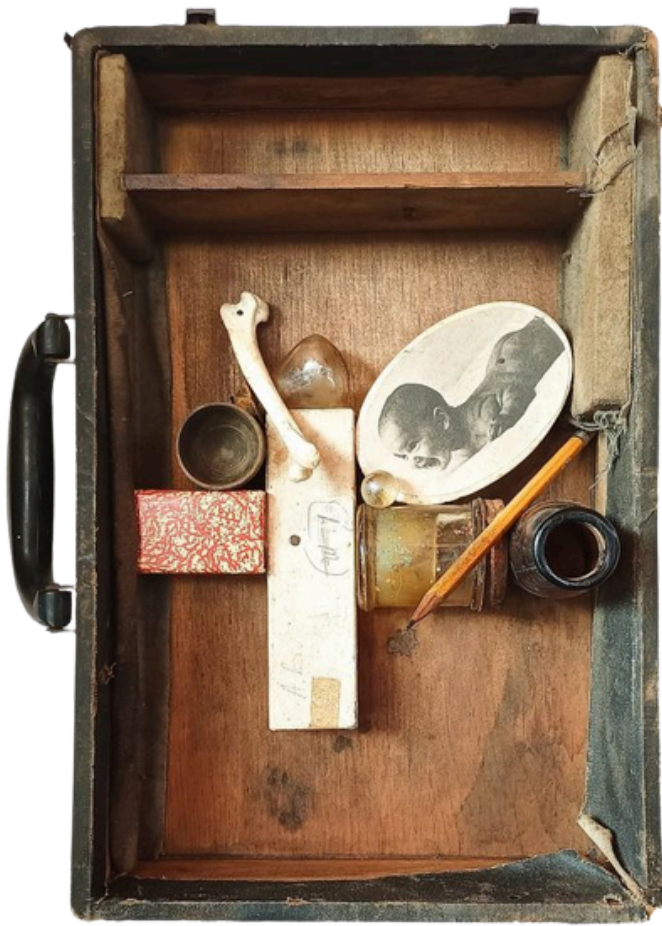




Story-based assemblages exploring Black history, memory, injustice, resilience, and the stories carried by objects.

Several works are dedicated specifically to the history and legacy of enslavement in the United States.



**you will be killed if they find you with a pencil | 14x11x4 in.**

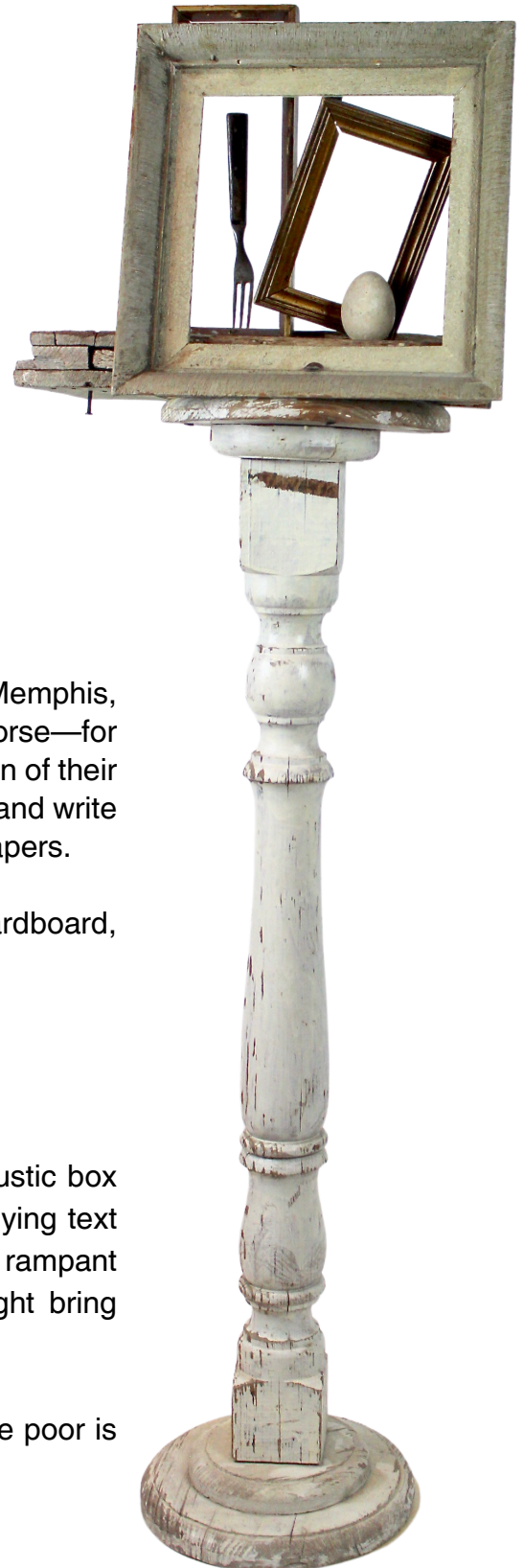
After visiting the Slave Haven Museum and the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, I learned that enslaved people could be severely punished—or worse—for attempting to read or write. I saw photographs documenting the mutilation of their hands. White enslavers feared that an enslaved person who could read and write would become too powerful—and might forge their own emancipation papers.

Vintage wood, glass bottles (with unknown substance), marble, cardboard, image, light-bulb, bone and pencil.

**hunger, revisited | 47x15x10 in.**

Many years ago, I created a piece called *Hunger*. It was crafted in a rustic box and included a single piece of wire and a rusty tin can. The accompanying text spoke of the years I'd spent as a psychiatric social worker and the rampant poverty I witnessed in the lives of my clients. I hoped the piece might bring attention to—and advocacy for—the difficulties people face.

All these years later, I created this piece, cognizant that the plight of the poor is ever present—and the hunger hasn't gone away.







### kitchen chattel, it's dangerous inside

This work was created in the days following the death of assemblage artist and activist Betye Saar, whose work has deeply influenced my own. It is an homage to the enslaved women who labored inside plantation homes — living under the constant gaze of the enslavers. I wonder if it was more dangerous inside the house than in the fields?

More intimate. More unpredictable. More vulnerable.

The small red berry references the practice of enslavers marking dishes and utensils with a red dot for Black people to use. The word *chattel* was the legal term once used to classify enslaved human beings as property rather than people. Chain, nails, wood, fabric, spoon, red berry.

### collars and cuffs | 8x7x7 in.

This vintage box, embossed with the words “Collars + Cuffs,” was originally designed to store the cotton collars and cuffs of privileged men when they weren’t being worn.

This piece uses cotton that I picked from an Alabama plantation after visiting slave trading sites and the National Lynching Memorial.

The work also features an image of a young Black man, his fist blurred and caught in motion, along with glass, nails, and rusty chains.

Together, these elements pay homage to the millions who suffered during slavery—and since.







**unrecorded | 8x6x2 in.**

This assemblage was created in response to learning about the recently discovered unmarked graves of 230 Black boys (some as young as five) buried on the grounds of the House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children in Cheltenham, Maryland.

It is believed the boys died from illness, starvation, exhaustion, and abuse.

Not one of their deaths had been recorded.

Leather, paper, cardboard, cork, nail, ball bearings, found writing. Encased in a wood and glass frame.

**unless it moves the human heart | 11x13x2.5 in.**

This title is borrowed from a book by Roger Rosenblatt. As with much of my work, I was drawn to creating an assemblage that speaks to the history, trauma, and horror experienced by those who were enslaved—and to the innumerable ways that history continues to affect the human heart.

Wood, leather, seed pod, vintage safety pin, marble, plaster picture frame, glass jar, chalk, spool of various threads. Encased in a wood and glass frame.





**and yet not broken | 7x9x2 in.**

This piece speaks to the resilience of those who were formerly enslaved—and to those who, in one way or another, remain enslaved by the legacy of slavery. Freedom did not erase what came before it. The wounds, injustices, and consequences continue to shape lives today.

Tin can, nail, frame, found image.



**what if the opposite were true? | 8x6x7.5 in.**

An image of Harry Belafonte, activist and financier of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s, is featured in the center of this work, along with a glass vessel for symbolically capturing the tears of those affected.

The question raised in this piece was inspired by a visit to the National Lynching Memorial and the suffering, torture and murder that happened there.

I ask: What if thousands of white women and men had been hanged by Black men, their lynchings witnessed and celebrated by Black Americans—wearing their finest Sunday best, taking pictures, and selling postcards—just as white Americans did to Black people?



**slave #10542, out on bale (chain) | 4x3x5 in.**

This vintage postcard, actually titled *Out on Bale*, features a young Black boy sitting atop a bale of cotton—likely photographed in the midst of the labor that produced it.

I dare to imagine what the publishers hoped to advertise: cotton, plantation life, tourism, or some sanitized version of the South built on enslaved labor?

Somehow, his labor became a postcard.

Cardboard, vintage postcard, found text, plastic.



**momma, don't let your babies grow up to be addicts | 4x5x2 in.**

When we bring babies into the world, we never imagine that they might grow up to become addicts. And yet, millions of us live with that pain each day.

This work is an homage to those parents and children who are working toward recovery.

The baby shoe was discovered in my mother-in-law's house; it once belonged to my husband—66 years ago. The glass vials are said to be from a meth lab in California.







**tool, utensil (for Betye Saar) | 13x3x2 in.**

Often when I sit at my workbench, it's as though I'm channeling the inspiration of other artists. I'm always grateful for their company:) For this piece, *tool, utensil*, Betye Saar, a famed activist, textile and assemblage artist who worked into her late 90s, was my muse.

Fork, knife, pin, textile, ball bearing, cardboard, found text and image.



**keeping up with the Joneses | 17x21x6 in.**

A black doll, rescued from a local fire, her clothing torn, is the focal point for this work about striving for a better life, an escape from hardship. An empty bottle and a rusted soda can complete the piece and speaks to the nutritional choices we are forced to make while living in poverty.



**an oral history of slavery in my family | 6x20x5 in.**

Vintage, handcrafted, hinged box with metal hardware—and sealed with concrete.

While researching slavery in Delaware for a historical fiction novel I was writing, I discovered that enslaved people had lived where I grew up. And yet, somehow, no one ever talked about it. My family certainly didn't have the money to own people, as far as I know.

But the possibility that enslaved people might have lived close by—and that something as enormous as slavery could simply be buried, unspoken, sealed away—stayed with me.

Family secrets are not to be shared, obviously. Yet I ask: what of the things we deliberately don't remember?