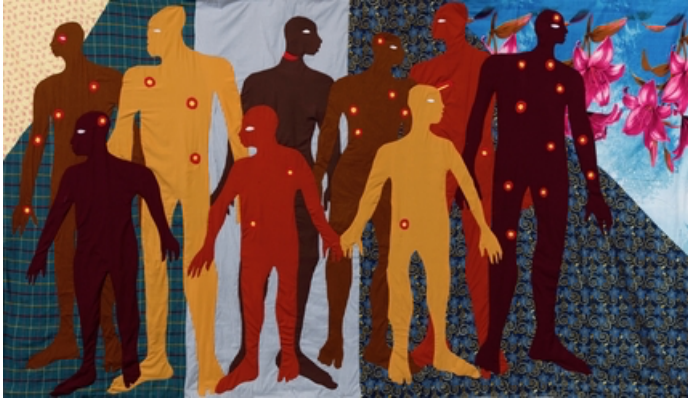


# FORT GANSEVOORT

## ARTFORUM

Christopher Myers  
January 10, 2020  
by Liz Hirsch



Christopher Myers, *What Does It Mean to Matter (Community Autopsy)*, 2019, fabric, 96 x 168"

**LOS ANGELES**

Christopher Myers

FORT GANSEVOORT LOS ANGELES

4859 Fountain Ave

December 14, 2019–February 8, 2020

Christopher Myers's exhibition at Fort Gansevoort's new satellite space opens with an image of nine human silhouettes on a banner that spans almost the entirety of the gallery's storefront window. Cut from umber, crimson, and ocher cloths, the figures are sewn onto the solid and patterned fabrics that make up the piece. They would be anonymous if not for the forensic specificity of yellow and red appliquéd shapes that mark primarily the actual locations of lethal gunshot wounds inflicted by police officers on particular black Americans. Titled *What Does It Mean to Matter (Community Autopsy)* (all works 2019), this enigmatic portrait of loss responds to high-profile murders—such as those of Michael Brown, Ezell Ford, and Antwon Rose—with more than illustration. The work gathers isolated victims into an urgent assembly.

# FORT GANSEVOORT

Myers expands his critique of state-sanctioned violence with allusions to public intellectuals' historic framings of race and power. The show's title, "Drapetomania," names a nineteenth-century pseudoscience that absurdly diagnosed enslaved Africans' desire to flee as a mental illness. *The Talented Tenth and the Beauty of Statistics*, one of the many vivid textiles on view, layers photographs and infographics from W. E. B. Du Bois's "Exhibit of American Negroes," a groundbreaking study of black Americans' lives shown at the Paris Exposition in 1900.

Despite the abundance of historical citations, the textiles and sculptures on view read lyrically; in the quilted works, trenchant commentary on physical and psychic trauma is set against scenes of joyful emancipation. A small glass figurine functions as the exhibition's poetic core. *Made of Ink* is a corked bottle of black ink in the shape of a man. Here a reference to the black body, ink is also a medium of the storyteller, and the symbol through which Myers insists on the transformative materiality of narrative.

— Liz Hirsch