

FORT GANSEVOORT

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Review: Fort Gansevoort, Christopher Myers, "Drapetomania"

by Juri Koll

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Christopher Myers; photos by Juri Koll

On a beautiful morning in Hollywood Christopher Myers opened Fort Gansevoort's new LA space by beginning his talk outside the gallery - on the sidewalk in front of "What Does it Mean to Matter (Community Autopsy)" a gorgeous monumental appliqué fabric completed just this year, as were all works in the show. While the subjects of his work are always sharp and challenging of history and our assumptions about freedom and domination, his talk was casual, inclusive, wide ranging, engaging.

"What Does it Mean..." depicts multiple slain African Americans in a sort of standing/dancing "autopsy" view, with each bullet hole and its precise placement lovingly sewn into the work. It's a visceral, signature piece utilizing printed and solid fabrics of all kinds carefully selected for their impact, character, manner.

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Christopher Myers addresses the crowd

Each of the pieces in the show are emotional, tactilely inviting in color and composition. All exhibit a sense of exuberance, of hope, of self-awareness.

These creative stories Myers makes have been sewn by hand in Luxor, Egypt, and are impressive, beautiful, and open. He says the technique is "not mysterious" and in that understanding lies Myers invitation to us - to bring us to the social and cultural significance of the stories behind the vibrant dance each character performs. His main focus is freedom and by extension perhaps, bondage, the need to express oneself, to have a chance to stand up.



"Monument to Shouting"

Christopher Myers is an acclaimed author/illustrator and so surveying the exhibition is all about story - exclaimed out loud - as in "Monument to Shouting" or with the quiet strength of "Whisper to Graves."

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One of his "favorite" pieces is "The Talented Tenth and the Beauty of Statistics," which takes up an entire wall. When Christopher Myers eloquently states that it is based on data sets from WEB Du Bois's data visualization about the African American's position globally, and elaborates on that subject, you are joined to the work.



"The Talented Tenth and the Beauty of Statistics"

Bringing disparate pieces of cloth from the far reaches of the globe as it were, Myers creates and immediacy and dignity in his tapestries - flags warning of danger and signaling promise.

"Drapetomania" will remain on view through February 8, 2020. Find out more about this exhibition and Fort Gansevoort's new LA gallery space on its website: <https://www.fortgansevoort.com/>