



Congolene Resistance

Date

2021

Primary Maker

Alison Saar

Medium

Screen print, acrylic spray paint, and gloss varnish on aluminum tin

Description

Alison Saar's Congolene Resistance is meant to resemble the top of a tub of Congolene, a hair relaxer popular with Black men between the 1920s and the 1960s. However, the figure in Saar's image proudly boasts "stubborn and kinky" natural hair while biting down on a hot comb. In mimicking a product that was used to tame natural hair, Saar instead creates a badgelike symbol of defiance. For Saar, the daughter of acclaimed assemblage artist

Betye Saar and art conservator Richard Saar, natural hair is a crucial element of her identity as a biracial woman. Several of her works consequently depict natural hair as a response to racism and sexism.

Dimensions

Overall: 18 1/2 in. x 18 1/2 in. x 2 in. (47 x 47 x 5.1 cm)