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Carol Vogel



JAMES EWING/ART PRODUCTION FUND

Kiki Smith working on “Chorus,” which will be installed on Eighth Avenue at 46th Street in the theater district.

Josephine Baker in a Lot

The artist Kiki Smith describes her latest project, “Chorus,” opening May 23, as “an intersection between medieval pageantry and an early 1920s Busby Berkeley film.” She has sprinkled what is called the Last Lot — a 70-by-100-foot empty slice of theater district real estate at 46th Street and Eighth Avenue — with stained-glass stars, a nostalgic nod to the glamour of old Broadway. An etched metal figure of Josephine Baker will stand amid the star sculptures.

“The history of Times Square has been erased and made boring,” Ms. Smith said, recalling the gritty days of burlesque clubs, peep shows and tenements.

Stained glass is a medium she has embraced in recent years, having worked with the architect Deborah Gans on a 16-foot-high window for the Eldridge Street Synagogue on the Lower East Side. She has also created work using cast glass, blown glass, Schott crystal, fluorescent tub-

ing, lamp glass, industrial sheet glass and mirrors.

The stars she has made for the Last Lot, Ms. Smith said, are a metaphor for the star power of Broadway itself, and the sculpture of Baker will be “like one of those life-size cutouts that stood in old movie theaters.”

The project was commissioned by the nonprofit Art Production Fund, in collaboration with the Times Square Alliance and the Shubert Organization, which owns the chain-link-fenced lot and has donated it temporarily for art projects.