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The quilted and applique techniques used in the piece recall the importance of quilts in African American history. Like Ringgold, Butler also taps into the ideas of community. She explores the continuation of community by depicting children, although individualized, standing together and facing the world head-on. She gives power to Black youths and represents them as future leaders. Further, their clothing directly ties them to an African heritage, as Butler used "Kool-Aid" colors like bright oranges, yellows, crimson reds, and blues, which she described as rooted in Africa but distinctly acknowledged as a new African American technique. [68]Through this color palette, she acknowledges the impact African art had on contemporary African American artists. All seven of the children wearing a variation of the Kool-Aid palette and African-esque patterns creates a visual community and references the larger African American community in the United States.

Another artist, Clara Nartey, immigrated to America from Africa.[69] Her textile portraits use bright, bold colors and patterns reminiscent of African textiles, with her process explanations specifically citing "kente, mud cloth, and adinkra." [70] The same Kool-Aid colors found in Butler's work are evident in Nartey's art. Furthermore, Nartey's "ancestors who were brought to America several generations ago" informed her recent series Black Crowns.[71] Her work engages with the entanglement of African American and African history.



Figure 10: Clara Nartey, *Catching God's Eye*, 2020, inks and threads on cotton, 40"×30", courtesy of the artist.

The piece Catching God's Eye, part of the Black Crowns series,[72] was made of threads and printed inks on cotton (Figure 10). The textile shows a figure, a woman churchgoer,[73] against a bright blue background. The figure wears brightly colored and complexly patterned clothing with a large, similarly bright and intricately patterned hat. The figure stares directly out at the viewer. Her look is as bold and prideful as the clothing she wears. Subtle embroidered and quilted designs cover the piece with even more

68. Sok Vision, "Quilting for Culture."
69. Clara Nartey, "Black Crowns," *Clara Nartey* (blog), https://claranartey.com/black-crowns/.
70. Clara Nartey, "Processes and Materials," Clara Nartey, https://claranartey.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Processes-and-Materials.pdf.
71. Clara Nartey, "Black Crowns."
72. Clara Nartey, "Catching God's Eye—The Story Behind the Art," Clara Nartey (blog), October 16, 2020, https://claranartey.com/catching-gods-eye-the-story-behind-the-art/.
73. Nartey, "Catching God's Eye."

pattern.

According to Nartley, the hats of church ladies inspired this textile art piece. She says: "Enslaved Africans were not allowed to dress the way they wanted. The only times they got to express themselves in clothes was when they got the rare occasion to congregate at church."[74] The textile celebrates the combination of African American autonomy and small acts of resistance as well as African heritage. The historical narrative that inspired the work[75] created a unique perspective on African American experiences from an African artist. As illustrated by Nartley's textile artwork, African textiles brought into America and carried through the present African diaspora evolved into a new, distinct artform reminiscent of both African heritage and Black experiences in America.

The Transatlantic slave trade brought countless travesties and unforgivable cruelties upon the enslaved Africans. However, enslaved people did not allow the devastation to break them. Instead, cultural continuation in the form of textiles flourished as best as possible under the circumstances. Histories and practices spread among the enslaved people, then through the freed Black people, and into today where the heritage is used to continue the fight against the effects of enslavement. The evolution of artistic style and culture continued with enslaved people and their descendants until a new, unique approach developed. Africans brought their culture to America with them and established a new tradition of creation and storytelling as resistance. Although African influence is prevalent, contemporary African Americans created a distinct textile presence in America. Despite all efforts to the contrary, art and culture protected its practitioners. In return, the practitioners use art and culture to protect their heritage.

74. Nartey, "Catching God's Eye."
75. Nartey, "Catching God's Eye."