



**SONYA CLARK**

# SONYA CLARK

Snyderman Gallery  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
October 1, 2011 – November 19, 2011

Southwest School of Art  
San Antonio, Texas  
December 8, 2011 – February 12, 2012

Front Cover. *Adrienne's Tale*

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**SONYA CLARK**

— HERITAGE —

CULTURED PEARLS

14 KT. GOLD



## Foreword

It is an honor to present Sonya Clark's solo exhibition at the Southwest School of Art. Her works, charged with meaning and message, are made even more powerful by the evocative materials and physical processes she employs. Trained in the fiber arts, Clark today weaves together not threads but ideas and symbols in order to produce elegant yet demanding works of art.

The visceral but quotidian properties of her works, as well as their exquisite execution, force our attention, compelling the viewer to grapple with their sweeping implications. To explore the poignancy and potency of lineage and the biases of history through works of art requires unique cognitive and perceptive skills.

We are grateful to Sonya Clark for sharing those skills with us and also to Rick Snyderman of Snyderman Gallery in Philadelphia, our partner in this exhibition, and to essayists, Ashley Kistler of Richmond, Virginia and Namita Gupta Wiggers of Portland, Oregon.

**PAULA OWEN**  
President, Southwest School of Art

## Acknowledgements

### Recently I gained a new ancestor.

He was a man who understood if you possess passion, work would never seem burdensome, challenges blossomed into opportunities, and dedication yielded blessings. My father, Ranville Clark, taught me these life lessons in his relentlessly kind way. This exhibition is dedicated to him.

My father also taught me to be grateful. Friends, family, and mentors including Darryl Harper, Lilleth Clark, Henry Drewal, Joyce Scott, Bill Gaskins, Johnnetta Cole, Lowery Stokes Sims, Nick Cave, Gerhardt Knodel, and Leah Gilliam have exemplified how to walk in the world as creative people. The Dean's Office at Virginia Commonwealth University, my right hand in the Department of Craft/Material Studies, Deborah Quick, and my studio assistants Meg Roberts, Andrea Donnelly, and Amy Weiks have helped this exhibit come to fruition. Ideas for the newer pieces came while I was a Smithsonian Artist Research Fellow where I had access to the outstanding curators and collections. I am indebted to the essayists and each of the individuals at the Southwest School of Art and Snyderman Gallery for their perspectives and assistance.

## Artist Statement

### I investigate simple objects as cultural interfaces.

Through them I navigate accord and discord. I am instinctively drawn to things that connect to my personal narrative as a point of a departure: a comb, a piece of cloth, or a strand of hair. I wonder how each comes to have meaning collectively. What is the history of the object? How does it function? Why is it made of a certain material? How did its form evolve? These questions and their answers direct the structure, scale, and material choices in my work.

### Charged with agency, otherwise passive objects have the mysterious ability to reflect or absorb us.

I find my image, my personal story, in an object. But it is also the object's ability to act as a rhizome, the multiple ways in which it can be discovered or read, that draws me in. To sustain my practice, I milk the object and question the viewer about these collective meanings. My stories, your stories, our stories are held in the object. I work in series to reframe the object as a mediated compilation of our stories. In this way, the everyday "thing" becomes a lens through which we may better see one another.

SONYA CLARK, 2011

[www.sonyaclark.com](http://www.sonyaclark.com)











# Sonya Clark: Corporeal Materiality

NAMITA GUPTA WIGGERS

Curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft, in partnership with Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon

Hair, as Sonya Clark reminds us, is a primordial fiber. It is the first thread we handle, a deceptively mundane material we often dismiss or ignore in its singular form despite its ability to quietly contain our genetic history within each individual strand. When still intact on our heads, this collection of strands is shaped to communicate our identities, tortured into submission if it does not obey our desires, and most frequently made to behave in direct opposition to its natural state. It is here, in the space where hair functions as a cultural signifier that Sonya Clark's artwork resides. But it is not hair in general which occupies the questions in Clark's work; it is hair that belongs to her and from those in her community, that resides on the body and is manipulated through her cultural experiences and history. Her work calls our attention to black hair, hair which – for and on Clark – is tough and tightly coiled in its natural state, but can be made straight, braided, shaped, flattened, woven, and extended.<sup>1</sup>

The use of hair as a “ladies craft” is not new. During the Victorian period, for example, hair was used in a wide

displayed under crystals in the manner of gemstones to braided bracelet chains and elaborate wall displays with hair shaped into flowers or rings with private chambers to hold a loved one's locks. Clark's work, however, is not overtly sentimental, romantic, or part of the better known *memento mori* tradition. It operates, instead, in multiple public realms from the contemporary artscape to the global culturescape.

Through Clark's hands, hair exits the messiness of the studio and is tamed for the white cube. Here, too, Clark's work is distinctive. The hair to which she calls our attention is curly and highly textured; it is not the silky, long tresses Hrafnildur Arnadottir manipulates into hairpieces, a substitute for embroidery floss as used by Anne Wilson to “mend” wounded linens, or reduced to a single line as in Melanie Bilenger's “drawings.” The hair to which Clark calls our attention is that which forms a tangle of fibers, a ball of fibrous energy that can be barely contained between two hands (*Mom's Wisdom or Cotton Candy*, 2011).<sup>2</sup> It is hair that makes dreadlocks and from a friend which Clark hangs in *Adrienne's Tale* (2008), creating long, pendulous

sculptural forms reminiscent of Eva Hesse's material explorations. Clark embraces the specificities of her hair, challenging the preconceived cultural notions embedded in such polarities as rough versus silky.

Madam CJ Walker looms physically and psychologically large in Clark's work. Self-made businesswoman Sarah Breedlove McWilliams, a.k.a. Madam Walker (1867-1919), became the first African American millionaire through the sale of hair care products to “help” women transform “bad” hair into “good” hair. Constructed out of meticulously manipulated black plastic combs, Clark monumentalizes Madam Walker with the very tool that most African American women with naturally curly hair, including Clark, simply do not use; that is, unless the hair has been altered as in *Untitled (Comb Rubbing and Burning)*, 2009). Her *Afro Abe* (Progression, 2008-2012) provides an extreme contrast on the other end of the spectrum, by manipulating “natural” hair into bigger and bigger forms, the growing Afro dwarfing the five dollar bill and the president responsible for emancipation of enslaved Africans

(Abraham Lincoln) while simultaneously referencing how hair was engaged during the rise of the Black Power movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

Most of the writing about Clark's work to-date emphasizes her connection to the cultures of West Africa, Yoruba in particular. Clark, who is of African and Scottish Caribbean descent, speaks eloquently of being part of a continuum that connects her to an invisible and unknown past. It is in her most recent pieces that the charged nature of this aspect of that continuum comes to the forefront. Using black thread to create corn-rowed stripes and Bantu knots for stars, Clark's *Black Hair Flag* (2010) deliberately places the "body" of black slaves into the history of the Confederacy. This new direction of object-based work continues with *3/5* (2010), in which Clark weaves three of five potential braids into a man's dress shirt, referencing a pre-Civil War compromise of 1787 in which enslaved Africans were counted as partial human beings for taxation purposes and to determine the number of officials that could be elected from any given state to the U.S. House of Representatives.

*Flat Twist on a Remnant of Idyllic Days* (2010), in which Clark obscures scenes of pastoral frolicking with specific types of braids (called flat twists), likewise, functions similarly to Fred Wilson's co-location of slave shackles with an enormous silver urn in the exhibition *Mining the Museum* (1992-1993) at the Maryland Historical Society. Both works call attention to enslaved Africans and their bodies whose physical labors enabled such privileged lifestyles.

Regardless of the medium, Clark's hands are always embedded in her process. As she notes, slaves removed from Africa may have arrived apparently empty-handed, but in fact their hands held memories of particular ways of working, making, and moving materials carried from Africa to the "New World." An embodied practitioner and educator, Clark's explorations through her material practice remind us of the complexities of culture and reify its otherwise invisible origins.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See Lowery Sims, *Fiberarts*, Jan/Feb 2009, for a discussion of the connections between African American culture and contemporary African American artists in relation to Sonya Clark's work.
- <sup>2</sup> Other artists who use hair in their work include Richard Artschwager, Nick Cave, David Hammons, Dario Robletto, and Lorna Simpson, amongst many others.

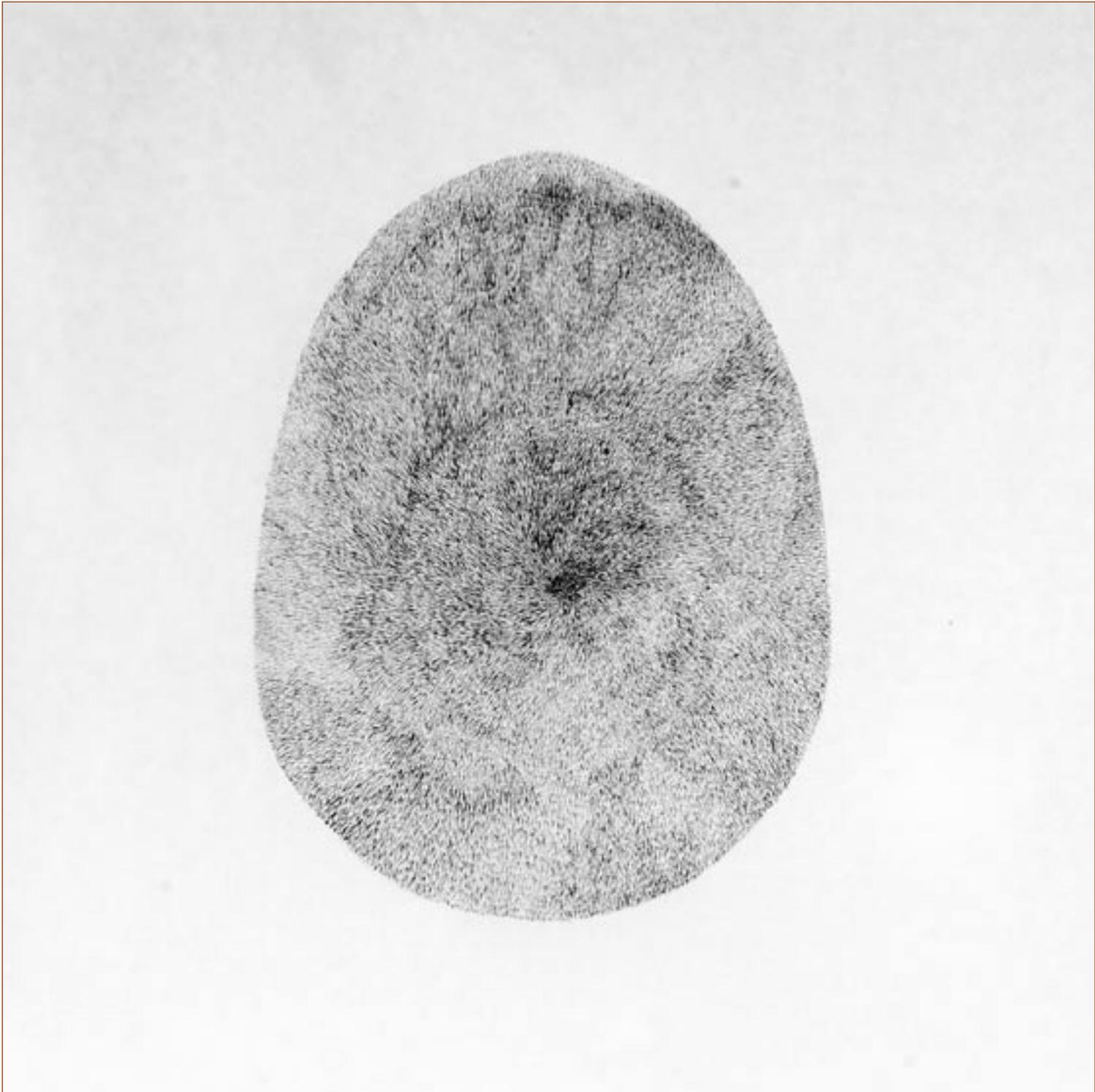


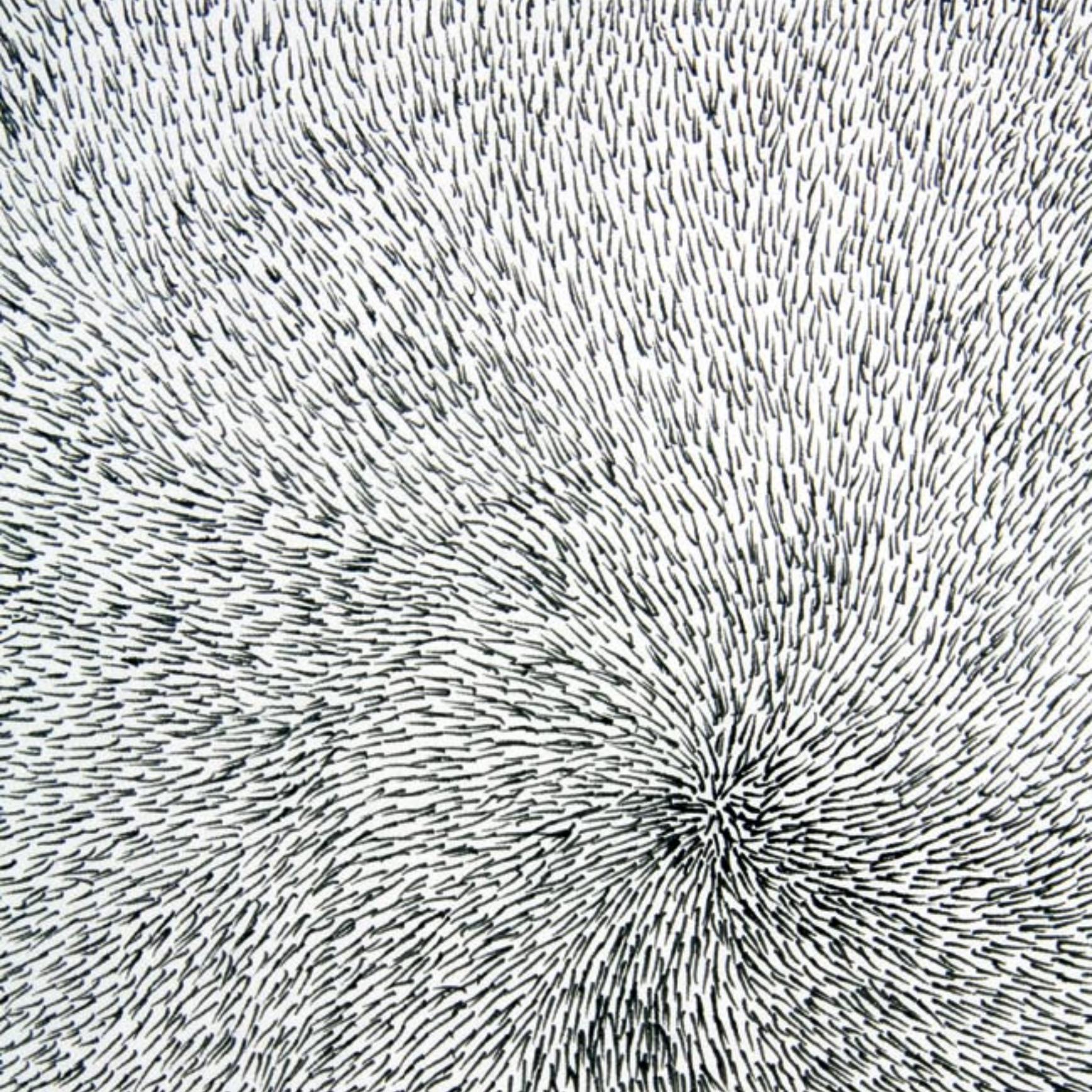
Detail. Gold Teeth



Above. Detail. In Her Own Words | Right. Detail. Mom's Wisdom or Cotton Candy













# Authentic Obsessions

**ASHLEY KISTLER**

Director, Anderson Gallery, School of the Arts, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

During a program aired in February 2010, shortly after the death of novelist J. D. Salinger, broadcast journalist Charlie Rose asked his guest and *New Yorker* essayist, Adam Gopnik, what he, as a writer, had learned from Salinger. In response, Gopnik stressed the importance of identifying the story that seems most crucial to tell and “learning to recognize that your authentic obsession... is your real material.”<sup>1</sup> This indispensable lesson shares an objective with the rite of passage known as *imori* (“knowing the head”), traditionally practiced among the Yoruba of West Africa to determine a newborn’s inner nature and destiny. Although the cultural contexts and particulars of these two situations differ vastly, both stress the essentiality of discerning and sustaining a path of genuine self-realization and expression. As professor Bolaji Campbell notes in the opening lines of an essay on the work of Sonya Clark, “Like the Yoruba diviner, we must perform the rituals of *imori* – that is, knowing the path...”<sup>2</sup>

Clark’s authentic obsession springs in part from the potent, multisensory memories of having her hair combed

and braided as a child. Seated on the floor, between the legs of a female family member or friend, she recalls the feeling of being literally tethered to that person as her hair was dressed. Her description evokes an image of birth. The space thus demarcated for this intimate activity assumed ritual, even sacred dimensions; it was where some of life’s most important lessons concerning cultural precepts and spiritual knowledge were first imparted, and surely where the many facets of an individual’s identity began to take on greater relief.

As Clark has become the accomplished maker that she is today, she has used hair as her medium and her message. She thinks and works cyclically, extracting meaning and nuance from themes that have long preoccupied her as a way of expanding her story. Some years ago, as if the muscle memory embedded in the hands of an attentive elder – remembered as rhythmic tugs on her own small scalp – was another form of knowledge passed on to her from previous generations, Clark began adopting hairstyling techniques as a textile art form. Her *Wig Series* from

the late 1990s features elaborate coiffures sculpted out of black thread atop rounded cloth caps. The honorific *Afro Abe* (*Progression*, 2008-2012) comprises seven altered five-dollar bills in which the artist crowns Lincoln’s head with an embroidered, increasingly volumetric afro. In a new group of works included in this exhibition, she augments found, sometimes historically loaded images and objects with multiple black cornrows of braided and knotted thread that blanket and dangle from their surfaces. By stitching these signifying elements onto her chosen artifacts, she layers an alternate, overtly political narrative that speaks of perseverance and continuity.

Actual hair constitutes Clark’s fiber of choice for many pieces, including the strand of small felted black balls whose title, *Heritage Pearls*, affirms the instructive legacy of intergenerational connections. Several recent works reinforce this theme in intensely personal ways. *Mom’s Wisdom or Cotton Candy*, a new photograph that reprises an earlier work entitled *Pearl of Mother*, depicts the artist’s cupped hands gently cradling a nest-like mound of her mother’s light gray

## Authentic Obsessions

hair as if holding a treasured keepsake. To make *Coming of Age*, Clark shaped her mother's hair into a dreadlock whose black fibers gradually fade to nearly white at the bottom of the thick strand. She envisions using it to create a second version of *Long Hair*; when unfurled, this digital print depicts a single 30-foot-long dreadlock that conceivably measures the growth of an individual's hair over the course of a lifetime. In these works, Clark fashions hair into lifelines that mark the passage of time and the accumulation of wisdom.

Clark extends her obsession to also embrace a basic grooming implement. She manages to wrest multiple personalities from one of the most banal objects imaginable, though her use of the plastic fine-toothed pocket comb reminds us that its connotations of racial assimilation are hardly benign. Clark has configured many hundreds of these black combs into wall-mounted, free-standing, hanging, and floor sculptures that sometimes mimic the texture and character of hair: *Twist*, *Wavy Strand*, *Curls*, and *7 Layer Tangle* name a few. Clark exploits the comb's formal properties to also produce seductive

abstract pieces like *Carpet*, as well as image-based works like *Madame CJ Walker* (large), in which she employs the teeth of the comb as her warp and weft to weave a portrait of the legendary black hair-care entrepreneur. For Clark, missing or broken teeth offer "evidence of struggle."<sup>3</sup> In *Gold Teeth*, she repairs the progressively greater number of missing teeth in a series of seven combs by inserting cast-gold replacements. These precious substitutes commemorate a legacy of hair culture, while the resulting black-and-gold pattern extols the visual rhythm of what Clark has called "a new order."<sup>4</sup> Finally, in a drawing of sequential images entitled *Consequences*, two combs assume a figurative presence as they enact an age-old ritual dance of coming together and pulling apart. Considered within the context of these inventive works, the lowly comb apparently has a great deal more versatility as an artistic medium than it does as a hairdressing tool.

Clark's preoccupation with hair not only reasserts the importance of this attribute as a conveyor of countless aspects of human identity and experience; it also underscores

the significance of its carrier, the head, which she likewise accords sustained attention. *Gele Kente Flag*, one of two early works from the mid-1990s included in the exhibition, anticipates the sculptural headdresses and intricate wigs she began shortly thereafter. Its construction reflects techniques she learned during a 1989 trip to Cote d'Ivoire, working on a strip loom in a traditional setting. The pattern of her elongated weaving intersperses blue squares with white stars and the multicolored motifs of Kente cloth across a field of red and white bands suggesting the stripes of the American flag. The syncretic design of Clark's textile reflects her desire "to strengthen the tether to my African heritage," in keeping with the content of many of her other pieces, as does its function as a wrap intended to embellish the head.<sup>5</sup> By acknowledging the head as something worthy of adornment, she affirms its status as the cardinal site of personal empowerment so integral to the spiritual beliefs of her Yoruba ancestors and herself.

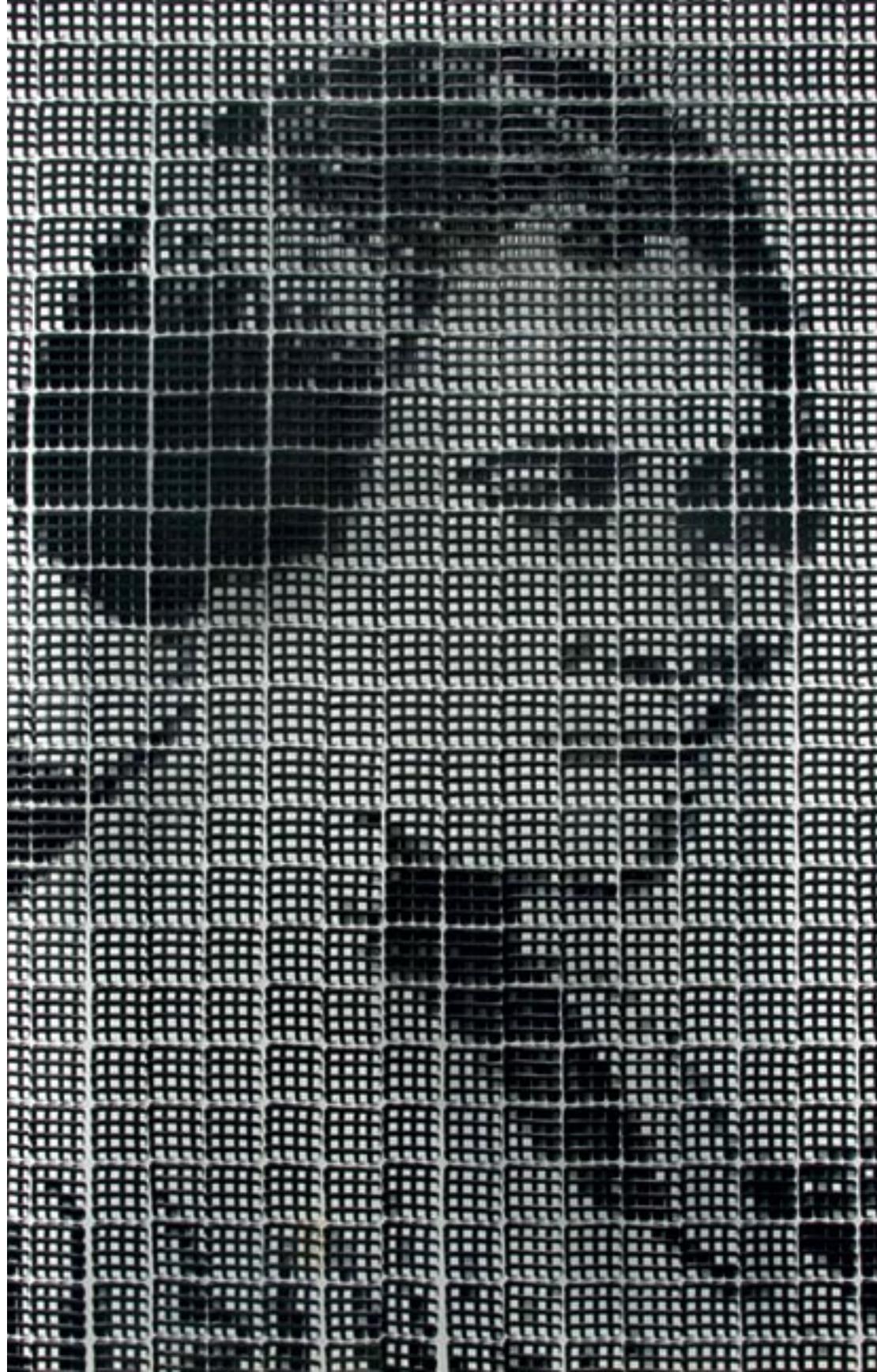
One of the most profound images in the exhibition is also one of the simplest.

Detail. *Madam CJ Walker* (large)

Clark once again pays tribute to that sacred site but, in this instance, she attends to a very particular head. Within the rounded contours of her minimal ink-on-paper drawing, she inscribes the pattern created by the stubble on top of her husband's shaved head – a constellation of marks as singular and distinctive as a fingerprint. Indeed, many aspects of Clark's authentic obsession coalesce in this lovingly rendered image.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> [www.charlierose.com/download/transcript/10841](http://www.charlierose.com/download/transcript/10841)
- <sup>2</sup> "Altars of Memory and of Identity: The Art of Sonya Clark," in *Marvels of the African World*, Niyi Afolabi, ed. (Trenton, New Jersey, and Asmara, Eritrea: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003), p. 395.
- <sup>3</sup> Introduction in *Comb Series* | Sonya Clark, self-published catalogue, 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> As quoted in Bolaji Campbell, "Altars of Memory and of Identity: The Art of Sonya Clark," p. 401.







United States of America

SERIES 2006

*John W. Snow*  
Secretary of the Treasury

FIVE B 12

FIVE

LINCOLN

DOLLARS

5



Detail. *Long Hair*

## Artist Biography

### EDUCATION

1995 M.F.A., Cranbrook Academy of Art  
1993 B.F.A., School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
1989 B.A., Amherst College

### GRANTS, AWARDS, AND RESIDENCIES

Art Matters Grant, New York, New York, 2011 - 12  
Culture Works Grant, Richmond, Virginia, 2011 - 12  
McColl Knight Residency, Charlotte, North Carolina, 2011  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Professional Fellowship, 2011  
Cranbrook Distinguished Mid-Career Alumni Award, 2011  
Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship, 2010 and 2011  
Virginia Commission for the Arts Fellowship, 2009  
Outstanding Woman in the Arts for the State of Virginia, 2009  
Rockefeller Foundation Residency, Bellagio, Italy, 2006  
Pollock Krasner Grant, 2006  
Ruth Chenven Foundation Award, 2005  
Red Gate Artist in Residence, Beijing, China, 2005  
Romnes Award, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2004  
Lillian Elliott Award, 2000  
Wisconsin Arts Board Artist Fellowship Award, 2000

### SELECTED ONE AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITS

2009 *Combs: Pieces and Parts*  
List Gallery, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania  
2008 *Loose Strands, Tight Knots*  
Walters Museum of Art, Baltimore, Maryland  
*Groom Room*  
Delaware Contemporary Art Center, Wilmington

- Transformers* (Sonya Clark and David Ellis)  
Corridor Gallery, Brooklyn, New York
- 2006 *Sonya Clark: Tangles, Teeth, and Touch*  
Cannon Gallery, North Carolina State University, Raleigh;  
Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin
- 2003 *Sonya Clark*  
Sherry Leedy Contemporary Arts, Kansas City, Missouri
- Sonya Clark*  
Galerie Goettlicher, Krems-Stein, Austria
- 2002 *Sonya Clark and Syd Carpenter*  
Stella Jones Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2001 *African Inspirations*  
University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City; Indianapolis  
Art Museum, Indiana
- Couples, Duples and Dopplegangers*  
Anderson Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan
- 2000 *Cultural Memories*  
Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, Virginia
- 1999 *Heads and Tales*  
Wisconsin Academy Gallery, Madison
- 1998 *Parted, Plaited and Piled*  
Leedy Voulkos Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri
- Diadems*  
Museum of Decorative Art, Montreal, Canada

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITS

- 2011 *Material Girls*  
Reginald Lewis Museum, Baltimore, Maryland
- 2010 *Global Africa*  
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York
- New Material World: Rethreading Technology*  
Sheldon Art Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska
- True Self*  
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin
- Hand+Mind*  
Contemporary Art Museum of Houston, Texas
- The New Materiality: Digital Dialogues at The Boundaries  
of Contemporary Craft*  
Fuller Museum of Craft, Brockton, Massachusetts
- Social Skin*  
Anderson Gallery, Richmond, Virginia
- 7th International Fiber Biennial*  
Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Wearing Spirit*  
Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute,  
New York, New York
- 2009 *Generously Odd: Craft Now*  
Lexington Art League, Kentucky
- Black*  
DCAC, Washington, D.C.
- Rockstone and Bootheel: Contemporary West Indian Art*  
Real Art Ways, Hartford, Connecticut
- Dress Codes: Clothing as Metaphor in Contemporary Art*  
Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, New York
- Complex Weave*  
Stedman Gallery, Rutgers University, Camden, New  
Jersey; Center for the Arts Gallery, Towson University,  
Maryland; Lore Degenstein Gallery, Susquehanna  
University, Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania
- Cheongju International Craft Biennale*  
Cheongju Arts Center, Korea
- Taking Time*  
Birmingham Museum of Art, England; Doveco Studios,  
Edinburgh, Scotland; Harley Gallery, Worksop, England;  
Millennium Court Arts Centre, Portadown, Ireland;  
University of Hertfordshire Galleries, Hatfield, England;  
Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, England; Platform  
Gallery, Clitheroe, England
- Uber Portrait*  
Bellevue Arts Museum, Washington
- Upcycling*  
Architecture and Design Museum, Los Angeles, California
- Hair on Fire*  
Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, College of  
Charleston, South Carolina
- 2008 *Political Circus*  
Ritter Gallery, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton
- Manufactured*  
Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon
- Second Lives*  
Museum of Art and Design, New York, New York
- Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits*  
UCLA Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, California; Chazen  
Museum, Madison, Wisconsin; National Museum of  
African Art, Washington, D.C.; Cantor Center for Visual  
Arts, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California
- 6th International Fiber Biennial*  
Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- The matter at hand*  
Memphis College of Art, Tennessee
- National Black Fine Art Show*  
NCA Gallery, Puck Building, New York, New York

- From Taboo to Icon*  
Ice Box Project Space, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2007 *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery*  
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York
- Material Culture*  
Longwood Gallery @ Hostos, Bronx, New York
- Conceptual Edge*  
NCA Gallery, Detroit, Michigan
- and I am blue . . .*  
McLean County Arts Center, Bloomington, Illinois
- Well Dressed*  
Nathan Cummings Foundation, New York, New York
- Hot House*  
Cranbrook Museum of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan  
Reading Museum of Art, Pennsylvania
- National Black Fine Art Show*  
NCA Gallery, Puck Building, New York, New York
- 2006 *Hair*  
Lisa Sette Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona
- Artificial Afrika*  
Gigantic Art Space, New York, New York
- 5th International Fiber Biennial*  
Snyderman-Works Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2004 *Convergence/Divergence*  
Goldstein Museum of Design, St. Paul, Minnesota
- Draw Drawing*  
Gallery 32, London, England
- 2003 *Destinies: Yoruba Art in America*  
Myhren Gallery, University of Denver, Colorado
- Threading the Eye*  
Sherry Leedy Contemporary, Kansas City, Missouri
- Pins and Needles*  
Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin
- Charmed Lives*  
Facere Art Gallery, Seattle, Washington
- Hair Stories*  
Scottsdale Museum of Art, Arizona; Chicago Cultural Center, Illinois; Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, California; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2002 *7th International Mini-Textiles Triennial*  
Jean Lurcat Tapestry Museum, Angers, France; St. Gall Textile Museum, Switzerland
- Made from Scratch*  
Chicago Athenaeum, Illinois
- 2000 *Crosscurrents 2000*  
The Art Gallery, University of Maryland, College Park

- Bead International 2000*  
Mitchell Museum, Mount Vernon, Illinois; Pratt Museum, Homer, Alaska; University of Alaska Museum, Fairbanks; York County Museum, Rock Hill, South Carolina
- Mosaic: Culture and Identity in America*  
Hampton University Museum, Virginia
- 1999 *The Practiced Hand: Constructions and Sculptural Fiber*  
South Bend Regional Art Museum, Indiana
- The Beaded Universe: Strands of Culture*  
American Craft Museum, New York, New York
- Cultural Influences in Craft*  
Penland Gallery, North Carolina
- 1998 *Wrapped in Pride: Ghanaian Kente and African American Identity*  
Newark Museum, New Jersey; The Oakland Museum, California; Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois; St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri; Detroit Museum of African American History, Michigan; National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.; UCLA Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, California; Le Corps Habite; Galerie Noel Guyomarc'h, Montreal, Canada
- Transformed: Textiles as Creative Medium*  
Natal Society of the Arts, Durban, South Africa

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES

### MUSEUMS

- American Folk Art Museum, New York, New York  
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, Michigan  
Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, Massachusetts  
Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
Museum of Arts and Design, New York, New York  
Museum of Contemporary Craft, Portland, Oregon  
National Museum of African Art, Washington, D.C.  
National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.  
Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri  
UCLA Fowler Museum, Los Angeles, California  
Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids, Michigan  
Walters Museum, Baltimore, Maryland

### SCHOOLS

- California College of Art, Oakland  
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York  
Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan  
East Carolina State University, Greenville, North Carolina  
Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, Michigan



Gele Kente Flag

Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore  
 North Carolina State University, Raleigh  
 Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland  
 Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon  
 Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana  
 Syracuse University, New York  
 Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania  
 Towson University, Maryland  
 University of Kansas-Lawrence  
 University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth  
 University of Wisconsin, Madison

Lewis, Samella. *African American Art and Artists*, University of California Press, 2003, pp. 310-313.  
 McFadden, David. *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*, Museum of Arts and Design Press, 2008, pp. 76-79.  
 Roberston, Jean. "Indianapolis: Sonya Y.S. Clark", *Sculpture*, December 2002, Vol. 21, No.10, pp. 71-72.  
 Sims, Lowery S. and L. K. Hammond. *Global Africa Project*, Prestel, 2010, pp. 184-185, 215.  
 Sims, Lowery S. "The Currency of Craft: Sonya Clark", *Fiberarts* Sept/Oct 2009, Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 40-43.

## BOOKS AND REVIEWS

Caplan, Ralph. "Recrafting the Ordinary", *AIGA: Voice*, October 14, 2008.  
 Cotter, Holland. "From the Deep, a Diva With Many Faces", *New York Times*, April 3, 2009, p. C23.  
 Clowes, Jody. "Sonya Clark", *Surface Design Journal*, Winter 2000, pp. 35-37  
 Douglas, Diane. and V. Halper. *Choosing Craft: A History in Artists' Words*, University of North Carolina Press (Chapel Hill), 2008.  
 DeSmith, Christy. "Data Processing", *American Craft*, Vol. 70, No.6 Dec/Jan 2011, p. 24.  
 Drewal, Henry. *Mami Wata: Arts for Water Spirits in Africa and Its Diasporas*, University of California Press, 2008, pp. 191-193  
 Francis, Jacqueline. "Art About Hair", *International Review of African American Art*, Vol.15, No.2, Fall 1998, pp. 37-38.  
 Gaskins, Bill. "Review: Sonya Clark at the Anderson Gallery", *New Art Examiner*, Vol. 24, No. 6, March 1997, p. 46.  
 Gordon, Beverly, "Profile: Sonya Clark", *Fiberarts*, Vol. 25, No. 4. Jan/Feb 1999, p. 23  
 Halper, Valerie, "Trinket to Talisman", *Metalsmith*, Vol. 24, No. 5, p. 37  
 Holt Skov, Steven and M. Holt Skov. *Manufactured: The Conspicuous Transformation of Everyday Objects*, Chronicle Books, 2008, pp. 9-19

## PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan  
 Hampton Museum, Virginia  
 Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection, Madison, Wisconsin  
 Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana  
 Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin  
 Mead Art Museum, Amherst, Massachusetts  
 Montreal Museum of Decorative Arts, Quebec, Canada  
 Musees d'Angers, Angers, France  
 Sprint Collection, Overland Park, Kansas  
 University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City

## PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

2006-present	Professor and Chair, Craft/Material Studies, Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Richmond
2004-2006	Baldwin Bascom Professor of Creative Arts, University of Wisconsin, Madison
2002-2005	Associate Professor, Environment, Textiles and Design, University of Wisconsin, Madison
1997-2002	Assistant Professor, Environment, Textiles and Design, University of Wisconsin, Madison



Left. Detail. *Penny Loafers*  
Right. Detail. *Counting Change*



# Exhibition Checklist

*Abacus*  
2010  
wood, human hair and metal  
5 x 5 x 0.5 inches

*Adrienne's Tale*  
2008  
human hair and wire  
60 x 6 x 4 inches

*Afro Abe (Peacock)*  
2010  
1 of 44, only one with feathers  
five-dollar bill with stitched peacock feathers  
4 x 6 inches

*Afro Abe (Progression)...* five-dollar bills  
2008–2012  
five-dollar bill and thread  
36 x 12 inches

*Barbershop Pole*  
2008  
combs  
96 x 10 x 10 inches

*Basketweave Cornrows*  
2011  
handwoven, embroidered and braided  
cotton  
unframed, 17 x 15 inches

*Black Hair Flag*  
2010  
paint and thread on canvas  
52 x 26 inches

*Counting Change*  
1994  
cloth, screening, pins and pennies  
30 x 12 inches

*Flat Twist on a Remnant of Idyllic Days*  
2010  
*Idyllic Days* cloth with thread stitched as flat  
twist hairstyle  
42 x 54 inches

*Gele Kente Flag*  
1995  
handwoven and embroidered silk and cotton  
15 x 72 inches

*Gold Teeth*  
2008  
combs and bronze  
5 x 10 inches

*Heritage Pearls*  
2010  
found box, human hair and silver  
8 x 5 x 5 inches

*In Her Own Words*  
2008  
combs and thread  
45 x 140 inches

*Long Hair*  
2007  
digital print  
30 x 2.5 feet  
as shown | 120 x 4 x 2.5 inches

*Madam CJ Walker (large)*  
2006  
combs  
132 x 96 x 12 inches

*Mom's Wisdom or Cotton Candy*  
2011  
photograph  
36 x 24 inches

*Penny Loafers*  
2008  
pennies and copper  
10 x 4 x 2.5 inches each

*3/5*  
2010  
found men's dress shirt, hanger, and  
embroidered thread  
30 x 21 x 3 inches

Detail. *Twisted Diaspora*

*Twisted Diaspora*

2011

primed canvases and cotton thread

60 x 84 inches

*Consequences (Comb Rubbing)*

2009

polyester

framed, 35 x 32 inches

*Untitled (Comb Rubbing and Burning)*

2009

polyester

framed, 18 x 20 inches

*Untitled (Cornrow Chair)*

2011

found chair, thread

36 x 20 x 20 inches

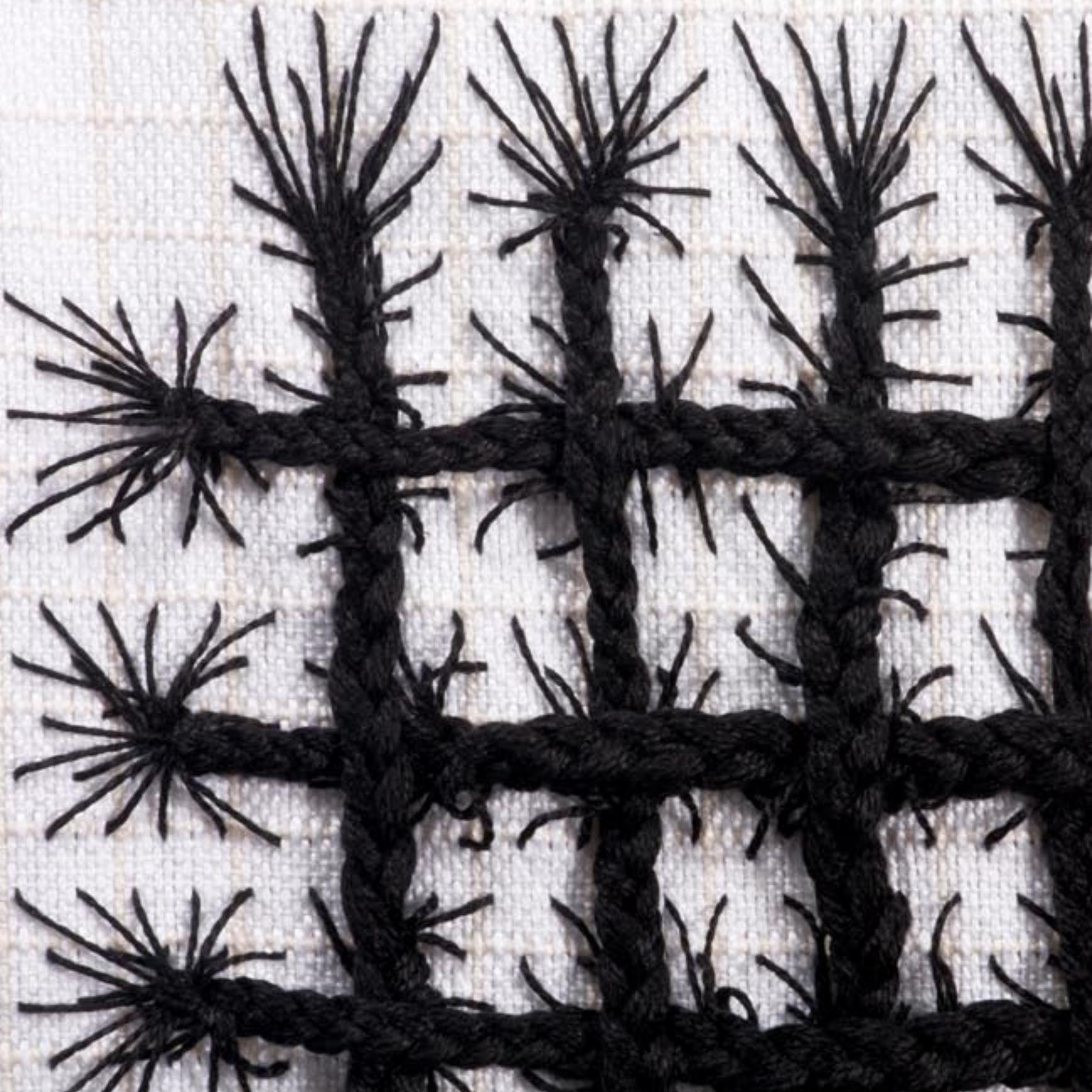
*Untitled (Drawing of Darryl's Head)*

2009

pen on paper

32 x 24 inches







Southwest School of Art

[www.swschool.org](http://www.swschool.org)

300 Augusta | San Antonio, Texas 78205  
210.224.1848

Left. Detail. *Basketweave Cornrows*

Back Cover. Detail. *Flat Twist on a Remnant of Idyllic Days*

Design | Patricia Jane Fugitt, San Antonio, Texas

Photography | Taylor Dabney, Richmond, Virginia | All images except Front Cover

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