

Acknowledging the reciprocal nature of migration as a non-linear course of movement, Firelei Báez seeks to underscore streams of influence that are often stifled by dominant and reductive understandings about migration that suggest a singular direction of transmission. In this painting, a vibrantly colored figure crouches onto a reproduction of a map from 1794 entitled “A Correct Chart of Hispaniola with the Windward Passage,” which describes the navigation of the West Indies. Taken from a major sea atlas published in England, the map illustrates trade routes across the Caribbean region that circulate not only commodities and bodies, but also ideologies and revolutionary precedent. Using abstract gesture to build swirling layers that ultimately comprise a strong, shape-shifting female protagonist in the center of this composition, Báez choreographs a new relationship with these channels of movement, challenging legacies of capitalism and imperialism to create possibilities for self-determination and alternate futures.

Firelei Báez,
Untitled (A Correct Chart of Hispaniola with the Windward Passage), 2020
Oil and acrylic on printed canvas

© Firelei Báez. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth
Photo: Phoebe d'Heurle

