

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Sasha Ali | Exhibitions Manager
sasha@cafam.org | 323.937.4230 x25

SONYA CLARK: MATERIAL REFLEX

May 26 – September 8, 2013

First solo museum exhibition in Los Angeles of United States Artists Fellow Sonya Clark at the Craft & Folk Art Museum



3/5 (Three-Fifths), 2010 Found men's dress shirt, hanger and embroidered thread. Courtesy of the artist



Abacus 1863, 2008, Wood, human hair; metal. Courtesy of the artist

LOS ANGELES — The Craft and Folk Art Museum presents the first solo museum exhibition in Los Angeles of artist Sonya Clark. *Sonya Clark: Material Reflex* will be on view from May 26 through September 8, 2013. The exhibition was developed in partnership with the Winthrop University Galleries in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Drawing from her African-American, Scottish, and Caribbean roots, Sonya Clark incorporates the hair of African-American women and culturally associated hair-braiding techniques into textile form and sculptural objects. Her symbolic and innovative interpretation of materials and weaving processes explores the layered historical and intergenerational contexts of racial identity, disenfranchisement, and definitions of beauty within African diasporic cultures.

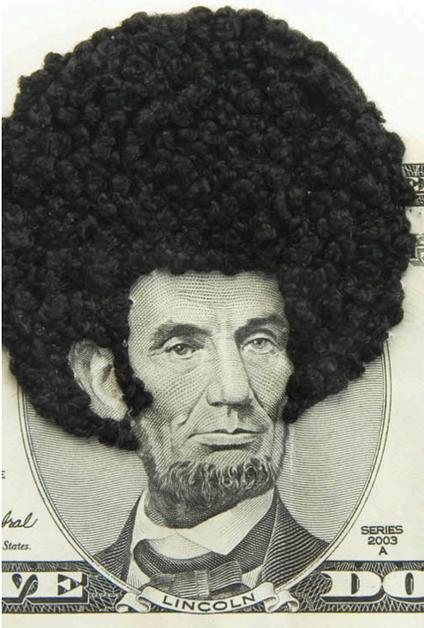
Combining her childhood associations with braiding hair and her training as a textile artist, Clark transforms seemingly common objects such as a piece of cloth or a strand of human hair into historical commentary. In *Afro Abe II*, a five-dollar bill is transformed with Clark's placement of a hand-embroidered Afro on Lincoln's head. With *3/5 (Three-Fifths)*, she applies three braids to a white men's shirt, alluding to the 1787 constitutional compromise that deemed slaves as three-fifths of a person for electoral purposes.

A monumental portrait woven from black plastic combs represents Madam CJ Walker, who became the first self-made American female millionaire in 1917 from the sale of hair products for African-American women. *Abacus 1863* utilizes Clark's own hair shaped into counting beads to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Clark was born in Washington, D.C. and has an MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art. She is currently a professor at the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, and chair of the Department of Craft/Material Studies. She serves on the Board of the American Craft Council and the Advisory Board of the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. Her most recent award from the United States Artists Fellows program follows a prestigious list of honors from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Smithsonian and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, among others.

The public opening reception will take place on Saturday, May 25 from 6:00 – 9:00pm. Sonya Clark will give an artist talk at CAFAM on Sunday, June 23 at 3:00pm.

This exhibition has been sponsored in part by the Pasadena Art Alliance.



Afro Abe II, 2008–2012, Hand-embroidered and French-knotted thread on five dollar bill. Courtesy of the artist

The title *This is Not A Silent Movie* comes from a quote by Native American writer and filmmaker Sherman Alexie, who works to move audiences away from narrow and stereotypical views of Native people—a view that Native people had very little influence in shaping. The exhibition was curated by Julie Decker, Ph.D., Chief Curator at the Anchorage Museum.

An artist panel will take place on Saturday, May 25 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. at CAFAM. The opening reception will follow from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Both events are open to members and the public.

CATALOGUE AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

An illustrated catalogue is being produced to accompany the exhibition and will be available in the CAFAM Shop.

CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition, including CraftLab family workshops on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

May 25 | 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Artist panel followed by opening reception from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

July 13 | 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Brendan Constantine other guest poets will read new and original works written in response to the exhibition *This Is Not A Silent Movie*. This program is supported by The Antonia and Vladimir Cultural Heritage Fund.

Situated on historic Museum Row since 1973, the Craft & Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) is an invaluable contributor to Los Angeles culture, exhibiting current artists with intriguing perspectives and distinctive practices. Exploring the leading edge of craft, art, and design, CAFAM gives audience to diverse makers and artists whose work is often not represented in larger art institutions. The museum is a place to see art and make art — all under one roof. CAFAM coordinates a robust roster of hands-on workshops led by professional artists and makers. The intimate, atypical museum space and independent spirit at CAFAM combine to create an atmosphere of excitement and innovation, where people in Los Angeles deepen their relationships to art, creativity and one another. For more information, visit www.cafam.org

Location: 5814 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

Admission: FREE every Sunday

Regularly: \$7 for adults; \$5 for students, teachers, seniors, and veterans; free for CAFAM members

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed

Mondays. Every first Thursday of the month, extended hours 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.