



Open today, 10 am to 5 pm.  
Parking & Directions  
**Free Admission**

October 7, 2020

# Joyce Scott: Hard Truth in Beauty



Joyce Scott, photo courtesy of John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Joyce Scott's skilled hands weave narratives of oppression and violence in materials whose sparkling allure subverts their weighty subject matter. A force in the world of art and fine craft for over forty years, she is renowned as much for her unreserved personality as for the exquisitely beaded handiwork that graces collections around the world. Scott's masterpieces are a testament to her staggering work ethic and lifelong dedication to her creative outlets,

which include performance art and song in addition to her fiber and glass practice. Her work in the visual arts ranges from the minuscule to the monumental, but is tied together with a focus on social justice that long predates the movements that have gained traction since the death of George Floyd.



Joyce J. Scott (American, born 1948), *Head Shot*, 2008, Glassbeads and mold-blown glass with thread and bullet casings, Museum purchase, 2016.36.2

Scott's *Head Shot* (2008), featured in *Come Together, Right Now! The Art of Gathering*, is emblematic of her ability to portray brutality with equal parts beautiful craftsmanship and

gallows humor. The emerald glass beads that make up the eponymous “head” are woven using a peyote stitch technique, which Scott learned early in her career. The freedom of the stitch allowed Scott to move away from the 2-D surface of fiber work, which she learned from her quilt artist mother Elizabeth Talford Scott at the age of five. She began creating dimensional forms with the magically translucent material, and she’s been pushing the boundaries of what is possible with the form ever since.

In a recent exhibition at Grounds for Sculpture in New Jersey, Scott dedicated an exhibition to Harriet Tubman, with larger-than-life sculptures that incorporated beadwork, resin, glass, mud and time into their construction. *Graffiti Harriet*, an monumental outdoor sculpture molded from mud with a glass rifle and beadwork, was designed to melt into the landscape over the duration of the exhibition—speaking to the impermanence of memory and the loss of historical record for women of color. Working at that scale and with that material was newer territory for Scott, but she maintains a fierce dedication to pushing her practice and skills with each new endeavor. “You can make the things that sell and listen to people and be very formulaic, but... I’m going to make the artwork that will make me into a more evolved person, work that challenges me and has a space in this world.”



Joyce Scott, photo courtesy of John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

When asked about the current state of our nation and planet, Scott notes the parallels she sees between our current time and the 1960s and 70s when she was in school. Those years were “like this time in some ways in the sense that people were challenging all kinds of institutions and forms, and making artwork that spoke to that, and building art centers and ways of working

with each other.” The pandemic has intensified that energy, in her opinion, and the opportunity that goes along with it. “Right now we’re in a time where we can make a real difference, because this is truly a global assault. We’re being shaken because of the pandemic, and people are just uneasy about the life they’re living.”

Not one to pull a punch in either craftsmanship or conversation, Scott calls our current situation a time of “great soul searching for white people.” She sees technology as a powerful ally. It is both helping to wake America up to the realities of living while Black and bringing up a new generation of savvy, well-connected artists of color. She recognizes technology as a crucial tool to succeed where traditional activism has failed to gain crucial support from white allies. “White people have to deconstruct these things. Black people have done it forever. We’ve done everything we can to show white people that we are equal. White people have to go to other white people and find ways to explain to them that our system isn’t feasible—that this society cannot continue this way.”

Scott lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland, where she remains active in her community. In addition to an encyclopedic list of awards for achievement in the field of fine craft, she is a 2019 recipient of the Smithsonian Visionary Award and a 2020 awardee of the American Craft Council’s Gold Medal for Consummate Craftsmanship. She is represented by Goya Contemporary in Baltimore; Mobilia Gallery in Cambridge, MA; and Peter Blum Gallery in New York, NY.

Read more from my conversation with Joyce Scott in [Glass Art Society’s summer 2020 edition of GASnews](#).

—Jennifer Hand, Chrysler Museum Gallery Host

---

[Previous Article](#)

[Next Article](#)

---



Chrysler Museum of Art

**Chrysler Museum of Art**  
One Memorial Place, Norfolk,  
Virginia 23510  
757-664-6200 [Contact Us](#)

**Free parking onsite**  
Located adjacent to the  
Museum. [See Map](#)

**Torch**  
Stories from the Chrysler  
Museum. [Read the blog](#)

**With Generous Support From**



**Thanks to our Corporate Leadership Alliance Members**  
**Dollar Tree, Bank of America, ADP**

[See the full list](#)

Tuesday–Saturday, 10–5

Sunday, noon–5

Closed Mondays

[About](#) [News](#) [Weddings & Rentals](#) [Careers](#) [Privacy](#) [Rights](#) [Email Sign-up](#)





