



Museum of the African Diaspora

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ART

Works tied to Caribbean dazzle with island images

It's not easy to make an exhibition suggest a carnival atmosphere in the constrained galleries of the Museum of the African Diaspora, but many individual works in the current show mount a valiant effort.

"Coffee, Rhum, Sugar & Gold" is a great title, but then the curators tacked on a dead-

ly academic subtitle, "A Postcolonial Paradox." Little but the wall text supports the idea that this is a theory-driven enterprise, thank goodness. The real through line is the origin stories of the artists, all of whom have ties to the Caribbean. The best of their works glory in island color and images, whether with

complete abandon — as in the glittery pair of tapestries that overwhelm their subjects in Ebony G. Patterson's "A View In" and "A View Out" — or tempered by haunting images of an enslaved past, as we find embedded in the background of a grand triptych, "Pimper's Paradise" (2018) by Phillip Thomas.

Of the 10 artists included, perhaps half are seen regularly in commercial galleries in the Bay Area. The most familiar, and among the most confidently eclectic, is Firelei Báez. Her chorus line of hirsute legs surrealistically conflates animal, aboriginal and social stereotype.

— Charles Desmarais

"Coffee, Rhum, Sugar & Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox": 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Through Aug. 11. \$5-\$10. Museum of the African Diaspora, 685 Mission St., S.F. 415-358-7200. www.moadsf.org