



Press release

Firelei Báez. Trust Memory Over History
July 6 – October 12, 2024

Press Conference: Wednesday, July 3, 2024, at 11:15 am

With dynamic compositions, intense color variety, and enigmatic motifs, the large-format paintings and expansive installations of the Dominican-US-American artist Firelei Báez (b. 1981) know how to demand attention and invite the viewer into visually overwhelming experiences in today's overstimulated culture. Following the acquisition of the installation *Those who would douse it* (2018) by Firelei Báez in 2018, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg is now presenting the artist's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany from July 6 to October 13, 2024. It comprises 27 paintings and paper installations mainly created over the past eight years, including a work created especially for the exhibition in Wolfsburg.

The New York-based artist's fictional pictorial worlds combine multifaceted creatures that magically oscillate between human, plant, and animal, with seductively shiny hair, colorful feathers, plump fruit, and storm-tested palm trees. With a painterly stroke of liberation, Firelei Báez contrasts the violent chapters of world history with beauty and joy. Her themes range from Dominican and Caribbean culture to science fiction, art and natural history, the colonial era, migration, life in the diaspora, racism, and gender issues.

While Firelei Báez's paintings are based on historical maps, construction plans, or diagrams, her paper installations consist primarily of painted book pages. The maps document state borders and thus control mechanisms and power relations, her abstract compositions and powerful creatures occupy and explode this world order. Her figures are difficult to grasp—self-determined, they defy categorization. They subvert Eurocentric views and demonstrate resistance to past and present social hierarchies.

In this sense, the exhibition title, *Trust Memory Over History*, refers to the vast space between memory and oral tradition on the one hand and written and mapped history on the other. Firelei Báez confronts the absence of critical voices of discriminated people and countries in historical documents of the manifestation of power with colorful and figurative presence as a form of intervention.



With this corrective retrospection, she creates perspectives for alternative, global, and future-oriented ways of thinking. Firelei Báez's virtuoso paintings bear witness to the processing of experienced trauma and promise healing.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication in English.

Curator: Uta Ruhkamp

Curatorial Assistance: Carla Wiggering

The exhibition was organised in cooperation with
the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark.

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