

FORT GANSEVOORT

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Myrlande Constant

By Andrea K. Scott – January 24, 2023



Art work © Myrlande Constant / Courtesy of the artist / Fort Gansevoort

Historically, the Haitian art of sewing drapos, or vodou flags, was dominated by men. Enter Myrlande Constant, whose astonishing textiles are on view at Fort Gansevoort through March 11. In the early nineteen-nineties, the artist left her job at a wedding-dress factory in Port-au-Prince and took up the form—revolutionizing it in the process. Constant adds beads to her compositions, alongside the traditional sequins, using a tambour embroidery stitch that yields both unprecedented intricacy and pictorial depth. You could say that Constant was born to the practice she calls “painting with beads”: her mother was a seamstress and her father was a vodou priest. Now her children assist in the production of her epic pieces, which can take up to six months to complete. (The nine-foot-wide “Apres Gran Met La Fey Nan Bwa Se Tretmant Yo Viy,” pictured above, from 2022, pays homage to both the ceremonial and the secular sides of plant medicine.) With distinctions between so-called outsiders and M.F.A.-minted insiders becoming increasingly moot, Constant’s moment has arrived. Last year, she was in the Venice Biennale’s acclaimed exhibition “The Milk of Dreams,” and in March she’ll be the first Haitian woman to have a solo museum show in the U.S., at U.C.L.A.

FORT GANSEVOORT

Jan. 11-Mar.11
Fort Gansevoort
5 Ninth Ave.
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