

By the time Betye Saar (American, born 1926) made her assemblage *Black Girl's Window*, in 1969, she had already established an impactful artistic career. Five decades later, *Black Girl's Window* still exemplifies an important turning point in Saar's body of work: It is the first in which she combined her interests in family, history, and the mystical with her growing need to comment on social and political injustice in America. And it marks the beginning of her practice of incorporating found objects in her artwork, thereby connecting with the past while transforming it.

The artistic language that Saar debuted in *Black Girl's Window* originated in her printmaking, which she began studying in 1962. "Printmaking was a great seducer," she recalled, "because the technique sucked me in." Finding time between her responsibilities as a mother, she explored etching impressions of a variety of materials and items, such as fabric and rubber stamps, to produce an array of visual elements that she brought together in unified compositions. Saar turned printmaking into an imaginative collage of preexisting imagery, creating a body of work focused on both the personal and the universal. Some of her prints made their way into *Black Girl's Window*, in which she expanded the approach she had developed into three dimensions with the addition of sculptural elements. Examined in depth here for the first time in Saar's career, the prints show the wide-ranging experimentation that led to this shift. They reflect an interest in exploring the unknown, not unlike the girl pressed against a window, both looking out and looking in.

Organized by Christophe Cherix, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings and Prints, and Esther Adler, Associate Curator, with Ana Torok, Curatorial Assistant, and Nectar Knuckles, Curatorial Fellow, Department of Drawings and Prints.

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