

IDB Cultural Center

Inter-American Development Bank
1300 New York Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20577

Vive Haïti !
Contemporary Art of the Haitian Diaspora



Edouard Duval-Carrié (b. Haiti, 1954)

Le Général Toussaint enfumé (General Toussaint Enshrouded in Smoke), 2001

Mixed media on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Courtesy of Bernice Steinbaum Gallery

Photo: Teresa Diehl

Open May 24 to August 6, 2004

The Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

announces the opening of the exhibition

Vive Haïti ! ***Contemporary Art of the Haitian Diaspora***

Open May 24 to August 6, 2004

With this exhibition of 11 outstanding contemporary Haitian artists, the IDB Cultural Center joins the Inter-American community in its solidarity with the people of Haiti, honoring the country, a member of the Inter-American Development Bank since October 1959, in the celebration of its Bicentennial of Independence.

The Cultural Center has also contributed this year to the IFE Foundation in Haiti with a \$10,000 grant to help Haitian craft makers produce their work, which in turn will be exhibited at this year's Smithsonian Folklife and Cultural Heritage Festival in June, on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

The Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Festival has also teamed up with the IDB Cultural Center in the presentation of a concert in the IDB's Andrés Bello Auditorium of Haitian singer and composer Beethova Obas (May 27th at 6:30 pm).

Washington, D.C., April 22, 2004

No country in the Americas, or perhaps in the world, comes close to matching the history and culture of Haiti. According to the theory that everything is interrelated, the flapping of a butterfly's wings can set off a tornado across the world. Haiti's flapping of the wings of freedom in 1804 did much more than that: it changed the course of world history.

In a series of revolts that started in 1790, Haitians, mainly Haitian slaves, fought their French overlords and managed to crush the armies of Napoleon, who sought to restore slavery

in the colonies where it had been abolished by the French Revolution. In the process, the Haitians also managed to defeat a British army bent on incorporating Haiti into the British Empire while maintaining slavery in the Caribbean. It has been two hundred years since Haiti became the second independent country in the Americas, and the first created by former slaves.

The Cultural Center of the Inter-American Development Bank pays tribute to the Haitian people and the country's bicentennial of its independence with an exhibition entitled: ***Vive Haïti! Contemporary Art of the Haitian Diaspora***, which focuses primarily on the work of artists belonging to recent generations from that country who live abroad as a result of the upheaval that has characterized modern Haitian social and economic history. The potential posed by the existence of an active and resourceful Diaspora in light of recent developments appears enormous.

The exhibit ventures into the emotional and mental attachment some artists – who for several reasons have made their home outside Haiti in France, Canada and the United States – feel toward their history and culture in a process that somehow seems always incomplete. The exhibit explores their fixation with certain symbols that anchor them in the past, such as General Toussaint Louverture, the Haitian Liberator, and synthesize inherited traditions, such as *Voodoo*, while living the present with uncertainty and seeing the future as elusive. The exhibit includes the work of a few artists who, although living in Haiti, depend on outside sources such as commercial galleries and collectors interested in Haitian art for professional recognition and their economic livelihood.

Mrs. Mirna Liévano de Marques, IDB External Relations Advisor, explains the particular case of Haiti in the Americas, saying that after Haiti's independence a world that continued upholding slavery for many more decades shunned Haiti, and the weight of debt to France to indemnify plantation owners made the world's richest colony in the 18th century a subsistence economy. This isolated the country from trade, investment and technology, while demographic growth increased pressure to provide food, shelter and fuel. These circumstances dictated a weak civil society and state, despite the occasional strong leader. This was a terrible price for freedom, a prescription for lasting poverty, and a spur to the emigration that created the Diaspora.

Extraordinary realities hidden behind mythical aspects of Haitian culture are intimated in this exhibition of the works of 11 contemporary Haitian artists: Edouard Duval-Carrié and Adler Guerrier in Miami; Marie-Hélène Cauvin and Marie-Denise Douyon in Montreal; Barbara Prézeau in Montreal and Port-au-Prince; Elodie Barthélemy in Saintines (France); Maxence Denis in Paris; and Pierrot Barra (d. 1999), Mireille Délice, Jeannot Jean-Philippe (d. 1997), and Yves Telemak in Port-au-Prince.

The Curator of the IDB Cultural Center, Félix Angel, selected the artists and the works for the Center's exhibit and invited Dr. Francine Farr, former director of the Haiti's Art Museum in Port-au-Prince, to act as Associate Curator. In her essay written for the catalogue, Dr. Farr states that "Love for Haiti runs deep in the hearts of Haitian artists of the Diaspora. Their passionate and mysterious love of country, sympathetic yet critical, moves them to create art

that is both rooted in and independent of its cultural origins.” She cites artist Edouard Duval-Carrié who articulates his inspiring patriotism born of the Diaspora: “Because I was displaced, I’ll never be an unconscious Haitian. I am very bewildered by Haiti. I’m very much in love with it, and I am trying to understand it.”

The IDB Cultural Center, which is devoted to promoting knowledge about the member states of the Inter-American Development Bank, is proud to serve as a bridge for the powerful cultural links between Haiti and its Diaspora. Timeliness, worldliness, and a critical yet loving eye characterize the contemporary art of Haitians living abroad and reflect positively on art produced in Haiti for Haitians and for an attuned international audience. These stylistically disparate works of art offer a broad glimpse of Haiti’s capacity for change. They are an implicit critique of Haitian culture conceived and lived as though it were suspended in mythical timelessness and entrenched stereotypes, as an unchanging cultural monolith. This contemporary art counters notions and realities of retrograde provincialism and romantic, bourgeois traditions. The latter have stimulated commercial enterprise but have intellectually restricted the visual arts, journalistic criticism, and university teaching of the history of Haitian art. The exhibition proves that the experience of the Diaspora frees the Haitian artist, the art, and its public audience from fatalistic, ethnocentric, deterministic thought and action. The Haitian Diaspora’s openness to change has the capacity to reserve the negative social cycles mirrored in the art history of Haiti, while it can also encourage increased, and improved productivity grounded in sustained innovation.

Today’s artists of the Haitian Diaspora avail themselves of ideas in their field amid unrestricted, mobile interactions with the world at large that eventually initiate ripples of change in the visual arts within Haiti. Free-flowing ideas circulating among Haitian artists generate newsworthy visual art extending far beyond *la peinture* (painting traditions), uncovering a redefined, propitious sense of Haitian cultural identity. Naturally, the art forms tend toward surprising and kaleidoscopic novelty, even as they hark back to mediums as time honored as painting and subjects as universal as the cycle of life. These artistic expressions are preeminent on the competitive, multicultural world stage of contemporary art. *Vive Haïti !* thus proudly unveils a fresh, successful face of Haiti, a face chiseled out of diversity, global permeability, and utter individuality.

Artists and Works in the Exhibition

• **Pierrot Barra**

(b. Bel Air district, Port-au-Prince, 1942 - d. 1999)

Ogou/Saint James Major Mounted on a Unicorn
(Ogou/Sen Jak Majè monté sur une unicorne), 1994

Mojo board, appliquéd cloth, doll parts,

sequins, 22 1/2 x 35 1/2 inches

Collection of Bill, Freddi, and Gabriela Brubaker

Three Lwa (Trois esprits vaudou), 1994
Mojo board, appliquéd cloth, doll heads, sequins, 36 x 14 inches

Collection of Bill, Freddi, and Gabriela Brubaker

Cousin or Papa Zaka, or Azaka, 1997
(Kouzen, Papa Zaka, Azaka)
Mixed media, 34 x 13 1/2 x 8 inches
Collection of Beverly and John Fox Sullivan

• **Marie-Hélène Cauvin**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1951 -)
No Man's Land, 2002
Oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inches
Collection of the artist

Difficile équilibre (Difficult Balance), 2001
Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches
Collection of the artist

Survivance du passé I (Survival From the Past I), 2000
Gouache, charcoal, pastel on paper
33 x 15 inches
Collection of the artist

• **Edouard Duval-Carrié**

(b. Haiti, 1954 -)
Le Général Toussaint enfumé (General Toussaint Enshrouded in Smoke), 2001
Mixed media on canvas, 60 x 60 inches
Courtesy of Bernice Steinbaum Gallery

• **Jeannot Jean-Philippe**

(b. Port-au-Prince 1958 – d. 1997)
Ti chèn pay (Little Haitian Chair), 1996
Painted wood and straw
24 x 16 3/4 x 15 inches
Private collection

Marassa Govi (Spirit Pot Dedicated to the Sacred Twins), 1997
Painted terracotta capped jar,
5 1/8 x 6 1/2 inches
Private collection

Govi Dedicated to Erzulie and Bossu with Flags and Banners (Govi dédié aux Erzulie et Bossu avec Drapeaux et Bannières), 1997
Painted terracotta capped jar
10 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches
Private collection

Govi Dedicated to Guede and Erzulie, 1997
(Govi dédié aux Guédé et Erzulie)
Painted terracotta capped jar
10 x 5 1/8 inches
Private collection

• **Marie-Denise Douyon**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1961 -)
Moran (Maasai Warrior), 2004
Oil and ink on wood, 45 1/4 x 33 7/16 inches
Collection of the artist

Musique de guerre ou de chasse (War or Hunting Music), 2003
Calabash, cut metal, 22 13/16 x 13 3/4 inches
Collection of the artist

Conscience de femme (Woman's Conscience), 2003
Calabash, cut metal
32 5/16 x 11 13/16 inches
Collection of the artist

• **Elodie Barthélemy**

(b. Bogotá, Colombia, 1965 -)
Petite Annonce / Le Port de Nantes (Small Ad / The Port of Nantes), 1998
Acrylic on canvas, 58 1/4 x 94 7/8 inches
Collection of the artist

Fécondation en kwi (Calabash Fertilization), 1997
Engraved and painted calabashes
11 13/16 x 5 1/2, 11 x 5 1/8, 9 13/16 x 4 3/4, 9 1/16 x 4 5/16, 7 7/8 x 3 1/8 inches
Collection of the artist

L'homme qui marche (The Man Who Walks), 1992
Appliquéd fabric, clothing
35 1/16 x 35 1/16 inches
Collection of the artist

• **Barbara Prézeau**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1965 -)
Erzulie, 2002
Mixed media, artificial rose petals
48 x 48 inches
Collection of the artist

Dakar, 1995-2003
Mixed media on tin can
Approx. 18 x 14 inches
Collection of the artist

• **Yves Telemak**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1960s -)
Ceremoni Grand Bois (Great Forest Ceremony), c. 1996
Sequins, beads on cloth, 31 x 31 inches
Collection of the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

La Sirène Diamante (Diamond Mermaid Goddess), 1999
Appliquéd sequins, beads on cloth
40 x 31 1/4 inches
Collection of Bill, Freddi and Gabriela Brubaker

Tête Sans Corps (Headless Body), 1995
Sequins, beads, appliquéd on cloth
38 x 32 inches
Collection of Nancy Forrest

Dambala Wouedo (Danbala Wèdo), 1997
Sequins, beads, appliquéd on cloth
40 x 33 inches
Collection of the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

• **Maxence Denis**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1968 -)
Je ne veux plus aller à l'école (I Don't Want to Go to School Anymore), 2001
Video, run time 22 minutes
Collection of the artist

Toussaint, 2003
Digital color print, 25 5/8 x 15 3/4 inches
Collection of the artist

Code Noir (Black Code), 2003
Digital color print, 25 5/8 x 15 3/4 inches
Collection of the artist

Blueman (L'homme bleu), 1999
Digital color print, 25 5/8 x 15 3/4 inches
Collection of the artist

• **Mireille Délice**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1970s -)
Coat of Arms of Erzulie Dantor (Blason d'Erzulie Dantor), 1996
Flag (Drapo vèvè), 35 x 28 inches
Private Collection

Archangel (L'archange), 1996
Flag (Drapo vèvè), 25 1/2 x 36 inches
Sequins, beads on cloth
Collection of the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

La Reine brisée (The Broken Queen), 1996
Flag (Drapo vèvè), 27 1/2 x 29 inches
Sequins, beads on cloth
Collection of the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.

• **Adler Guerrier**

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1975 -)
After/for/with(Mingus) or Haitian Fighting Song, 2001-2004
(après/pour/avec [Mingus] ou La chanson haïtienne à lutter), wall installation of twelve 10 x 15 inch c-prints mounted on Sentra
Collection of the artist

Selection of works in the exhibition



Marie-Hélène Cauvin

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1951 -)
No Man's Land, 2002
 Oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inches
 Collection of the artist
 Photo: Paul Litherland



Pierrot Barra

(b. Bel Air district, Port-au-Prince, 1942 - d. 1999)
Cousin or Papa Zaka, or Azaka, 1997
 (Kouzen, Papa Zaka, Azaka)
 Mixed media, 34 x 13½ x 8 inches
 Collection of Beverly and John Fox Sullivan
 Photo: IDB Photo Unit



Maxence Denis

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1968 -)
Toussaint, 2003
 Digital color print, 25½ x 15¾ inches
 Collection of the artist
 Photo: Maxence Denis



Yves Telemak

(b. Port-au-Prince, 1960s -)
Dambala Wouedo (Danbala Wèdo), 1997
 Sequins, beads, appliquéd on cloth, 40 x 33 inches
 Collection of the Inter-American Development Bank,
 Washington, D.C.
 Photo: Gregory R. Staley

Concert



Haitian singer and composer **Beethova Obas**, who sings his own Creole and French songs in a combination of Haitian rhythms and jazz tempos and harmonies, will be accompanied by five other Caribbean jazz musicians. Presented in collaboration with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2004.

Thursday, May 27, 2004, at 6:30 p.m., in the Andrés Bello Auditorium, 9th floor.

For information please call
(202) 623-3558

Exhibition

The exhibition will run from May 24 to August 6, 2004. A free, full-color brochure in English and French will be available to the public. Photographs of the artworks on exhibit are available upon request. For photographs, please call 202 623 1213.

The Art Gallery is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., free of charge.

For guided tours of groups of ten or more (in English and Spanish) and for additional information about the IDB Cultural Center and its programs, please call (202) 623-3774.

Concert

Concert is held at the Andrés Bello Auditorium, IDB main building, 9th Floor. Free admission and limited seating. For more information please call (202) 623-3558.

The IDB Cultural Center is located at 1300 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. The nearest Metro station is Metro Center (13th Street exit). All the events are free of charge.

The Cultural Center home page is located at: www.iadb.org/cultural/
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