

Curator's Statement

Mobilia Gallery has had the pleasure to represent and exhibit the work of Joyce J. Scott, for over forty years. Scott is esteemed for her technical skills, transforming the rich tradition of beadwork with her own interpretations of the peyote stitch. She pushes the boundaries of beadwork, reflecting the artist's narrative of what it means to be Black in America.

Throughout her illustrious career Scott has garnered numerous accolades, including a McArthur Fellowship (2016) and four honorary doctorates. To honor Scott for her accomplishments, Mobilia Gallery has organized a traveling exhibition of Scott's work titled *Messages*, consisting of thirty-five beaded objects expressing contemporary issues and concepts. Each object is a unique, vibrant, challenging work of art done with imagination, wit and sly humor.

Historical work and current work are featured in *Messages*. *Chinese Panthers*, from 1979, is a rare, loom woven and peyote stitched neckpiece. Another neckpiece, *Bird Trapped in Shadows*, from 1986, was shown in *The Eloquent Object: The Evolution of American Art in Craft Since 1945*, a groundbreaking exhibition which opened in 1987. Organized by the Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, *The Eloquent Object* travelled to The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Chicago Public Library Cultural Center, The Orlando Museum of Art, FL, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. In *The Eloquent Object*, Scott's dynamic work elevated the possibilities of contemporary beadwork as a relevant art form.

We are grateful for the many lenders who came on board: the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, Jacqueline Copeland, Atiyah Curmally, Marion Fulk, the Fuller Craft Museum, the Kamm Teapot Foundation, Catherine Rose, the Rotasa Collection, Barbara Shuster, and University Museums at Iowa State University.

Most of all, a special thank you to Joyce J. Scott, a true trailblazer, who worked tirelessly day and night to make this exhibition possible. Her passion for the art, relentless pursuit of perfection, and commitment to social reform through her work has made her an icon of the contemporary art world.

Libby Cooper & JoAnne Cooper
Mobilia Gallery
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