

let's look

family guide



Let's look at the series of sculptures pictured above.

What do these sculptures look like? What are they made out of?

These sculptures are part of a group of works called the *Wig Series*. The artist, Sonya Clark, fashioned these after hairstyles she wore as a child. Instead of skin and hair, Sonya used fabric and thread.

The titles of these sculptures are associated with numbers. (Find them on the left.) *Unum* means 'one' in Latin. *Hemi* means 'half,' or one of two parts, and *Triad* means 'a group of three.'

What on these sculptures can be counted? Which sculpture do you think is *Unum*? Which is *Hemi*? What makes you think so?

Sonya Clark named the sculpture with five sections *Fingers*, and the one with eight sections *Spider*. Why do you think she chose these titles?

These numbers are special. They are part of the Fibonacci sequence, a pattern of numbers often found in nature. What pattern can you see in these numbers: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21?

more →

1 Unum

Hemi 2

3 Triad

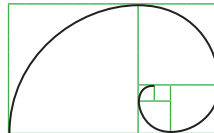
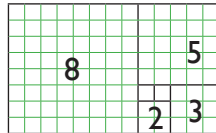
Fingers 5

8 Spider

Each number is the sum of the two before it:

$1+1=2$ $1+2=3$ $2+3=5$ $3+5=8$ $5+8=13$ $8+13=21$

This sequence is found in the way tree branches split, the number and position of flower petals, and the spirals formed by shells, hurricanes, and galaxies.



The Fibonacci sequence is also found in African art and architecture, which is what originally interested Sonya Clark in the sequence.

In math, coordinates are sets of numbers that tell where something is located. Through the *Wig Series*, Clark places herself within her African heritage and her family's stories and traditions. She says:

When I sat between the knees of an aunt, mother, grandmother or other woman who was doing my hair as a child, inevitably, storytelling would begin. Those stories might be about how to behave or about family history. It seemed as if the stories themselves were being braided into my hair.

What stories are told in your family? When do you usually hear them?

Write or draw your favorite family story in the space below.

Reverse, left to right:

Sonya Y.S. Clark, *Unum*, 1998. Cloth and crochet thread, 10 x 14 x 14 inches. Collection of Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchase, through Rudolph and Louise Langer Fund. © Sonya Y.S. Clark.

Sonya Y.S. Clark, *Hemi*, 1998. Cloth and crochet thread, 4 x 8 x 8 inches. Collection of Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchase, through Rudolph and Louise Langer Fund. © Sonya Y.S. Clark.

Sonya Y.S. Clark, *Triad*, 1998. Cloth and crochet thread, 4 x 8 x 8 inches. Collection of Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchase, through Rudolph and Louise Langer Fund. © Sonya Y.S. Clark.

Sonya Y.S. Clark, *Fingers*, 1998. Cloth and crochet thread, 10 x 14 x 14 inches. Collection of Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchase, through Rudolph and Louise Langer Fund. © Sonya Y.S. Clark.

Sonya Y.S. Clark, *Spider*, 1998. Cloth and crochet thread, 4 x 8 x 8 inches. Collection of Madison Museum of Contemporary Art. Purchase, through Rudolph and Louise Langer Fund. © Sonya Y.S. Clark.