

History Is Rarely Black or White

Transcript: Karin Jones

My name is Karin Jones. I'm an interdisciplinary artist with a background in jewellery and I've created this work for the exhibition at the Agnes. So, my work in recent years has mostly been about the way that historical narratives shape our identities. And as a woman of African descent, a lot of this has been attached to the history of slavery. So, for this piece, I really was thinking about how that narrative of slavery is the really predominant story that gets told about black people in North America. And it's a much stronger narrative that's presented to us than, say, even the histories and cultures of the actual African countries that our ancestors would have been taken from. So, in a way, this story of slavery, and specifically about cotton fields, which gets used in so many countless movies and books becomes almost like an origin story of where we're coming from. So, for this piece, I have natural cotton bolls, and some of them, I've removed the cotton from the husk and glued in different people's hair, so hair from black people in North America, just to show that, in a way, we're growing out of those cotton fields. And for this piece, I also wanted it to be, these bolls to be hanging, because it's meant to be shown with historic garments, so that when we look at garments in a museum, we literally can't look at the garment itself without also being confronted with this history.