

“I’d like my art to inspire people to stop raping, torturing, and shooting each other. While I don’t have the ability to end violence, racism, and sexism, my art can encourage people to look and think.”

– Joyce J. Scott

MacArthur Fellow Dr. Joyce J. Scott (b. 1948, Baltimore, MD) works across a spectrum of media, confronting urgent issues such as racism, sexism, violence, inequality, oppression, and injustice, while also embracing beauty, spirituality, nature, and healing. Through her work, she unearths universal truths while delving into the complex tapestry of our collective history.

Scott is best known for her mastery of the off-loom peyote stitch, a free-form glass bead weaving technique, which she uses to merge beads, blown glass, and repurposed objects with autobiographical, sociological, and political themes. Born to sharecroppers from North Carolina, descendants of enslaved people, Scott’s parents migrated to Baltimore, where she was born and raised. Coming from a lineage of skilled artisans in pottery, knitting, metalwork, basketry, storytelling, and quilting, Scott was deeply influenced by her family's craftsmanship. It was within this environment that she honed the remarkable skills that have become the hallmark of her artistic career, as well as her ability to repurpose materials, transforming craft into a powerful platform for social commentary and activism.

In her early career, Scott worked with fibers to create clothing, jewelry, shoes, and quilts, also experimenting with loom-constructed textiles. In the late 1970s, she began exploring beads, drawn to their ability to capture light and blend colors outside the realm of traditional painting techniques. During this period, she learned the peyote stitch from a Native American bead artisan, a technique that would define much of her work. Over time, Scott expanded her practice by incorporating multicultural found objects into her beadwork, while also experimenting with printmaking, performance art, vocals, and even comedy. For Scott, the creative process knows no boundaries.

In the early 1990s, Scott collaborated with glass artisans to create blown, pressed, and cast glass that she incorporated into her beaded sculptures. This not only allowed her to shift the scale of her work but also satisfied her desire to collaborate. In 1992, she was invited to the Pilchuck Glass School in Washington state. Continuing her interest in glass, Scott worked with local Baltimore glassblowers as well as with Paul Stankard and other celebrated glass fabricators.

By 1997, Scott shifted her focus to printmaking, producing hundreds of prints in collaboration with various ateliers, including Goya-Girl Press and Pyramid Atlantic, and later with Sol Print Studios and Goya Contemporary. In 1999, she held a landmark solo exhibition at the Baltimore Museum of Art, becoming the first Black female artist to be granted such an honor in the institution's history. In 2011, Scott traveled with her primary gallery Goya Contemporary to work at the Inferno Glass Studio in New Orleans, where she created groundbreaking work for the 2011-2012 U.S. Biennial Prospect.2 in New Orleans. In 2012, following the 2011 death of her

mother, Goya Contemporary Gallery arranged for Scott to work at Andriano Berengo's celebrated glass studio on the island of Murano in Italy, creating works that were part of Glasstress through the Venice Biennale. Returning in 2013, Scott continued to create important works that would go into major public and private collections, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Seattle Art Museum, Toledo Museum, Pace Foundation, among many others. During 2014-2015, Scott's Baltimore and Boston galleries joined to support curator Lowery Stokes Sims in presenting *Maryland to Murano: The Neckpieces & Sculpture of Joyce J. Scott* at the Museum of Arts and Design in NY. Later that year, Scott's Baltimore gallery worked with Patterson Sims to organize *Joyce J. Scott: Truths and Visions* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Cleveland.

By 2017, Scott and her primary dealer, Goya Contemporary Gallery, opened her largest exhibition to date at *Grounds for Sculpture* in New Jersey, which was co-curated by Lowery Stokes-Sims and Patterson Sims. In addition to historic and recent objects, Scott realized two large-scale, site-specific works focused on the abolitionist Harriet Tubman, created at the Johnson Atelier. Hailed as a great success, Scott's powerful work was used to build curriculum in nearby colleges, including Princeton University. Her art, which lures viewers with dazzling beauty, often exposes some of humanity's most difficult moments, as described by Nancy Princenthal in her *New York Times* review: "Indeed, you can't make out what these sculptures are about without coming closer than you feel you should — and seeing things you won't soon forget." Speaking of her work, Scott says: "I'd like my art to induce people to stop raping, torturing, and shooting each other. I don't have the ability to end violence, racism, and sexism. But my art can help them look and think."

Scott's exhibitions and contributions continued into the 2020s with significant retrospectives and solo shows. Scott's *Araminta with Rifle and VèVè* traveled to venues including *Open Spaces Kansas City* (2018), organized by Dan Cameron, and the *Banneker Douglas Museum* in Annapolis, MD (2022), where it remains on permanent display. In 2023, Scott opened a traveling jewelry exhibition with her jewelry dealer, *Mobilia Gallery* of Boston.

In March of 2024, Scott opened a major 50-year traveling museum retrospective titled *Joyce J. Scott: Walk a Mile in My Dreams*, co-organized by the *Baltimore Museum of Art* and *Seattle Art Museum* and curated by Cecilia Wichmann (BMA) and Catharina Manchanda (SAM), with assistance from curatorial assistant Leslie Rose. This same year, Scott opened *Bearing Witness: A History of Prints by Joyce J. Scott* at Goya Contemporary Gallery.

Scott and her work have been the subject of countless scholarly books and articles. She is the recipient of numerous commissions, grants, awards, residencies, and prestigious honors, including from the National Endowment for the Arts, 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, MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (2016), Smithsonian Visionary Artist Award, National Academy of Design, Moore College Visionary Woman Award, among others.

A graduate of the Maryland Institute College of Art (BFA) and the Instituto Allende in Mexico (MFA), Scott has received numerous honorary degrees, including from Johns Hopkins University, California College of the Arts, and the Maryland Institute College of Art.

Her works are held in prominent public and private collections worldwide, including those of the Baltimore Museum of Art, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Metropolitan Museum of Art NY, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Detroit Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Chrysler Museum of Art, Museum of Art and Design, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Speed Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, National Museum of American Art, Mint Museum of Art, Toledo Museum of Art, Seattle Art Museum, among countless others.

Scott's work continues to challenge and inspire, affirming the power of art to provoke thought, challenge societal norms, and spark meaningful change. Scott is represented globally by Goya Contemporary Gallery in Baltimore, where she continues to live and work.

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