



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Joyce J. Scott

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman  
Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Oral history interview with Joyce J. Scott
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<b>Creator:</b>	Scott, Joyce, 1948- Silberman, Robert B. (Robert Bruce), 1950- Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and administrators.

### Available Formats

Transcript is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

### Restrictions

This transcript is open for research. Access to the entire recording is restricted. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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## Biographical / Historical

Joyce J. Scott (1948- ) is a visual and performance artist and educator who lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland.

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## Scope and Contents

An interview of Joyce J. Scott conducted 2009 July 22, by Robert Silberman, for the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, at Scott's home and studio, in Baltimore, Maryland.

## Scope and Contents

Scott talks about her childhood in Baltimore; childhood visits to the Baltimore Museum of Art and Walters Art Gallery; her parents' lives growing up in the segregated South; her artist mother, who was her first bead-teacher; craft traditions in her family, including pottery and quilting; quilting as storytelling, "diaries" for preliterate people; improvisational craft; Three Generation Quilt; Fifty .; undergraduate studies at Maryland Institute College of Art; travels after graduation in Mexico, Central , and South America; graduate studies in craft in Mexico; decision at age 23 to become a studio artist, and partnership with her mother; theater work with Robert Sherman and in New York and in Baltimore; theater work with Kay Lawal in Thunder Thigh Revue; studies at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME, where she learned traditional Navajo weaving, and learned the peyote stitch for beadwork, a seminal technique for her career; her book *Fearless Beadwork: Improvisational Peyote Stitch: handwriting & drawings from hell*. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop, 1994; working in different mediums; *What You Mean Jungle Music?* [1988]; working for recognition of beadwork as a sculptural medium; politics, social commentary, and humor in her work; series *Day after Rape*; her working processes; *Rodney King's Head Was Squashed Like a Watermelon*; working in monoprints; working in glass (flameworking, lampworking), including at Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, WA, Tacoma [WA] Museum of Glass, UrbanGlass, New York, NY, Haystack Mountain; retrospective exhibition, "*Joyce Scott Kickin' It With the Old Masters*" at the Baltimore Museum of Art, 2000; series *Africa in Unexpected Places*; installation work, including in "*Images Concealed*," San Francisco, 1995, and *Believe I've Been Sanctified*, Charleston, SC, 1991; small-scale work; influence of her upbringing in the Pentecostal church; *Buddha Gives Basketball to the Ghetto* [1991] and the importance of spirituality in her work; travels in South America, Africa, and Europe; the complementarity of performance/theater work and visual art; performance pieces: *Generic Interference*, *Genetic Engineering*, *Virtual Reality*, and *Walk a Mile in My Drawers*; Lips mosaic at Reagan National Airport, Washington, D.C.; teaching workshops at Haystack, Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC, the Oregon School of Arts and Craft, Portland; artist-in-residency at Pilchuck; gallery affiliations, and usefulness of the gallery system, which allows her to work as a studio artist; the importance of galleries as a free venue open to ordinary people; luxuriating in beauty. She recalls Betty Woodman, Dr. Leslie King-Hammond, Lowery Sims, Fritz Dreisbach, Anthony Corradetti, Antony Gormley, Ann Hamilton, David Hammons, Mary Jane Jacob, Cesar Pelli, Susan Cummins, and Helen Drutt English.

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## General

Originally recorded on 4 memory cards. Reformatted in 2010 as 4 digital wav files. Duration is 3 hr., 11 min.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Educators -- Maryland -- Interviews  
Performance artists -- Maryland -- Interviews

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America