



Quilted exhibition of works by Elizabeth Talford Scott on display at Goya Contemporary Gallery

by Marcus Dieterle
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Quilted works by the late artist Elizabeth Talford Scott are on display through April 21 at the Goya Contemporary Gallery.

Elizabeth Talford Scott was no stranger to unconventional materials in her quilted sculptural artworks.

From buttons and bones to shells and stones, no item went wasted by the late artist. "Both Sides Now: The Spirituality, Resilience, and Innovation of Elizabeth Talford Scott" is on display now through April 21 at the Goya Contemporary Gallery in Hampden. There will also be a reception March 16 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Born Elizabeth Talford, she was raised with her thirteen siblings by parents who worked as sharecroppers at the Blackstock Plantation near Chester, South Carolina. It was on that same land where her grandparents were once enslaved.

Family members trained the young Elizabeth to turn scrap materials into usable resources. She practiced quilting throughout her youth and went on to create sculptural wall hangings.



An untitled piece by Elizabeth Talford Scott, circa the 1990s, features fabric, thread, yarn, buttons, and rocks.

In the early 1940s, Elizabeth and her then-husband Charlie Scott Jr. moved to Baltimore. There they raised their daughter, Joyce J. Scott, who has gone on to become an accomplished artist in her own right, with her works including a sculpture of Harriett Tubman that is currently on display at the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis. Talford Scott paused her quilting while raising her daughter as a single mother, as well as working in food services and as a hired caregiver for other families.

By the 1970s, when Joyce had grown up and was independent, Talford Scott returned to quilting and incorporated stones, bones, glass, and other unconventional materials into her works.

Her quilts include depictions of traditional flowers and animals to fantasy creatures and otherworldly images.

“She told her stories through those animals and made up creatures, and she told our family’s stories [through her quilts],” Joyce J. Scott said in a 2017 recorded conversation

with Goya Contemporary Gallery curator Amy Eva Raehse. “She had an improvisational spirit and rascally ways which came through in everything.... Her fingers held the wisdom and sagacity of all those experiences – it bolted out of her like lightning.”



A 1983 quilted artwork titled “Three Generation Quilt I” by Elizabeth Talford Scott.

Talford Scott died in 2011, and the Goya Contemporary Gallery was awarded estate management of her works in 2019.

The Goya Contemporary has previously hosted a joint exhibition, “Reality, Times Two: Joyce J. Scott & Elizabeth Talford Scott,” in 2019; and a solo exhibition, “Upside-Downwards,” in 2021.

In her conversation with Raehse, Joyce said her mother’s power – of will, of heart, and of artistry – was what set her and her work apart from others.

“It was her stick-to-itiveness, her incredible strength, her stubbornness, her humor, her aptitude with materials, her fortitude, and her insistence on seeking justice which gave her the ‘thang’ –you know– the edge,” Joyce said.