

By Mark Jenkins May 6 at 11:13 AM

Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter

The doorways in Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter's artworks are not entrances; they're hubs around which the eclectic compositions revolve. The D.C. artist's "French Doors" comprises 13 collages, each centered on a photograph of an elaborately embellished portal from Paris's Chateau Rouge area, home to many people of African descent. The pieces feature craggy edges and spontaneous gestures, West African textile patterns and abstract-expressionist swoops of pencil and white paint.

Titles such as "Crossroads at Cameroon" and "Boukman's Ghost" invoke France's imperialist history. (Dutty Boukman was a 19th-century revolutionary in French-ruled Haiti.) In a statement, Gibson-Hunter writes that African migration to Europe is a continuation of colonialism. Yet the contrasts in the artist's assemblages are dynamic without appearing angry. And the freehand gestures that both crown and unify the pictures are arcs of triumph.

Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter: French Doors On view through May 13 at Honfleur Gallery, 1241 Good Hope Rd. SE. 202-365-6291. honfleurgallery.com.



"A Breath of Legacy" by Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter, 2014, 55" x 46 6/8", mixed media collage. (Aziza Claudia Gibson-Hunter/Honfleur Gallery)