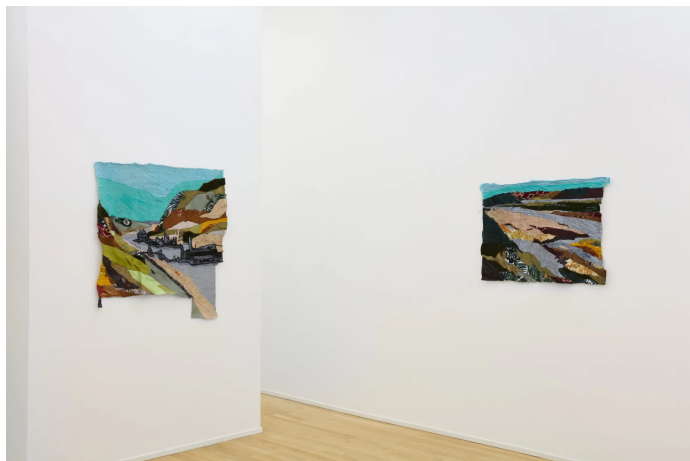


ART REVIEW

A patchwork of love and labor at Andrew Rafacz

Lush textile works from Krystle Lemonias hold personal and political histories.

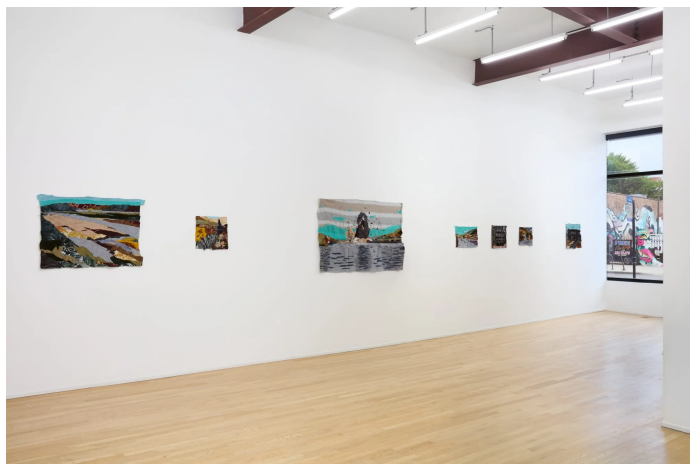
by Lucas Gómez-Doyle
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Installation view, "Sorri fi maaga dawg, cuz maaga dawg will ton roun bite yu"
Credit: Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

Krystle Lemonias's second solo show at Andrew Rafacz, "Sorri fi maaga dawg, cuz maaga dawg will ton roun bite yu," delivers an unimpeachable account of the artist's interdisciplinary talent, sealed by a prowess for stitchwork. The product of a residency at the Casa Santa Ana Foundation in Panama City, this new body of mixed-media work draws as much inspiration from a general engagement with Panama's history as from a more personal source, Lemonias's great-grandfather, who once lived in the country. This familial connection, one which in some ways mirrors Lemonias's own experience of journeying to the U.S. when she was ten, has led the artist to deepen her engagement with themes of movement, labor, and identity.

Venturing to the then recently constructed Panama Canal in hopes of securing employment after his service in WWI, Lemonias' great-grandfather, like many other immigrant workers, knew the location as an epicenter of commerce. But the canal was more than just a place of international commodity exchange. It is these other defining aspects of the landscape—particularly the contributions made by Black Caribbean workers and the sites of their effort—that the artist has narrativized.



Krystle Lemonias's second solo show at Andrew Rafacz shows a prowess for stitchwork.
Courtesy Andrew Rafacz

Labor comes in and out of focus throughout the room, appearing in smaller and more sprawling compositions. Lemonias's larger works are where her capabilities truly settle. Composed of selections of patterned upholstery fabric, donations of clothes from her paternal family, and carefully selected portions of food packaging, the scenic landscapes and depictions of bodies at work are exquisitely detailed. The differences between these material choices provide a tantalizing contrast, a flirtation with depth that gives the appearance of something like watercolors on textile. The best in show: A patchwork image of two figures in a steady procession, marching a minecart down a railway to an unknown destination.

Up close, the simple elegance of Lemonias's sewing and relief printing tells yet another story. Loose ends of threads spool downward in loops and curls. These aren't just lines, and they aren't just superfluous matter; they are lineages, and they are personal. This is the content often hidden from view. It is the reverse side of a work, a different history, one responsible for constructing and holding everything together, just like Lemonias's great-grandfather once did. Thread history together and it all comes into focus; it's all quite radiant.

📍 "Sorri fi maaga dawg, cuz maaga dawg will ton roun bite yu"

Through 8/1: Tue–Fri 10 AM–5PM, Sat 11 AM–5 PM, [Andrew Rafacz](#), 1749 W. Chicago 📍