

THE CHICAGO **Crusader**

One of a kind artist brings her creativity to a one of a kind show



By Elaine Hegwood Bowen, M.S.J.

The 4th annual One of a Kind Spring Show® returns to The Mart, 222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza, on April 26-28. The Show brings more than 300 artists and makers together under one roof, featuring a variety of exceptional work from independent artists and makers from across North America and beyond. The event will also host exciting fashion runway shows, live music, a gourmet market, and more throughout the weekend.

Shoppers will be able to meet and engage with participating artists to learn about them, their creative process and their work. The items include accessories, bath and body, ceramics, fashion, fiber art, furniture, glass and gourmet goods, to home goods, jewelry, kids, metal, mixed media, paintings, paper, pet products, photography, sculpture and wood.

The Emerging Market section highlights about 20 up-and-coming participants who are new to the event.

“We are extremely excited to be bringing back the One of a Kind Spring Show for the fourth year. After a long winter, our annual show is a great opportunity for shoppers to get out of the house and explore the many offerings,” said Lisa Simonian, Vice President of Marketing at The Mart.

Patricia Coleman-Cobb, an award-winning African-American designer, whose work is steeped in rich African tradition, is new to the Spring Show.

Her hand crafted collection includes many works of art such as beautifully framed clay sculpted and mixed media figures, traditional clay sculptures/busts, and one-of-a-kind mixed media collectible dolls.



THE ARTIST’S WORK from her “Faces in Profile and Courage” series. Patricia Coleman-Cobb will bring her colorful, African-inspired pieces to Chicago for the first time at the One of a Kind Spring Show® from April 26 through April 28. (Photo by Darrell Turner).

She discussed her work with the **Crusader**, explaining her first “surreal and mystical” exposure to art. “One night, after the house was quiet, I sat folding diapers and towels. As I reached to pick up a towel, I noticed that—like faces in the clouds—the folds of laundry had personalities all their own. As I began to fumble and play with these shapes and expressions, I found myself laughing and talking aloud to myself about how each one looked like it was saying or doing one thing or another.” Though family members could have argued that she was delirious from a lack of sleep brought on by having two babies in

diapers, Coleman-Cobb said that in the morning she drew the images that she had remembered. "Within six weeks, I was exhibiting at my first show."

She had a bachelor's degree in Clothing and Textiles and hinted that she felt something spiritual that particular night. "Right there in the still of the night, I was handed this amazing gift, it was like being touched by an angel, because I became an Artist that day." She says that her most touching and notable pieces have been the simple designs that came to her that one night at the dining room table.

Coleman-Cobb's pieces include the limited-edition series "Pregnant Woman in Mud Cloth," which uses pregnancy as a theme. "Up until recently, pregnancy was often times spoken of in hushed tones, and not considered something that was [displayed] on the covers of magazines. The maternity fashions were hideous and sold in a back corner tucked away behind clothing made for plus-sized women," she said. "At the time I created this piece, I did still witness some residual apprehensions from a few about showing a semi-nude piece that celebrated the natural beauty of impending motherhood. But once I introduced these proud maternal pieces showing their beautiful tummies, adorned in Mud cloth and bright colored wraps, they quickly became my most popular signature pieces."

Coleman-Cobb says that people view her pieces differently. "When people interact with my work, I give them time to interpret their feelings. It has been the most humbling for me to have them explain what it means through their own personal life experiences."

The artist studied the history of costume and spoke about the early handmade African-American "Topsy Turvy Dolls," which were pieces designed from the waist up on one end as "Mammy" and the other end as the typical Southern Bell. "Many theorize that these early pieces were made so that the slave children could play with the white side in the absence of the slave master, and upon his approach could quickly flip the doll from white to Black allowing the dress to cover the forbidden fruit."

The prices for Coleman-Cobb's extraordinary pieces range from \$225 to \$3,000.

The One of a Kind Show Spring Show® will be open 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Friday, April 26; 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Saturday, April 27; and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sunday, April 28. Tickets are \$12 per adult and provide entry for all three days. Special ticket packages and offers are available. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.oneofakindshowchicago.com. To view more of ColemanCobb's work, visit <https://patcobb.com/index.html>.