

NEWS

Artist Ashley Longshore reimagines Royal Poinciana Plaza tree with 'jewels and sparkle'

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Published 3:31 p.m. ET Dec. 2, 2020 | Updated 4:42 p.m. ET Dec. 4, 2020



The installation for the Royal Poinciana Plaza tree last year was by fine art photographer and author, Gray Malin.
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For artist Ashley Longshore, the holiday message this year is all about jewels and lots of sparkle.

This concept, combined with plenty of bright colors, will be unveiled Friday today when the Royal Poinciana Plaza reveals the New Orleans-based artist's take on the plaza's signature 30-foot Christmas tree made out of 52 surfboards. It will be visible by mid-day, plaza officials said.

Longshore's installation, which will be on view through Jan. 10, reimagines the tree through a visual of colorful jewels, with five images of gemstones created specifically for the installation.

"I was very excited when they (Royal Poinciana Plaza) reached out to me directly. I was excited that they wanted a strong-willed, foul-mouthed, gracious and enthusiastic female artist to come down there and spread a little love in a time when people really need to be uplifted," Longshore said.



Artist Ashley Longshore's work adorns The Royal Poinciana Plaza's annual surfboard Christmas tree and holiday decor throughout the property December 4, 2020 in Palm Beach. The New Orleans based artist will be at the nook by Celis Produce Saturday to sign books between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. [MEGHAN MCCARTHY/palmbeachdailynews.com] *Meghan McCarthy, MEGHAN McCARTHY / Palm Beach Dai*

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Longshore's work is known not just in the art world, but also in the fashion industry. A mostly self-taught artist, she has worked with major designer brands such as Gucci, Judith Leiber and Christian Siriano. For Siriano, she was asked to collaborate on his 2019 New York Fashion Week fall show by painting live canvases on the runway.

She also was the first female artist to have a solo exhibition at Manhattan luxury department store Bergdorf Goodman with her art covering the store's Fifth Avenue windows from floor to ceiling.

Although Longshore wasn't initially scheduled to be at the event, she will be present for a book signing from 2 to 3 p.m. Saturday in the nook between Celis Produce and Orlebar Brown. With every book purchase, visitors will receive an 8x10 autographed photograph of Longshore's tree installation.

The artist said she's hoping people will see her "love of fashion and all things Palm Beach" when they see the tree.

"The whole idea is that you are a treasure, a gem. I wrote a poem that will be displayed along with the tree, which follows that idea. Art is very subjective and powerful. When you see art, you relate to there is a bond that form, an intimacy that happens," she said.

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Longshore painting live on the runway at the Christian Siriano fashion show during 2019 New York Fashion Week. Photo: Ashley Longshore *Photo: Ashley Longshore*

Longshore said the installation is an analogy of how difficult 2020 has been for everyone, and the pressure and heat it takes for beautiful stones to form inside the earth.

“I feel like the loss we have felt, the people we lost, and missed opportunities to make memories with the people we love, has affected us greatly,” she said. “We want to appreciate the time we once had, and the ones we have ahead of us. There’s a certain amount of joy in that. Being able to adorn that tree with color and images of jewels, it is, hopefully, symbolic of the beauty that is to come.”

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Lori Berg, general manager of the Royal Poinciana Plaza, said plaza officials were “delighted” to work with Longshore on this year’s tree installation.

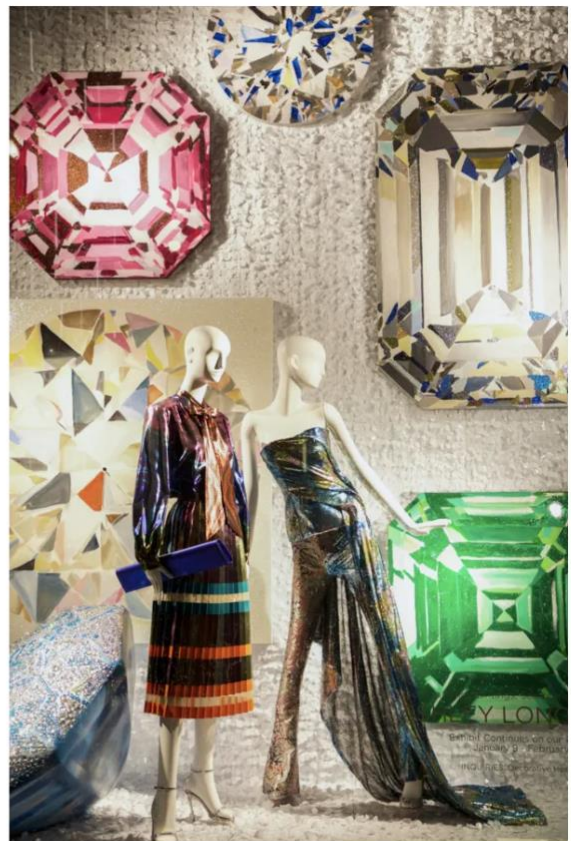
“The holidays will certainly look different this year, but we want to ensure they are full of hope and joy,” Berg said in a press release.

Last year, the plaza’s tree was designed by Gray Malin, a fine art photographer and author known for his aerial beach photography. Aboard a doorless helicopter, Malin shot photographs from Palm Beach, the Hamptons, St. Tropez and other locations, which he then adhered to each of the tree’s 52 surfboards.

In 2018, illustrator and pop artist Donald Robertson used a rainbow of colorfully painted lips to repurpose the tree’s surfboards.

Longshore would like people to take away two things from the installation: strength and self-reflection.

“I’m so excited for this planet to just be Studio 54, pulsating with music and people. I want people to know that among all these beautifully curated items inside the stores, they themselves are a radiant jewel. We all are a diamond catching the light,” she said.



Ashley Longshore's window design for Bergdorf Goodman's Fifth Avenue store in Manhattan this year.
Photo: Ashley Longshore *Ashley Longshore*