

The deeply personal pieces in my "Ain't I a Woman?" series (*The title of the project is from a speech by Sojourner Truth*) were created in response to learning that I had slaveowners in my family history. I was born in the North, but moved to the shallow south of Maryland and Virginia some thirty years ago. It was not until I began to research my ancestry that I discovered my "ancient planter" southern roots. Underneath those roots were buried the lives of generations of enslaved people, and into my karmic lineage fell the sudden, swift burden of an outstanding debt, unpaid.

I have spent the past several years trying to come to terms with this unholy legacy; using my art practice to work through this emotional debt. I searched through generations of family records and slave schedules to discover where my ancestors had lived and the numbers, though rarely the names, of the people who were uprooted from their own lands to work the lands of a strange shore. I used vintage found photographs alongside my original photography and created a series of photographic mixed media works layering maps and period documents to re-member and bring dignity to people robbed of their rightful stories. The titles from this series are taken from the words of the *Black National Anthem*, "Lift Every Voice" written by James Weldon Johnson. In this series of images I hope to bring light to a dark chapter in American history and give voice to untold stories while paying forward my own form of soul reparations, however inadequate.