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Myrlande Constant exhibit opens in Chelsea art space

John Barker – January 19, 2023



Myrlande Constant stands in front of her new work, “Apres Gran Met La Fey Nan Bwa Se Tretmant Yo Viy” (Karen Juanita Carrillo photo)

The work of Haitian textile artist Myrlande Constant can be seen at a new exhibit in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood. The Fort Gansevoort art gallery (5 Ninth Avenue; between Gansevoort Street and Little W. 12th Street, Manhattan; www.fortgansevoort.com) is showcasing “Myrlande Constant: Drapo,” which will feature 10 of Constant’s art works on display through March 11, 2023.

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During a press preview for the show, Constant spoke about her process of artmaking and the ideas she is trying to project through her work.

Constant uses textiles, beads, sequins and varied other materials to create Vodou flags (drapo Vodou), which are traditionally used during religious ceremonies and often depict stories about ancestral spirits. Vodou flags don't typically feature the name of the artist who made them, but Constant said she adds her name "to let people know that it's her work and she's proud of it." Constant most recently had her work featured at the 2022 Venice Biennale.

Constant began making her flags in the 1990s and quickly became one of the most admired drapo artists in the nation. Many of her works, she said, depict Haitians and their respect for herbal medicine and its essential elements that come from the Earth.

In addition to this New York-based exhibit, Constant's work will be on view at UCLA's Fowler Museum in Los Angeles, California, beginning March 26. That exhibition, "Myrlande Constant: The Work of Radiance," will be the first solo exhibit of the work of a Haitian woman in the United States.