

WOMEN AND MIGRATION(S) II



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Cover image: FIRELEI BÁEZ for Marie-Louise Coidavid, exiled, keeper of order, Anacaona, 2018. Oil on canvas. Installation view: 10th Berlin Biennale, Akademie der Künste (Hanseatenweg), Berlin, 9 June 9-September 2018. Photo: Timo Ohler. Cover design by Anna Gatti

2. Marie Louise Christophe

Firelei Báez

My recent paintings and installations explore the histories of Afro-Latina and Afro-Caribbean women that have been overshadowed by—albeit absolutely foundational to—dominant Western narratives about migration. More specifically, within the scope of Haitian history, for the past five years I have centered my research on the life of Marie Louise Christophe, the first queen of Haiti, which gained independence from France in 1804. Following the death of her husband King Henri I of Haiti in 1820, and the fall of the Kingdom of Haiti, she was forced into exile, ultimately settling in Pisa. My ongoing series of portraits of Marie Louise and her two daughters Améthyste and Athénaïre, which I have been developing since 2017, serves as a testament to their importance within the larger narrative of the Haitian Revolution. By reclaiming their story from the margins, celebrating their resilience in the face of unrest and migration, and presenting them as symbolic of the rising of a new people and culture, I aspire to encourage a more complex view of the independence movements that occurred throughout the Americas during this period.



Fig. 1 Firelei Báez, *Sans-Souci* (*This threshold between a dematerialized and a historicized body*), 2015, acrylic and ink on linen, 108x74", courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York. Photo: Orriol Tarridas. Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York.



Fig. 2 Firelei Báez, *for Marie-Louise Coidavid, exiled, keeper of order, Anacaona*, 2018, oil on canvas, 320x430". Installation view: 10th Berlin Biennale, Akademie der Künste (Hanseatenweg), Berlin, June 9–September 9, 2018. Photo: Timo Ohler. Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York.



Fig. 3 Firelei Báez, *roots when they are young and most tender*, 2018, site-specific installation, two paintings, four to six hand-painted papier-mâché sculptures, 40x30" hand-painted blue tarp, chicken wire and foliage, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York.



Fig. 4 Firelei Báez, *For Améthyste and Athénaïre* (*Exiled Muses Beyond Jean Luc Nancy's Canon*), *Anacaonas*, 2018, oil paint on canvas and wood panel, hand-painted frames, 120x252". Installation view: *The Modern Window: Firelei Báez*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2018–19. Photograph by Kurt Heumiller. Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan, New York.