



Gamer notes that her work is a process of “demanding respect” for the black female body that has always been understood as a spectacle.

Doreen Garner | @doederek

Not all artworks are generalizable, nor should they be. Some refer to traumas so pervasively applied to one group of people that it would indeed be unconscionable to appeal to some universal human condition. Doreen Garner insists that her work must be read as a statement about the treatment of black women, and not an appeal to the general (i.e. white) body as we are prone to create in art history. “The era that I reference in my work is a period where black people were not only enslaved, but used as test subjects,” explains Garner. “There was a theory that black people can endure more pain, which is completely made up. It served the purpose of allowing black bodies to be used for medical research, but also to feed the sadistic nature of the white male medical practitioner.”

It follows that Garner's work is as historically informed as it is visually arresting. There is a wealth of research and documentation that takes her imagery out of the realm of shock and into a deeper appeal to the way the white patriarchy feverishly changes science in order to support its hatred. Garner shows the accoutrements of this mindset by taking objects out of context, such as silicone toys, teeth and medical instruments. She notes that her work is a process of “demanding respect” for the black female body that has always been understood as a spectacle.

It is the depth of this cruelty that Garner examines, and it is her goal to lay it bare so that it might not be another one of history's secret atrocities.