

FORT GANSEVOORT

DEPARTURES

The Thread of Things

Port-Au-Prince native Myrlande Constant, who became the first ever female Haitian artist to have a museum exhibition in the US in 2023, showcases the complexity and luminescence of the world we live in

Hiroko Kamogawa – January 2023



Left: © Myrlande Constant. Danbalah, 2022 Beads and sequins, and tassels on fabric 47 X 49.5 in.

Right: © Myrlande Constant. Erzulie Freda, 2022 Beads, sequins, and tassels on fabric 42.25 X 47 in.

Both intricate and monumental, the textile works by Haitian artist Myrlande Constant unfold a remarkable tale: centuries-old craftsmanship mingling with contemporary subject matters while symbolical Vodou-rooted details are embedded within contemporary and familiar landscapes.

This visual and conceptual duality is a key to Constant's work, yet at the initial glance, what appears most intriguing is the great sense of completeness and fullness her works bring. Their painting-like quality results from exceptionally fine detailing that was painstakingly realised by the hands of the artist using a traditional technique called tambour, said to be developed in France – a technique Constant acquired initially at a factory where she used to work. The initial stage in Constant's process involves a sketch drawn on the back of the canvas, followed by applying countless numbers of beads and sequins, the canvas remaining face down throughout the course of making, only revealed, even to the artist, when complete.

After leaving her factory job over unpaid wages in the 1990s, Constant has been solely engaging in making traditional Vodou flags, known as Drapo Vodou, as a way to survive. Charged with femininity, folklore and remarkable creative energy, her works were recently shown at the 59th edition of Venice Biennale, The Milk of Dreams, curated by Cecilia Alemani and there will be two surveys coming up in 2023 – indisputably must-see exhibitions of this remarkable artist.

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Myrlande Constant: Drapo
Fort Gansevoort, New York
12 January 2023 – 11 March 2023

Myrlande Constant: The Work of Radiance
Fowler Museum, Los Angeles
26 March 2023 – 16 July 2023