

[Rembert Artist Website](#)

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## Winfred Rembert (American, 1945-2021)

Read an article in [Folk Art Messenger](#) that includes direct quotes from the artist telling his own story.

The 2013 exhibition *Winfred Rembert: Amazing Grace* at the [Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts](#) was the first major museum exhibition dedicated to the artist's work.

Rembert was a USA Fellow with United States Artists in 2016. Read his [profile](#) for the fellowship.

"I'm 71. But I still wake up screaming and reliving things that happened to me." Listen to the [NPR StoryCorps Interview](#), "He Survived a Near-Lynching. 50 Years Later, He's Still Healing."

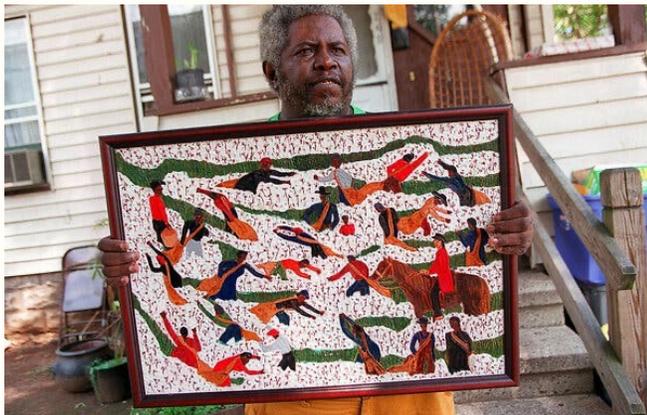
*Southern Roots: Winfred Rembert* traveled to the Muskegon Museum of Art and the Butler Institute of American Art. Scroll through [installation images](#) from the MMA and the [webpage](#) from the exhibition at BIAA.

Watch a discussion between Dr. Shirley Jackson Whitaker, Winfred Rembert, and Taylor Rees about the film [Ashes to Ashes: Two Artists Addressing Racial Injustice in America](#), sponsored by the Commonwealth Club of California.

Rembert passed away in 2021 at the age of 75. Read his [obituary](#) in the New York Times and a [remembrance](#) in the Yale Daily News (Rembert spent the last decades of his life in New Haven, Connecticut). The Equal Justice Initiative also published a [thoughtful account of the artist's life](#) upon his death.



Rembert, n.d.  
Photograph: Renan Ozturk



Rembert at his home in New Haven, Connecticut  
Photograph: Suzanne DeChillo

Rembert collaborated with Erin I. Kelly to write the memoir *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist's Memoir of the Jim Crow South*. Kelly visited the artist's home every two weeks from 2018 to 2020, transcribing and arranging his reflections so he could tell his story in his own words. Read a [New Yorker article](#) of excerpts, listen to an [NPR story](#) about the publication of the book, and read the article in [Harvard Magazine](#), "Open Book: Hiding in a Tick Mattress," about the project. Watch a [conversation](#) between Erin I. Kelly and Patsy Rembert, Winfred's widow, upon the publication of the memoir.

The 2021 exhibition [Winfred Rembert: 1945-2021](#) opened at Fort Gansevoort's Meatpacking location in New York. The posthumous exhibition included 23 figurative, tooled leather works. An article in [Cultured](#), "Every American Should See Artist Winfred Rembert's Pivotal Truths" discusses the exhibition and its impact.

Watch a trailer and learn about the film [All Me: The Life and Times of Winfred Rembert](#). The full film is available on Amazon.

Winfred Rembert (American, 1945-2021)

**Cracking Rocks**, 2011

Dye on carved and tooled leather

Private Collection; L2021:141.1

“I want Black people to be proud of what their families sacrificed and how they survived. I want people who have lived in the South to talk about their history.” Born and raised in Cuthbert Georgia, Winfred Rembert was a self-taught artist and activist. Rembert was arrested at a civil rights demonstration in 1965 and held without charges for a year, narrowly surviving an attempted lynching by white police officers when he escaped the prison in 1967. For the next seven years in incarceration, Rembert worked on chain gangs and began learning leather tooling from “T.J. the Tooler.” **Cracking Rocks** is a poignant reflection of the artist’s experience. The sea of Black men laboring in a rock quarry are almost blurred into abstraction with their black-and-white striped uniforms. Rendered in leather, a malleable but strong material, the work confronts blatant dehumanization in the modern prison-industrial complex.

Rembert passed away in March 2021 at the age of 75. His memoir, *Chasing Me to My Grave: An Artist’s Memoir of the Jim Crow South* was published shortly after his death and is now widely available.

*On view March 16 – June 19, 2022*

