

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Betye Saar

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Saar, Betye
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar,
Dates:	July 20, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:01:14).
Abstract:	Visual artist Betye Saar (1926 -) was the first African American woman to have an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York. Saar was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 20, 2017, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_116
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Visual artist Betye Saar was born on July 20, 1926 in Los Angeles, California to Jefferson Maze Brown and Beatrice Lillian Parson. After the passing of her father in 1931, Saar and her family moved to Pasadena, California to live with her great-aunt, Hattie Parson Keys. Saar earned her B.A. degree in design, with a minor in sociology, from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1949. She later took graduate level classes in design at multiple institutions in California, but changed her artistic focus after taking a printmaking class.

After graduating from the University of California, Saar briefly worked as a social worker until she met jewelry artist Curtis Tann. She began making assemblages in 1967. After being inspired by the Watts Riots, an exhibit by Joseph Cornell, and the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Saar began making politically themed artwork. Her first and most well-known piece, was *The Liberation of Aunt Jemima*. Throughout her artistic career, Saar's artwork has been displayed at prominent art museums. In 1975, she held her first solo show at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York and was the first African American woman to have her art on display there. The following year, Saar participated in her first commercial gallery show at the Monique Knowlton Gallery in New York.

Saar has won many awards for her artwork throughout her career. She received two National Endowment for the Arts Awards, in 1974 and 1984. Saar also received the J. Paul Getty Fund for the Visual Arts Fellowship, the Artist Award from the Studio Museum in Harlem in 1990, as well as the Distinguished Artist Award from Fresno Art Museum in 1993, and the Flintridge Foundation Visual Artists Award. In 1994, Saar represented the U.S. at the 22nd Biennial of Sao Paulo in Brazil. In 2005, the University of Michigan Museum of Art organized the traveling exhibition *Betye Saar: Extending the Frozen Moment* which examined her incorporation of photographic fragments in her work. In 2008, she was recognized for her career in art and community activism and was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award in Fine Arts from the Congressional Black Caucus.

Saar has three daughters: Lezley, Alison, and Tracey.

Betye Saar was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 19, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Betye Saar was conducted by Harriette Cole on July 20, 2017, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Visual artist Betye Saar (1926 -) was the first African American woman to have an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Saar, Betye

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Saar, Betye--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Visual Artist

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, July 20, 2017. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_001, TRT: 1:27:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_002, TRT: 2:26:44 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_003, TRT: 3:29:23 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_004, TRT: 4:29:17 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_005, TRT: 5:30:05 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_006, TRT: 6:30:01 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Betye Saar, Section A2017_116_001_007, TRT: 7:07:56 ?