



contemporary craft
news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OATHS AND EPITHETS: WORKS BY SONYA CLARK

PITTSBURGH, PA - April 29, 2017 - The Contemporary Craft (CC) is pleased to present work by Sonya Clark, a leader in the field of craft and material studies for more than 20 years. *Oaths and Epithets: Works by Sonya Clark* is a solo show including works by this internationally recognized artist that have never been publicly exhibited; her work explores self identity and social perceptions through commonplace objects and centuries-old handcraft traditions. The exhibition opened on Friday, April 21, 2017 and is free and open to the public at CC's Strip District gallery through Saturday, August 19, 2017.

Through Clark's artwork, CC invites the viewers to discover how commonplace objects act as mirrors and sponges reflecting and absorbing personal and collective narratives. Preoccupied with the texture, styling and politics of black hair, Clark leads the viewers on an investigation of inherent histories embedded in familiar materials ranging from human hair, to thread, gold and other materials. As scholar Bill Gaskins states in the exhibition brochure, Clark's work "offers a bridge to anyone seeking freedom from fear and ignorance about the complexities, contradictions, and consequences of slavery in America — then and now."

Clark was born in Washington, DC to a psychiatrist from Trinidad and a nurse from Jamaica and gained an appreciation for craft and the value of the handmade primarily from her maternal grandmother who was a professional tailor. Many of her family members taught her the value of a well-told story and so it is that she values the stories held in objects.

Since CC was founded 46 years ago, only a rare handful of artists have been given the entire gallery for a solo show, among them seminal individuals including Peter Voulkos, Lenore Tawney, Nick Cave, Mr. Imagination and, most recently, Edward Eberle. Further in recognition of the impressive breadth and depth of Clark's career, CC is pleased to honor her with the exceptional and merited designation of Raphael Prize for innovation in contemporary craft. Providing critical support for artists has been at the heart of the work of CC; the organization's founder, Elizabeth R. Raphael, who cared deeply about creating exhibitions and sales opportunities that would allow artists to make a livelihood while supporting their creation of new work.

FUNDERS

This exhibition is made possible by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the Elizabeth R. Raphael Fund of the Pittsburgh Foundation, The Heinz Endowments, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and the Windgate Foundation.

Sonya Clark, 2

MEDIA SPONSORS

This exhibition is media sponsored by 90.5 WESA and 91.3 WYEP.

ABOUT CONTEMPORARY CRAFT

Presenting contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists since 1971, Contemporary Craft (CC) offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and non-mainstream art, as well as a range of studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a retail store. Through its mission of engaging the public in creative experiences through contemporary craft, CC offers meaningful art opportunities for 145,000 people a year through four core values: providing vital support for artists, filling critical gaps in public education; sharing cross cultural perspectives; and using art to build community. CC is located at 2100 Smallman Street in the Strip District of Pittsburgh, PA. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM. Exhibition and informal, hands-on art activities in the Drop-In Studio are always free to the public. Contemporary Craft is committed to making its exhibitions, programs, and services accessible to the public. For questions related to accessible accommodations, please contact us. For more information, visit www.contemporarycraft.org or call 412.261.7003.

For additional details or images, please contact Stephanie Sun at ssun@contemporarycraft.org.

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Sonya Clark, 3



Skein, 2016
Human hair, number of hairs (approximately 80,000)
the same number of Africans forcibly migrated in one
year at the height of the Transatlantic slave trade.
5 x 5 x 5 inches



Monumental Cloth (old), 2016
Hand woven linen cloth reproduction of the dish cloth used as
the Confederate Flag of Truce, tea stained linen
42 x 16 inches



Unraveled, 2015
Unraveled cotton Confederate Battle Flag.
14" x 30" x 7"