried out by black women for white families both during and after slavery.

A worn washboard forms the base of *A Call to Arms*. Saar modified it by adding text and toy guns, tying the washboard to different associations and meanings. The central lettering comes from Langston Hughes’s poem “Negro” and refers to the international scope of the slave trade. The mantra at the very bottom, “extreme times call for extreme heroines,” makes explicit Saar’s intention to reframe women’s domestic labor as heroic and creates a sense of urgency in the present moment.

We can find an example of an “extreme heroine” at the top of the assemblage, in a brush doll that represents a mammy figure, a caricature of black women popularized in post-Civil War America, especially during the Jim Crow period (1877–1954).<sup>19</sup> Often overweight and jovial, the mammy stereotype was used by whites to create the illusion that black women were happy and content being slaves, and also content to work as domestic

servants and at other low-paying jobs post-slavery.

But Saar’s brush doll, an “extreme heroine,” is anything but passive and content. Her agency and her resistance are embodied in her open, outstretched arms, made of bullets, and in the torn rope around her neck. The tall spindles on either side of her, traditionally used to twist and wind thread by hand, are also symbols of women’s domestic labor. In the piece, they become pillars that hold up two fists, associated with the Black Panther Party in the 1960s as well as with Black Power.<sup>20 21</sup>

The appropriation of familiar objects or images in an artist’s work often encourages viewers to see the source materials in a new light and question their role in shaping a society’s attitudes, beliefs, and values. Although the washboard and racist artifacts like the brush doll were once tools for maintaining black women’s subservience, Saar transforms them into symbols of pride that bear witness to working women’s labor and connect contemporary women to their heroic forbearers.

<sup>18</sup> Betye Saar, “Unfinished Business: The Return of Aunt Jemima,” *Betye Saar: Workers and Warriors, the Return of Aunt Jemima*, exh. cat. (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 1998), 3, cited in Betye Saar, *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*, exh. cat. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2005), 96.

<sup>19</sup> For more information, see Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender, and Southern Memory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008).

<sup>20</sup> Carol S. Eliel, *Betye Saar: Call and Response* (Munich, London, New York: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2019), 31.

<sup>21</sup> Black Power was a revolutionary movement that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. It emphasized racial pride, economic empowerment, and the creation of political and cultural institutions. See “Black Power,” National Archives, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/black-power>.

## Discussion Prompts

1. Look closely at the artwork. What other details do you see? What might each element mean and how does it fit into the whole?

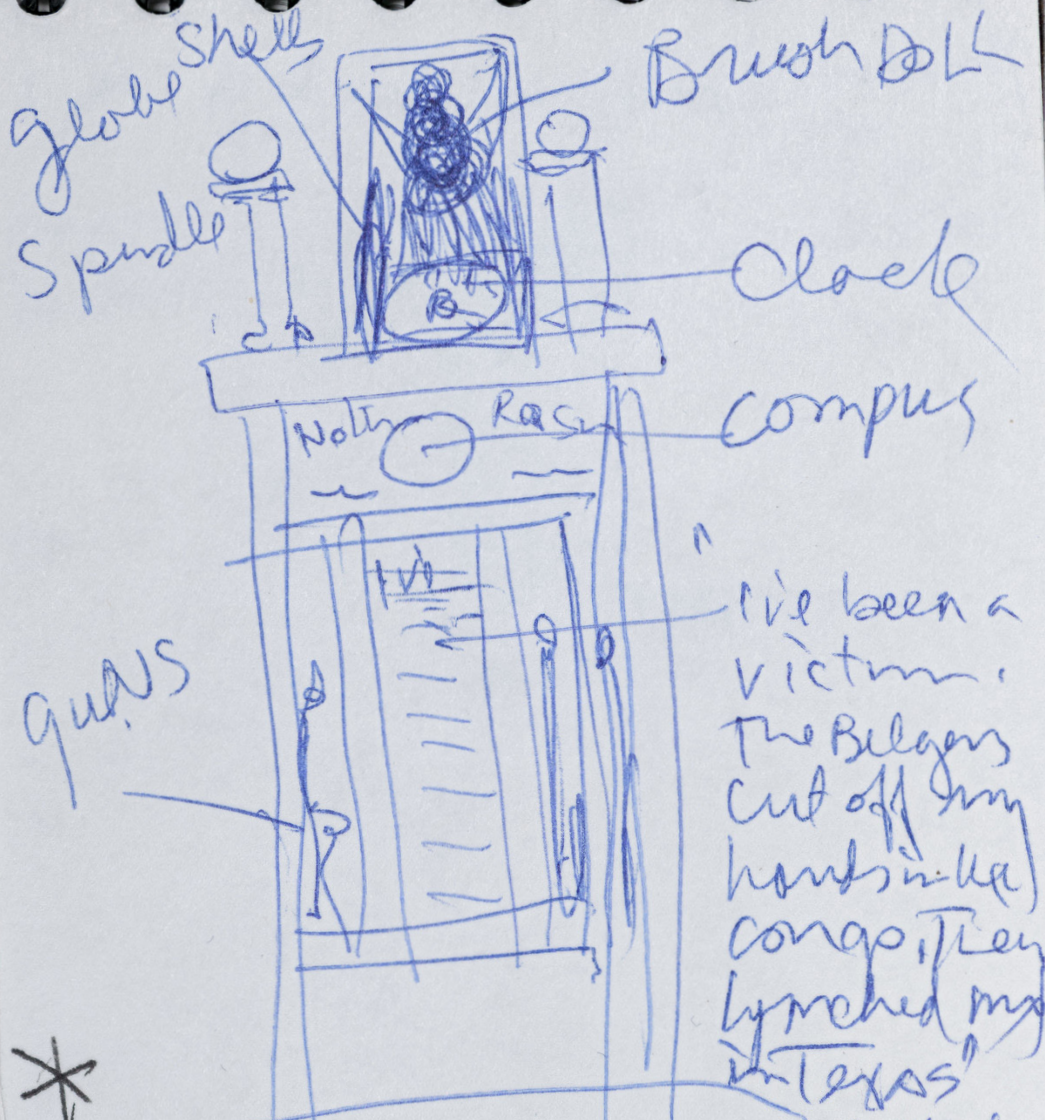
2. Both *Sanctuary Awaits* and *A Call to Arms* incorporate compasses and fists. How are they used similarly and/or differently in each artwork?

3. Saar talks about standing on the shoulders of the women who came before her. Can you think of individuals or groups in history whose efforts made it possible for you to enjoy certain freedoms or privileges?



Betye Saar, *A Call to Arms*, 1997, 36.8 x 13 x 2.5 in., courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California, © Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California





\*  
 Call To Arms L. Hughes

Betye Saar, *Sketchbook*, 1997, 1997, overall: 4 1/4 x 3 1/16 in.; sheet: 4 x 3 in., collection of Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

***I'll Bend But I Will Not Break, 1998***

“My purpose in creating these works is to remind us about the struggle of African Americans and to reclaim the humiliating images of how these workers were once portrayed. I feel that, however painful, there is honor in re-presenting the past. Racism should neither be ignored nor satirized, as it is a form of bondage for everyone, regardless of color. Racism cannot be conquered until it is confronted.”

—Betye Saar<sup>22</sup>

An ironing board acquired from one of her favorite vendors at the Pasadena City College flea market is the foundation of Betye Saar’s *I’ll Bend But I Will Not Break*. Like the washboard, the ironing board carries strong connotations of women’s labor, a topic of great importance to Saar.

The shape of this particular ironing board reminded Saar of an eighteenth-century print known as the Brookes diagram, which depicts the slave ship Brookes packed with more than four hundred Africans. The print became synonymous with the horrors of the Middle Passage and was widely used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as propaganda to support the abolition of slavery.

In this work, Saar appropriated the Brookes diagram, enlarging and then printing it on top of the ironing board. She also added an iron, and attached it with chains to the legs of the ironing board. Both the diagram and the chains suggest that the servitude of domestic labor in the post-Civil War period was similar in many ways to slavery. Even though slavery was abolished in 1865, limited educational and economic opportunities, Jim Crow laws, and the constant threat of violence created harsh living conditions for black people.

The threat of violence existed in part due to the Ku Klux Klan, a violent white extremist group started during Reconstruction (1865–77) to intimidate and terrorize newly freed Southern blacks. Saar evokes the Klan through the letters “KKK” applied on the white sheet behind the ironing board. She has also reflected on the irony “that the woman who irons this sheet that the KKK person wears, is a Black woman.”<sup>23</sup>

Saar’s piece confronts slavery and racism, and insists on honoring the labor of black women. The pristine sheet, the iron, the image of the woman superimposed on the Brookes diagram, staring directly at us—each element reminds us of the humanity and individuality of the women who performed this work. Discussing the artwork’s title, Saar has said, “...you can treat me as a slave, and I’ll bend down—I’ll bend down to pick cotton, I’ll bend to do this, to be a laborer—but I will not break.”<sup>24</sup> This same phrase is emblazoned on the ironing board in large red letters, right above the Brookes diagram.

**Discussion Prompts**

1. How does *I’ll Bend But I Will Not Break* make you feel? What sounds, smells, or physical sensations come to mind when you look at it?
2. What kinds of work do the women in your life perform? Why is it important to recognize their work? Write or draw something to thank them.
3. Saar has said, “I feel that, however painful, there is honor in re-presenting the past.” What do you think she means by this? Do you agree? Why or why not? Use one of her artworks as an example.

<sup>22</sup> Cindy Nemser, *Art Talk: Conversations with Fifteen Women Artists* (New York: Icon Editions, 1995), 23, cited in Betye Saar, *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2005), 14.

<sup>23</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, March 19, 2018, cited in Eliel, 62.

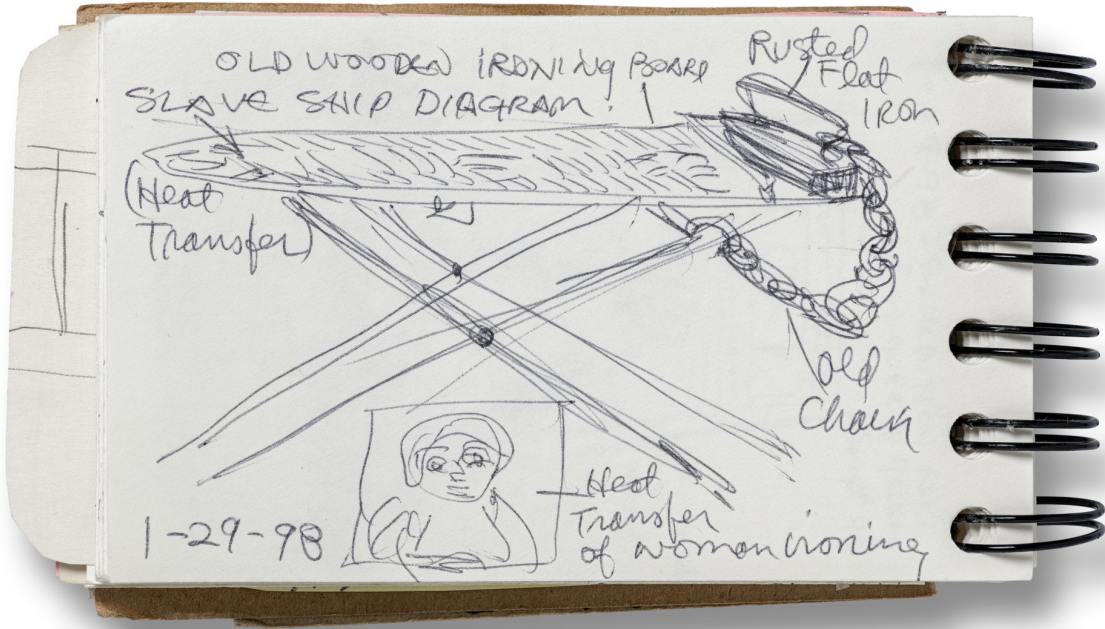
<sup>24</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist’s studio, Los Angeles, March 19, 2018, cited in Eliel, 62.



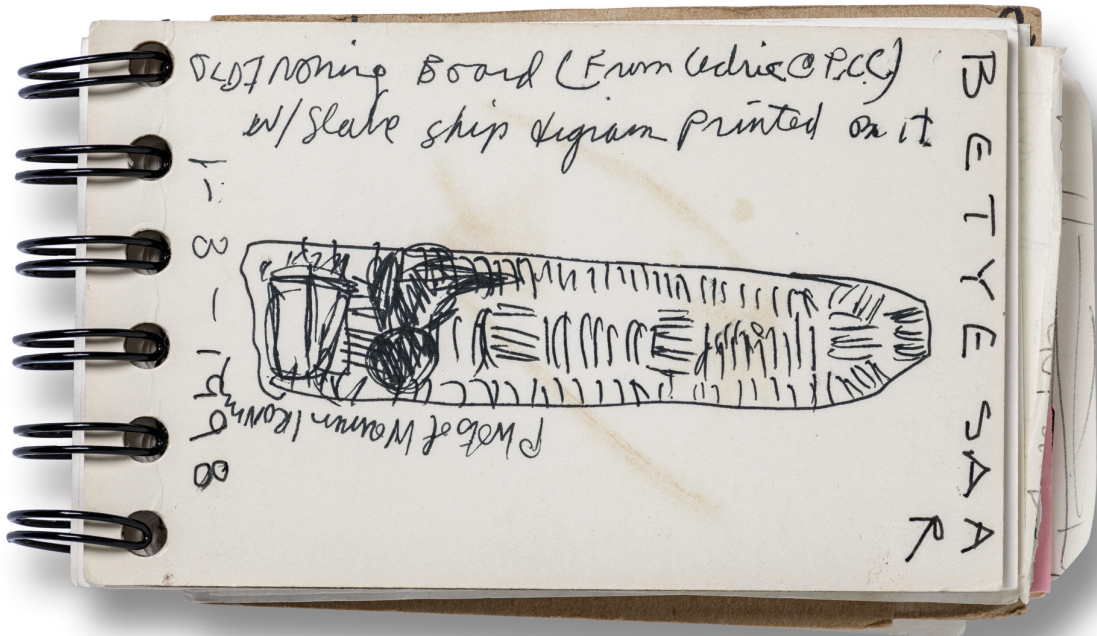
Betye Saar, *I'll Bend But I Will Not Break*, 1998, mixed-media tableau: vintage ironingboard, flat iron, metal chin, white bed sheet, six wooden clothespins, cotton, clothesline and one rope hook, 80 x 96 x 36 in., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Lynda and Stewart Resnick through the 2018 Collectors Committee, © Betye Saar



Betye Saar, *I'll Bend But I Will Not Break*, 1998, mixed-media tableau: vintage ironingboard, flat iron, metal chin, white bed sheet, six wooden clothespins, cotton, clothesline and one rope hook, 80 x 96 x 36 in., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, gift of Lynda and Stewart Resnick through the 2018 Collectors Committee, © Betye Saar



Betye Saar, *Sketchbook*, 1998, 1998, overall: 6 x 3 1/4 in.; sheet: 5 x 3 in., collection of Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA



Betye Saar, *Sketchbook*, 1998, 1998, overall: 6 x 3 1/4 in.; sheet: 5 x 3 in., collection of Betye Saar, courtesy of the artist and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, © Betye Saar, photo © Museum Associates/LACMA

## Resources

### Books for Students and Teachers

#### *Betye Saar: Call and Response*

Carol S. Eliel

This catalog accompanies the LACMA exhibition by the same name and provides an in-depth look at the relationship between Saar's sketches and finished works.

#### *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment*

Betye Saar

An exhibition catalog from 2005, this book provides multiple vantage points from which to gain a richer understanding of Saar's career, American art of the 1960s, feminism, contemporary art, and California culture and politics.

#### *Betye Saar: Still Tickin'*

Betye Saar and Sara Cochran

This book considers the breadth of Saar's career and its key themes. It also includes writings by the artist from the 1970s to the present, as well as a recent interview with Saar in which she discusses her artistic practice and her views on history, including the current debate about police violence in the US.

#### *Child of the Civil Rights Movement*

Paula Young Shelton

Provides an intimate look at the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of a child (for grades K–2).

#### *The Glass Bottle Tree*

Evelyn Coleman, illustrated by Gail Gordon Carter

Living together way out in the country, an African American girl and her grandmother have such a close relationship that they communicate without words. One day, the grandmother invokes the power of their bottle tree to protect her granddaughter (for grades K–3).

#### *Teaching Tolerance: Raising Open-Minded, Empathetic Children*

Sara Bullard

This book is an invitation to parents and teachers to examine their biases toward the people around them and make changes in their behavior.

### Online Resources

#### **Betye Saar**

Hammer Museum

An overview of Saar's life and work, including a video recording of a lecture given by the artist in 2014.

<https://hammer.ucla.edu/now-dig-this/artists/betye-saar>

#### **Social Justice Standards: The Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework**

Teaching Tolerance

The Social Justice Standards are a set of anchor standards and age-appropriate learning outcomes divided into four domains—identity, diversity, justice and action (IDJA)—for students grades K–12.

<https://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/TT-Social-Justice-Standards-June-2019.pdf>

## Classroom Activity

### Colorful Tree Spirals

<b>Essential Question</b>	How can art create awareness of the importance of caring for our communities?
<b>Grades</b>	K–8
<b>Time</b>	One class periods
<b>Art Concepts</b>	Sculpture, pattern, color, symbolism, found objects, assemblage, cultural history, rituals, community, composition, line, rhythm, three dimensional, installation
<b>Materials</b>	Empty 16.9 oz water bottles with the labels removed, fine tip Sharpies in various colors, colored pencils, colored pipe cleaners, scissors, hole punches, index cards
<b>Talking About Art</b>	<p>Look closely at the artwork silently for 30 seconds, then talk to your elbow partner about what you notice. Share observations with the class. What do you see? What more can you find? Can you make any interpretations? What do you see that makes you say that?</p> <p><i>Sanctuary Awaits</i> is an assemblage created with found objects by artist Betye Saar. The artwork is an interpretation of a bottle tree. Creating bottle trees is an old custom that originated in the Kingdom of Kongo on the West African coast and involves decorating trees with glass bottles to ward off evil spirits. Enslaved Africans brought the tradition to the United States beginning in the sixteenth century, and to this day, you can drive across the American South and see colorful bottle trees in all shapes and sizes in people’s yards and in cemeteries. In Saar’s words, “the glass bottles reflect the sunlight to attract the good spirit and ward off the negative spirit.”</p> <p>Saar combines the bottle tree with other symbolism pertaining to her identity and ancestry. For example, the compass is a symbol for navigation (perhaps referencing Saar’s world travels as well as the forced migration of millions of Africans across the Atlantic Ocean) and the fist is a symbol of the Black Power Movement. The bottle tree and the fist, in particular, connect the artist to her African heritage and to a community of people (and ancestors) all across the world.</p> <p>What does the word community mean to you? Who is part of a community and what do communities do? Where can we find communities? Why are communities important? What does it mean to be a member of a community? Who are the people in your community that you care about and who care about you? How do you show that you care about each other? People often create bottle trees to protect their homes and the ones they love and care about. Bottle trees are also a way to connect to one’s ancestors. Who in your community do you wish to keep safe and protected? Who in your life has passed on and whom you would still like to keep close?</p>
<b>Making Art</b>	<p>Inspired by the bottle tree tradition, we will each create our own “spinning tree spiral” for someone in our community whom we wish to keep safe, or someone we love who has passed on. We will be using recycled plastic bottles instead of glass bottles.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Teachers, write these guiding questions on the board:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Who are the people you care for and want to keep safe and protected?</li><li>◦ Draw a symbol that will help keep those people/your community safe.</li></ul></li></ol>

2. On a notecard, use colored pencils and nice penmanship to draw/write each person's name. Write your name on the back.
3. Using Sharpies, draw designs, patterns, and motifs all over the outside of your plastic bottle. Try to cover as much surface area as possible. (Teachers, warn the students that their bottle will be cut, so the image they draw should be something they are okay with cutting.)
4. Using a pair of scissors, carefully cut off the bottom of the bottle, poking a hole in the side first with one of the scissor blades.
5. Starting at the bottom of the bottle, begin cutting around the bottle in a spiral pattern until you get all the way up to the spout.
6. Finally, use a hole punch to make a hole at the tip of the spiral base and on the index card. Use a pipe cleaner to attach the index card to the spiral base.
7. Tie another pipe cleaner around the spout. Now your colorful tree spirals are ready to be hung on a tree or in your classroom!

### Reflection

Come up with a plan as a class for hanging up and displaying everyone's artwork. Where should the spirals hang? How should they be arranged? How will the viewer's perspective change with different displays? When you're ready, hang up everyone's artwork (inside or outside) and discuss the installation. What makes the installation feel special? How does making artwork together create community?

### Curriculum Connections

Betye Saar's work can be discussed within the context of Women's History Month and Black History Month, as well as in discussions about assemblages/recycled art.

California Arts Standards for Visual Arts

2.VA:Cr2.3 Repurpose found objects to make a new artwork or design. 5.VA:Re7.2

Identify and analyze cultural associations suggested by visual imagery. 6.VA:Pr5

Individually or collaboratively, develop a visual plan for displaying works of art, analyzing exhibit space, the needs of the viewer, and the layout of the exhibit.

### Images



## **Classroom Activity** **Symbolic Assemblages**

<b>Essential Question</b>	How do artists use symbols and found objects to express their identity and tell stories?
<b>Grades</b>	3–12
<b>Time</b>	1–2 class periods
<b>Art Concepts</b>	Line, shape, symbol, symmetry, graphite transfer, assemblage, found objects, identity, design, texture
<b>Materials</b>	10" x 14" rectangular cake pads cut in half, or 5" x 7" pieces of cardboard; scissors, Elmer's glue, Prismacolor ebony pencils, 4" x 6" white drawing or printer paper, markers, fabric scraps, tulle, yarn, beads, multi-colored popsicle sticks, miscellaneous recycled materials
<b>Talking About Art</b>	<p>Betye Saar is an American artist known for her assemblage and collage works that explore race, gender, spirituality, and personal and political identity. For Saar, objects carry memories, emotions, symbolic associations, and histories that she untangles and then reconstitutes as art. Her lifelong interest in global spiritual iconography and esoteric practices like palmistry, mysticism, phrenology, and sorcery can be seen in much of her work.</p> <p>View Betye Saar's <i>Eyes of the Beholder</i> (1994) and the accompanying sketch. Originating from a uniquely shaped drink tray, <i>Eyes of the Beholder</i> depicts a symmetrical panel of six sets of eyes looking in all different directions. At the top is a symbol of the sun, and at the bottom, a moon. What do these symbols represent to you? What do the shapes, colors, and symmetry add to the look and feel of the artwork? What themes or narratives do you notice within the artwork?</p> <p>Saar has said, "A spiritually conscious person sees all aspects of life; day and night, light and dark, up, down, diagonal, left, right." What do you think she means by this and what might her words tell us about her? How does her statement relate to <i>Eyes of the Beholder</i>?</p>
<b>Making Art</b>	<p>Begin by brainstorming everyday symbols as a class. A symbol is a shape, object, mark, or sign that represents or stands in for a word, idea, or larger concept. For instance, a heart shape is a symbol for "love," a red octagon is a symbol for "stop," a circle with an inverted "v" is a symbol for "peace," and two parallel lines within a circle is a symbol for "pause." Notice how each of these symbols can be divided into two identical halves, which shows that they are symmetrical.</p> <p>Brainstorm some adjectives you would use to describe yourself and jot them down on a piece of paper. Then fold a 4" x 6" piece of white paper in half vertically and use your words as inspiration to create your own symbol on just one half of the paper. Draw half of the symbol, taking your lines all the way to the middle fold line. Try to use simple shapes, lines, or patterns that convey personal attributes. For instance, if one of your qualities is observant, you might consider using the shape of an eye somewhere within your symbol. How might you identify elements of your culture, spirituality, or personal goals within your symbol?</p> <p>Once you have finished, trace over your lines using a graphite pencil. Press hard to make sure they are dark, then fold the paper so that your drawing is sandwiched</p>



inside. Turn the pencil on its side and use as much pressure as you can to press and roll it over the back of the image. Open your paper and you will notice that your drawing has been transferred to the other half of the paper. You now have a perfectly symmetrical design. Retrace your lines and color in your symbol with markers.

Now, glue your symbol to the center of a piece of cardboard and embellish it with recycled items and found objects to help tell a personal story. Experiment with different colors, shapes, and textures to create a unique, self-expressive art piece.

### **Reflection**

In groups, share and discuss your symbols and the reasons why you chose specific imagery, objects, colors, and textures for your artwork.

### **Curriculum Connections**

Common Core State Standards Math

4.G.A.3 Recognize a line of symmetry for a two-dimensional figure as a line across the figure such that the figure can be folded along the line into matching parts. Identify line-symmetric figures and draw lines of symmetry.

California Visual Arts Contents Standards

4.VA:Re7.2 Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages. 8.VA:Re7.1 Explain how a person's aesthetic choices are influenced by culture, environment, and personal experiences which impacts the message it conveys to others Prof.VA:Re7.2 Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery

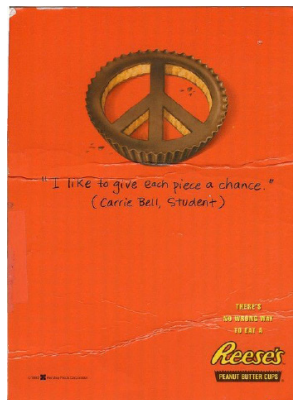
### **Sample Artwork**



## Classroom Activity Unpacking Stereotypes

<b>Essential Question</b>	How can we combat stereotypes by identifying and discussing them openly?
<b>Grades</b>	K-12
<b>Time</b>	2-3 class periods
<b>Art Concepts</b>	Stereotypes, sexism, racism, advertising, found objects, three dimensional artwork, assemblage, slavery, empowerment
<b>Materials</b>	Printouts of advertising images, some depicting various stereotypes; printouts of Betye Saar's <i>A Call to Arms</i> (1997)
<b>To Educators</b>	<i>Critical analysis of harmful stereotypes perpetuated by everyday media is an important skill for your students to learn. It can be helpful to scaffold discussions around stereotypes by first teaching students to analyze images, whether they be advertisements or artworks. When you move on to discuss stereotypes directly, be sure to develop a shared definition of this word. You may also want to assure your students that acknowledging the existence of a stereotype is not the same as saying you believe the stereotype to be true.</i>
<b>Part One</b>	Students will learn how to analyze contemporary advertising images. Teachers, pass out copies of two advertisements, either to each student individually or in pairs/groups.

### Examples



Introduce the idea that advertisements and other images are types of texts, like books, movies, newspapers, or songs. Then ask students to examine the two advertisements closely and pay attention to what they are doing as they read/look:

- Are they paying more attention to the pictures or words?
- What kinds of questions are they asking themselves that help the advertisement make sense?
- How do the two advertisements differ?

Bring the class back together and invite students to share their thought processes while reading the advertisements. Using student input, come up with a list of steps

## Part One (cont.)

- Pay attention to how words and images work together to communicate a message.
- Ask yourself what is the purpose of the advertisement.
- Ask yourself how the advertisement fulfills this purpose.
- Form a personal opinion about the advertisement and/or its message.

Make your list on chart paper and display it prominently, so you can return to it in future lessons.

This section was adapted from Teaching Tolerance, “Reading Advertisements,” <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/reading-advertisements>

## Part Two

Come up with a shared definition of the word “stereotype.” Ask students to share a few examples of stereotypes they are aware of. Remind them that acknowledging the existence of a particular stereotype is not the same as saying you believe the stereotype to be true. Ask students to share some of the consequences of stereotypes and how they can make people feel.

Break the students into small groups. Hand out two advertising images that perpetuate stereotypes, whether positive or negative, and the attached hand out.

Examples



Have students answer the questions in the handout and then come back together as a group to share responses and ideas.

Ask students:

- What power do advertisements have to keep stereotypes going?
- What power do advertisements have to show stereotypes to be unfair or untrue?

End with a group discussion where students can share their thoughts about the power advertisements have to perpetuate or challenge stereotypes, and create a chart listing strategies for rejecting stereotypes.

This section was adapted from Teaching Tolerance, “How Advertising Perpetuates Stereotypes” and “Stereotypes in Advertising,” <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/how-advertising-perpetuates-stereotypes>

## Talking About Art

View *A Call to Arms* by Betye Saar. Ask students to study it silently and then ask them what they see. Paraphrase students’ responses for the whole class. Identifiable objects include a washboard, spools for thread, a doll, a compass, a clock, and toy guns.

## Talking About Art (cont.)

Look more closely at the doll. Ask students if they have ever seen anything like it before. Share that the doll represents a mammy figure, which is a stereotype about black women that became popular after the Civil War. White people used the mammy stereotype to make it seem as though black women were happy and content being slaves, and also content to work as domestic servants and at other low-paying jobs after slavery ended. You can also show students images of mammy figures in advertising images, like the one pictured here. Ask them how Saar's artwork is similar to and different from the mammy advertisements or the other ads they looked at.



What might Saar be trying to say with this artwork? How does she turn the mammy figure into something positive? Students might point to the Black Power fists, the bullet arms, the doll's elevated position, or the text at the bottom that reads, "extreme times call for extreme heroines."

What might Saar be expressing through the artwork's title? How do you think different kinds of audiences will experience this artwork differently? Can you make any connections between the subject of the artwork and the present day?

## Reflection

Discussions about stereotypes can be uncomfortable. They bring up larger issues like racism and sexism. However, it is important that we do this work so that we can create a more just and equitable society.

For educators:

- How can you use/ adapt some of these strategies with your students?
- Can you think of other ways to support these lessons - art projects, essays, etc?

For students:

- How has the way you look at advertisements changed? What did you learn about advertisements that you didn't know before?
- What is a stereotype?
- How can artworks fight or reject stereotypes?
- What can you do in your own life to reject stereotypes?

## Curriculum Connections

California Visual Arts Contents Standards  
K.VA:Re8 Interpret art by identifying subject matter and describing relevant details.  
3.VA:Re7.2 Determine messages communicated by an image. 4.VA:Re7.2 Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages. Prof.VA:Re7.2 Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.  
5.VA:Cn11 Identify how art is used to inform or change beliefs, values, or behaviors of an individual or society.

## **Viewers Have Power Too**

After looking at the two advertisements with your class, answer the following questions:

1) When you look at the Dove advertisement, what message do you think it sends? How does this message make you feel?

2) What message about girls do you think the ALWAYS advertisement sends? How does this message make you feel?

3) What are some ways we can reject the stereotypes that advertising sends at us?

## Classroom Activity

### What is Racism?

<b>Essential Question</b>	How might we use art to talk about racism, in order to work together toward a more equitable society?
<b>Grades</b>	6–12
<b>Time</b>	2 or more class periods
<b>Concepts</b>	Race, prejudice, racism, white supremacy, social justice, assemblage
<b>To Educators</b>	<p><i>Discussing race and racism with your students can feel intimidating. Some of your students may even share the widespread misconception that simply noticing or mentioning race is, in and of itself, “racist.” This is all the more reason to have these conversations in your classrooms, and to begin them with definitions that can help the conversations stay rooted. Art like the work of Betye Saar, which explores systemic racism and white supremacy, can provide an excellent entry point to these conversations: when students have a common primary source to examine, such as an image or text, it can make the conversation feel a little less personal and a little more low stakes.</i></p> <p><i>In order for you as an educator to feel comfortable and confident facilitating conversations about issues of race and racism in your classroom, it is important that you practice having conversations about race elsewhere in your life as well—for example, with colleagues, family, and friends—and that you devote time to your personal learning about these issues.</i></p>
<b>Agreements</b>	<p>We will be looking at an artwork that explores racism in America. Racism is a sensitive topic, so let’s please begin by agreeing to some practices we can follow to be most respectful of each other and still learn from each other.</p> <p><i>Begin by sharing three or four agreements you find particularly important and most helpful to supporting productive conversations. You might choose from some of the sample agreements below or some of your own. Invite your students to add in their own agreements too.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We speak for ourselves: let’s not expect anybody of any identity to speak for a whole group.</li><li>• Challenge yourself to speak up if you are often quiet and to listen more if you often talk in class.</li><li>• Trust that we grow and change as individuals in our thinking and understandings. How someone is thinking about an issue today might be different tomorrow or next week.</li><li>• Take responsibility for what you say and how it might impact others in the room</li><li>• Try to understand where others with different perspectives are coming from.</li><li>• Speak up if you disagree, or if something someone said was hurtful to you.</li><li>• We aren’t going to end with all the answers today.</li></ul>

**Definitions** Let's now share some definitions.

**Race:** an idea of categorizing people based on skin color and features; it is not rooted in science, but informs the way that people are treated in society

**Prejudice:** making judgments about another person based on a social group they belong to

**Racism:** making judgments about another person based on their race, with the legal or institutional power to oppress them

**White Supremacy:** a system that treats white people superior to people of color

Definitions are adapted from Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2018).

**Talking About Art** Now let's examine Betye Saar's *I'll Bend, But I Will Not Break* (1998). What do you notice? What messages might the artist be trying to convey?

Let's look closely at another view of the ironing board from above. The image that spans the board is an eighteenth-century print called the Brookes diagram that depicts enslaved people being transported in close proximity in a large ship. How does Saar evoke history?

The other image on the ironing board depicts a black woman ironing. The neatly ironed sheet in the background bears the letters "KKK"—a reference to the Ku Klux Klan, a violent white extremist group that was formed in the Southern United States after the abolition of slavery. When speaking about this artwork, Betye Saar has said, "the woman who irons this sheet that the KKK person wears, is a Black woman."<sup>1</sup>

What might Saar be trying to say with the different representations of race (black and white) in *I'll Bend, But I Will Not Break*? How does the artwork relate to the present day?

The artist identifies as a black woman with African, Irish, and Native American heritage. Is it important to you that Saar is black? How might the meaning of the artwork change if the artist had a different racial identity?

What might Saar have been trying to say with the artwork's title?

**Reflection** With a partner, take some time to reflect:

- How did it feel to have that conversation as a class?
- What aspects felt comfortable? What felt uncomfortable?
- What did you learn?
- How might we have even more productive conversations about race and racism next time?
- What is one thing you would like to learn next in order to work toward a more equitable society?

<sup>1</sup> Betye Saar, in conversation with Carol S. Eliel in the artist's studio, Los Angeles, March 19, 2018, cited in Carol S. Eliel, *Betye Saar: Call and Response* (Munich, London, New York: DelMonico Books-Prestel, 2019), 62.

**Curriculum  
Connections**

ELA Speaking and Listening Standards 6–12

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. 2. Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

California Visual Arts Contents Standards 6–12

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

CONNECTING—Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

California History and Social Science Standards.11–12

11.11 Students analyze the major social problems and domestic policy issues in contemporary American society.