

# whitewall



Alison Saar, "Mutiny of the Sable Venus (study)," 2022, 84 x 39 in., indigo dye, charcoal, and acrylic on found seed sacks; courtesy of the artist and L.A. Louver.

ART

## Uproot by Alison Saar is a Powerful Meditation on Black Womanhood at L.A. Louver

By Erica Silverman  
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**Alison Saar's** exhibition "Uproot," is currently on view through March 11 at [L.A. Louver](#) in Venice, CA. debuted new poignant sculptures and paintings by the artist. In a powerful dedication to the fortitude of Black women, Saar journeys into the historical truths of Black womanhood within the realms of gender inequality and reproductive rights in the United States.

*Mutiny of the Sable Venus* (2022), a towering sculpture over seven feet-tall showcases Saar's skilled use of materials such as wood, copper, and ceiling tin, juxtaposing histories for a reclaimed, renewed narrative. The visionary expertly layers an array of meaningful symbols and imagery directly within her own sculpture work: the Sable Venus, known as a heinous misrepresentation of the transatlantic slave trade embodied by a Black Venusian figure; **Eugène Delacroix's** iconic painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), illustrating the July Revolution in Paris which overthrew **King Charles X**; and the African diasporic Yemaya water deity of reproductive health. Saar pays

distinct homage to revolts by enslaved peoples and reimagines the Sable Venus as a guarding, restorative symbol of light and positivity. The shining Sable Venus, adorned with bold blue lips, stands atop a capable catfish holding a protective machete in one hand, once used for harvesting sugarcane, and a large white conch shell in the other, symbolizing an energetic call to arms as well as fertility and a catharsis of mother earth.



Alison Saar, "Uproot," 2022, 106 x 27 1/2 in., charcoal and acrylic on vintage patched cotton picking bag, found hooks and chain; courtesy of the artist and L.A. Louver.

As a direct reaction to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the U.S. Supreme Court, Saar imparts the history of African American herbalism and self-induced abortions by enslaved people through charcoal and acrylic painted canvas sacks, nearly nine feet-tall, which were once used for harvesting cotton. Titled *Uproot* (2022) and *Plucked* (2022), the ivory-colored, patched vintage bags hang from hook and chain, depicting the ingestion of herbs by Black women to terminate pregnancies and therefore spare future lives from persecution and inhumanity.

In additional works which expand upon previous explorations of societal devaluation, *Kink Liberation Army* (2022), *Congolene Resistance* (2022), and *DeConkiefied* (2022) celebrate the virtues of Black hair while alluding to the harsh straightening products that have been known to cause uterine cancer. Through an exhibition of fierce creativity and enlightenment, Saar pays tribute to the bravery of Black women against ever-evolving adversity.



Alison Saar, "Mutiny of the Sable Venus," 2022, 89 x 24 x 57 in., wood, copper, ceiling tin, shell, and found metal shapes and sickle; courtesy of the artist and L.A. Louver.



Alison Saar, "Fanning the Fire II," 1989, lead and painted tin nailed over wooden armature, 97 x 30 x 22 inches, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, gift of Jeanne and Michael Klein in honor of the African American Art Advisory Association; © Alison Saar, courtesy of L.A. Louver, Venice, California, photograph © The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Thomas R. DuBrock.

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