

ARTFORUM

SONYA CLARK WINS 2020 RAPPAPORT PRIZE

September 03, 2020



Sonya Clark. Photo: Diego Valdez.

Lincoln, Massachusetts–based deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum has named fiber artist Sonya Clark as this year’s winner of the \$35,000 Rappaport Prize. Clark, whose practice embraces large-scale installation, performance, archival research, and participatory actions, frequently uses everyday objects such as combs and flags to celebrate Black identity and address themes of race, migration, slavery, and white supremacy, as embodied both historically and in modern-day functions such as policing and incarceration.

“Sonya Clark’s work thoughtfully and powerfully addresses aspects of Black experience in the United States, grappling with the relationship between history, social injustice, institutional racism, and racial inequality,” said Sarah Montross, deCordova’s interim artistic director and senior curator.

“Good news these days is a tender seedling pushing through hard concrete” acknowledged Clark. “It signals the fecundity of hope. The Rappaport Prize, this unexpected recognition, is a verdant promise, one that will help germinate the creative impulses my ancestors planted in my DNA long ago. I care for those seeds, help them flourish by resisting injustice and celebrating my forebears through my art practice. I am deeply grateful for the support this award provides towards this purpose.”

Clark is currently a professor of art at Amherst College in Massachusetts. Her work is held in collections at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Established in 2000 by the Phyllis and Jerome Lyle Rappaport Foundation, the prize is awarded annually to an artist with ties to New England who has demonstrated creativity and vision in engaging with aesthetic issues significantly impacting contemporary art. The intention behind the prize is to introduce the public to developments in American art. Past winners include Titus Kaphar, Barkley Hendricks, and Ursula von Rydingsvard.