

Afro Abe II



Cotton to Hair



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## Hair Raising

Broken combs, dog-eared currency, Confederate flags, and even human hair find renewed purpose in the hands of **Sonya Clark (b. 1967)**. She challenges us to reconsider our assumptions by borrowing and transforming meanings people assign to things.

### Take a closer look

Observe how the lines of twisted and knotted threads in Lincoln's "Black is Beautiful" Afro resemble the engraved curvilinear details embellishing the bill. Notice the similarities in shape and texture between the cotton and the hair emerging from burst bolls.

### Something to talk about

Clark uses hair—real and reinterpreted—to explore issues of race and commodification in the United States. In what ways might these works suggest that harvesting valuable crops comes at a human cost?

### In her own words

"Hair is a primordial fiber. It's the first thread we handle."

Sonya Clark, *Afro Abe II*, 2012; Five-dollar bill and hand-embroidered thread; 4 x 6 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Heather and Tony Podesta Collection, © Sonya Clark; Photograph by Lee Stalworth

Sonya Clark, *Cotton to Hair*, 2012; Cotton and human hair; 14½ x 12½ x 5 inches; Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, D.C.; © Sonya Clark; Photograph by Lee Stalworth

