

ARTnews

The Year in Black Art: A Wealth of Blockbuster Exhibitions

By Shantay Robinson

December 22, 2023 9:15am

Sonya Clark: We Are Each Other



Installation view of "Sonya Clark: We Are Each Other" at Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, June 17–September 24, 2023 Photo : PD Rearick.

Community is pivotal to Sonya Clark's art. "Sonya Clark: We Are Each Other," a mid-career survey of the artist's work over the past 25 years, allows museum visitors to actively engage with a sordid American past and imagine a more collaborative future. Clark commits to issues of history, race, and reconciliation by using a range of textile techniques including weaving, braiding, quilting, and beading to center her participatory projects. Instead of presenting herself as the sole author of her artwork, Clark aims to build community relations through it.

"Selfhood, especially when it comes to artistic practice, especially when we think about it through a Western mode, which I resist, is this self-identity, the artist as genius—I'm not calling myself a genius, but this solo person who makes this thing," Clark explained to *Forbes*.

Unraveling is a performance piece in which Clark and community members unravel a Confederate flag thread by thread. She considers a replacement flag in *Monumental Cloth*, a replica of the dishcloth that served as Robert E. Lee's white flag of surrender to end the Civil War; community members, too, can loom their own monumental cloths. Debuting at the Cranbrook Art Museum in Detroit, the exhibition traveled to the High Museum in Atlanta and will later move to the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City.