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GALLERY

FLAUNT



David Hammons. "Spade (Power for the Spade)," 1969.

PRINT MEDIA: L.A. OBJECT & DAVID HAMMONS BODY PRINTS

It was the era of civil rights. Racial tensions had reached a boiling point. The 1965 Watts Riots had left the heavily African-American neighborhood bloodied, battered, and littered with wreckage. Most saw trash—piles of charred wood, metal scraps, chicken bones, and dirty rags, lying in the streets. Others saw a gold mine of inspiration. They saw art supplies, weathered and worn, but with a built-in story to tell. *L.A. Object & David Hammons Body Prints* sheds light on the history of Los Angeles' volatile 1960s and '70s assemblage movement, and its often overlooked artists.

L.A. Object looks in-depth at the artists affected during this racially charged time – how they turned discrimination into creative fuel, producing sculptural assemblages from the array of discarded objects they stumbled upon. Junk was democratic, artist Noah Purifoy summarized, it didn't discriminate against those with less advantage because it was free. No matter each artist's specialty, they were united in each individual's need to transform their emotions into tangible, physical manifestations. Mostly, they each had

something to say. Their art reacted to the social/political landscape, and encouraged its audience to think, change, and engage more in their own lives.

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David Hammons, easily the most visible of the L.A. assemblage artists, is featured for his haunting, thought-provoking body prints that speak of the African-American experience, often parodying somber topics to make his points. Yet, *L.A. Object* offers up a satisfying spectrum of influential assemblage artists. The collection includes Betye Saar's mystical-inspired window collages, John Outterbridge's voodoo-like rag dolls, Noah Purifoy's mixed media installations, and more.



BETEY SAAR STUDIO-1970 PHOTO CREDIT BOB NAKAMURA-L.A. CAL

Betye Saar in her studio, 1970. Photo by Robert A. Nakamura. Courtesy Tilton Gallery, New York and Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA.

If nothing else, *L.A. Object* is intriguing for illuminating a relatively ignored creative movement, in the context of the explosive events that inspired it. However, it is the essays that are most fascinating, written by those who experienced these times and artists firsthand. These colorful, revealing stories give this book life, educating the public about a raw, reactionary art form that shows beauty can be found in the most unlikely of places.



Darcy Robinson and Judson Powell with Noah Purifoy's Barrel and Plow, 1966. Photo by Harry Drinkwater. Courtesy Tilton Gallery, New York and Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA.



David Hammons making body prints, Slauson Avenue studio, Los Angeles, 1974. Photo by Bruce W. Talamon. Courtesy Tilton Gallery, New York and Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA.

L.A. Object & David Hammons Body Prints is edited by Connie Rogers Tilton and Lindsay Charlwood. The book is available from the Tilton Gallery, New York; Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, CA; and D.A.P.

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