

Joyce J. Scott: Can't We All Just Get Along?

September 14 – November 10, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, Oct 9, 6-8pm

Goya Contemporary & Goya-Girl Press

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Goya Contemporary is free and open to the public. Hours: Tue – Fri 10:00 – 6:00 & Sat. by appointment.

Goya Contemporary Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of art by Baltimore-born, Contemporary American Artist Joyce J. Scott (B. 1948). ***Joyce J. Scott: Can't We All Just Get Along?*** will feature several new mixed media works authored by the artist who recently returned from various residencies, notably Venice Projects in Murano, Italy, and Monkey Biz in South Africa.

Scott is known to deliberately and systematically close the gap between the virtuosity of fine art and the honedadroitness of fine craft, to reveal a practice of meaningful storytelling through the vehicle of the object. Uncharacteristically for Scott, the exhibition *Can't We All Just Get Along?* focuses on a particular subject, the global gun culture. This is a common theme in her oeuvre, yet this showing deviates from past exhibitions in the sum total of her concentrated message.

Curator Amy Raehse writes: *Can't We All Just Get Along?* comes in the aftermath of recent gun massacres in schools and communities, while the enduring discourse of popular cultures ostensibly persistent obsession with guns (evidenced in Scott's hands through the series "Hip Hop Saints" and "Fallen Angels") continues. Scott's recent work examines the ethical, social, racial, political, sexual, moral, exploitive, and humanitarian implications of guns. Her work strides in tandem with the renewed debate on gun control in the United States, just as it remains in step with over four decades of her conceptual practice as an artist.

A diplomat as well as an advocate and activist, Scott is thoughtful about the state of the human condition and is determined to point out disparities and injustices. Still, Scott's artwork avoids being pedantic or dogmatic. Rather, her methods engage the viewer through provocative, open-ended questions that are ripe with contradiction and ignite dialogues to effect change – without necessarily assigning blame.

While the artist's precise and inventive use of materials act as an entry point – a palatable way for the viewer to approach, contemplate, and digest the subject – her complex objects also effectively double as sophisticated social mirrors. Scott's work provides a new space for discussing narrative where we may address semiotics, metaphor, occurrence, and experience simultaneously.

The seminal work titled "Sex Traffic," for example, is characteristically layered with meaning beyond that of its namesake. The cold-worked Murano-process blown glass totem in the shape of a musket is aggrandized by a free-form beaded figure tied to its barrel with leather cuffs. The phallic nature of the musket, the figure splayed "riding" the object, as well as sheer scale are confrontational, triggering a reaction similar to our recoil from observing the bonded and tortured woman, presumably sold into the contemporary sex trade. Interestingly, the materials – glass, beads, thread, and leather – disprove the power of the weapon. The simple act of using Scott's gun would result in the destruction of the object itself. The object thus becomes a suitable representation of the fragile nature of the gun, and a metaphor for the destruction caused by gun violence in general. Though gun rights advocates maintain that gun ownership is America's mark of freedom, Scott's work exposes the shackling effects guns have on our society.

Upon further reflection one may realize that the trigger and the cock (or serpent segment) of the gun are on the "wrong" side of the barrel, a serendipitous error with which the artist was comfortable. In this way, the artist explores another metaphor, that of the gun's inability to work. In theory and in practice, Joyce Scott's gun

symbolically fails. The gun's fixed form arrested in time, manipulated by conceptual narrative, points to the artist's versatile voice and her skill in delivering a multifarious message that transcends race, sex, religion and politics, which paradoxically are the fertile grounds for her subject matter.

While remaining true to her admirable work ethic, meticulously coaxing each bead into a believable form ripe with ponderation, contrapposto, pose, and posture, Scott opens up new doors for communicating narrative. Her figures, typically and startlingly often void of the support of an armature, reveal a collective, if not existential struggle to define the essence of identity and existence through human choice, illuminating pathos, anguish and humor.

Whereas the larger works such as "War Woman I" & "War Woman II" depict a complex accumulation of psychologically charged objects laden with meaning, her smaller singular objects such as "Power Pump" or "Red Head" single out more individualized triggers for society's preoccupation with guns. Anger, sex, fear, and humility all may contribute to one's feelings of inferiority, and thus to one's desire to claim power through use of a weapon.

Scott's signature use of color, spatial complexity, material experimentation, and perception peel back the layers of the proverbial onion, to reveal a state of perpetual trauma in need of examination, and leaves the viewer asking the same exact question posed by the artist in the exhibition title: "Why can't we all just get along?"

Scott received a BFA degree from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1970, and the following year, an MFA from the Instituto Allende in San Miguel Allende, Mexico. She pursued further study at Rochester Institute of Technology in New York and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine.

With numerous one-person and group exhibitions, Scott has exhibited, performed, and lectured widely across the country and abroad. The artist is represented in most major public collections including (but not limited to) the Baltimore Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Corning Museum of Glass, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Mint Museum of Art, Yale University, Mobile Museum of Art, Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Museum of Art and Design in New York, Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, The Delaware Museum of Art, Phillbrook Museum of Art, Reginald F. Lewis Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Additionally, Scott has been the recipient of myriad commissions, grants, awards, residencies, and prestigious honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Anonymous Was a Woman, American Craft Council, National Living Treasure Award, Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women's Caucus for the Arts.

Recent large scale exhibitions include "Glasstress New York: New Art from the Venice Biennales," "Global Africa," "Prospect.2- the USA Biennial," "Glasstress: Venice Biennale," and "Maryland to Murano," a one woman exhibition opening at the Museum of Arts and Design, NY, on Sept. 30th of 2014.

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