

Betye Saar

Blend

October 15 – December 17, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 15th, 6-8pm

Roberts & Tilton is pleased to announce Betye Saar's *Blend*, the final segment of a two-part survey spanning both gallery spaces. An exhibition of mixed media works from 1987 – 2016, *Blend* continues Saar's exploration of color as a means to engage with a multiplicity of techniques, images, and ideas. Whereas the first installment, entitled *Black White*, introduced how specific ideas are expressed through the descriptive qualities of black and white, *Blend* is less of an application than integration.



Betye Saar *Mojotech*, 1987
Mixed Media assemblage, 76 x 294 x 16 in (193.0 x 746.8 x 40.6 cm)

If we are to interpret *Black White* as an attitude, characterized not by its fidelity to an organizing principle but rather by its sharpness of delivery, then *Blend* is an exhale out. The release of tension, heaviness. The works on view are defined by several distinct qualities: they are ambiguous, arbitrary, and abstract. Seen together, the predominate color is a subdued, nonspecific grey. Even works incorporating vivid neon and flashes of blue remain grounded to grey platforms and plinths. What is seen as a formulated shade is in fact its essence: what it implies, or suggests. It is as much a sensibility, mood, texture or weight than a color.

Grey in itself is an enigmatic color: a color of contradictions; unsettling and expectant; nearly unidentifiable. Unlike white or black, grey doesn't subscribe to a specific belief system. It is here where *Blend* takes shape: in the reversal of expectations in terms of color, texture, and proportion. A slow burn.



Betye Saar and *Mojotech*, 1987, M.I.T. Residency (April 24 – June 28, 1987)

Saar's eagerness and curiosity in recontextualizing the familiar as alien, or magic, is none more so apparent than *Mojotech* (1987), a major work conceived when she was an artist in residence at M.I.T.

A meditation on the intersections between tribal and technological magic, personal offerings including charms, amulets, and voodoo symbols share space alongside discarded circuit boards, electronic objects, and other technological debris reconfigured as sacred objects.

Saar has long used her work as an organizing force for ritualized exchanges, rendering visible the experiential. It is in this gesture of reaching back that informs how Saar's integration of collectivistic cultural orientations with individualistic practices collapses the boundaries between the natural and the manufactured, the historical against the present, the distance between black and white.

Blend and *Black White* will remain on view through December 17, 2016.

Betye Saar (b.1926) is one of the most important artists of her generation, playing a seminal role in the development of Assemblage art. Since the 1960s, her work has reflected on African-American identity, spirituality and the connectedness between different cultures.

Saar's work can be found in the permanent collections of more than 60 museums, including Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others.

Current exhibitions include "Betye Saar: Uneasy Dancer" Fondazione Prada, Milan, curated by Elvira Dyangani Ose (September 2016); "Visual Art and the American Experience" Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, D.C., organized by Lonnie Bunch III (September 2016). Recent exhibitions include "America Is Hard to See" Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016); "Take an Object" Museum of Modern Art, New York, organized by Cara Manes (2016); "A Constellation" The Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, organized by Amanda Hunt (2016); and "Betye Saar: Still Tickin'" Museum De Domijnen, Sittard, The Netherlands, curated by Roel Arkesteijn (2015) and then traveled to the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona, curated by Sara Cochran, PhD (2016).

Forthcoming solo exhibitions include "Betye Saar: Ritual" Art Basel Miami Beach, Survey and Film Sectors (December 2016) and "Betye Saar" Craft & Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, curated by Holly Jerger (May 2017). Forthcoming group exhibitions include but are not limited to "We Wanted A Revolution: Black Radical Women, 1965-1985" Brooklyn Museum, NY, curated by Catherine Morris and Rujeko Hockley (April 2017) and "Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power", Tate Modern, London, England, curated by Mark Godfrey, Zoe Whitley and Julia Bailey (July 2017).

Saar received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1949, with graduate studies at California State University at Long Beach, the University of Southern California and California State University at Northridge. She has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees by California College of Arts and Crafts, California Institute of the Arts, Massachusetts College of Art, Otis College of Art & Design, and the San Francisco Art Institute.

For additional information, please contact Mary Skarbek: 323.549.0223 and mary@robertsandtilton.com
Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00am - 6:00pm.

Roberts & Tilton is located between Fairfax Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard.

Parking is available on the street and at Dunn Edwards located 1/2 block east of the gallery.