

The Museum of Modern Art

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO PRESENT ITS FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION OF THE ARTIST BETYE SAAR AND HER ICONIC WORK *BLACK GIRL'S WINDOW*

Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window

October 21, 2019 – January 4, 2020

Floor Two, Paul J. Sachs Galleries

NEW YORK, October 10, 2019—The Museum of Modern Art announces ***Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window***, an in-depth solo exhibition exploring the deep ties between the artist's iconic autobiographical assemblage *Black Girl's Window* (1969) and her rare, early prints, made during the 1960s. On view from October 21, 2019, through January 4, 2020, *Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window* is drawn almost entirely from the Museum's collection, and highlights the recent acquisition of 42 works on paper that provide an overview of Saar's sophisticated, experimental print practice. The exhibition engages with the themes of family, history, and mysticism, which have been at the core of Saar's work from its earliest days, and traces a link from her printmaking to the assemblages for which she is best known today. *Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window* is organized by Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator, and Esther Adler, Associate Curator, with Ana Torok, Curatorial Assistant, and Nectar Knuckles, Curatorial Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art.

Saar's *Black Girl's Window* (1969), one of her best known works, is at the heart of this exhibition, which provides an opportunity for a close examination of its myriad details and references. The work also serves as a guide to the larger installation, its signature themes explored through other works that reflect the artist's lifelong muses, including her three daughters, and a range of astrological and mystical symbols. New research into the construction and materials used to create *Black Girl's Window* allows for a direct link to be made between Saar's prints in the Museum's collection and the assemblage itself. *Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girl's Window* is also the first dedicated examination of Saar's work as a printmaker, demonstrating how her interest in found objects and assemblage appears even in her early works on paper through her experimental practice.

A major figure in postwar art, Betye Saar (b. 1926) has lived and worked in Los Angeles her entire life, and is part of a generation of artists who pursued assemblage there during the 1960s and '70s, which also included Edward Kienholz, John Outterbridge, and Noah Purifoy. Although best known for sculptures made from found materials, particularly those that challenge derogatory stereotypes of African Americans, Saar's earliest independent works are prints. Working in a range of techniques, including intaglio and lithography, she created works on paper that reveal a comfort with experimentation and an early interest in incorporating physical traces of the world within her art. The Museum now has the largest public collection of Saar's printed work, which remains largely unknown even to those familiar with her oeuvre.

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The prints will be juxtaposed in the exhibition with *Black Girl's Window* and a number of other early window assemblages.

SPONSORSHIP:

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PUBLICATION:

Published in conjunction with the exhibition is a new installment of our One on One series, on Betye Saar's *Black Girl's Window*. Written by Esther Adler and Christophe Cherix, the publication explores Saar's early career, gives insight into her sources, and brings in the artist's voice to illuminate that exceptional work. Saar created *Black Girl's Window* in 1969, assembling found images and fragments of her own prints and mounting them in a discarded window frame. At center, an arresting painted image of a girl confronts the viewer through parted curtains, her hands pressed against a pane of glass. The work offers a bridge between Saar's best-known sculptural pieces and her less-often-seen works on paper, as it draws on supernatural systems, political imagery, and the artist's personal history to create an object of astonishing resonance. 48 pages, 33 illustrations. Softcover, \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-63345-076-9. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world.

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