

RESTORING THE SPIRIT: HAITIAN ART FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE FIGGE ART MUSEUM



Located in the Caribbean on the western third of the island of Hispaniola, Haiti has endured a turbulent and often bloody political history that has left the Republic destitute and vulnerable to environmental disasters. Colonial rule and a series of corrupt and exploitative governments squandered the natural riches of the land and depleted its financial resources. Despite such hardships, Haiti has developed a flourishing artistic tradition that speaks to the vitality of Haitian culture. Ranging from vibrant paintings to sculpture created from discarded oil drums, the exhibition *Restoring the Spirit: Celebrating Haitian Art* pays homage to Haiti's rich visual traditions and the indomitable spirit of the Haitian people in the face of adversity.

Examples of Haitian art date back to the 19th century, but the art produced during this period was predominately influenced by Western European tradition and reveals little of the native values and belief systems. Only in the 20th century with the founding of the Centre d'Art in 1944 did a truly Haitian art emerge. Led by DeWitt Peters, an American painter teaching English in Haiti on wartime assignment, the Center promoted self-taught artists who created works largely independent of foreign styles and influences. Encouraged to explore their own techniques and subject matter, artists invented a style of art that was unique to Haiti. The paintings characteristically feature bold, vivid colors with little tonal variation and simple, easily recognizable forms. Geometric perspective is often imprecise and compositions are often reduced to flat, decorative surfaces of pattern and color.

Such disregard for artistic convention has fostered the perception that Haitian art is "primitive" and "naïve", terms that misleadingly suggest a lack of sophistication in style and content. But the broad spectrum of individual styles and choice of subject matter contradict such simple categorizations. The abstraction that distinguishes Haitian art reflects the complexities and ambiguities of Haitian life and culture. Works of art address Haiti's tumultuous history, make reference to current ecological and social problems, including questions about race and wealth, and give visual expression to their spiritual beliefs.



SUMMARY

Approximately 55-60 paintings and textiles; 2-D metal wall reliefs and 3-D sculpture with text panels and labels in PDF format.

FEES

\$25,000 for the exhibition with sculpture
\$18,000 without sculpture
Shipping to be determined; Figge designated carrier
Wall to wall insurance

RENTAL PERIOD

12-14 weeks

AVAILABILITY

Fall 2012

SECURITY

High

INQUIRIES

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Lionel St. Eloi, *Angel of Justice*, 2004, found aluminum, wire, glass, gift of estate of Dr. Walter E. Neiswanger, M.D., 2007. 0028
Préfète Duffaut, *Ville Imaginaire (Imaginary Town)*, 1966, oil on canvas, gift of Dr. Walter E. Neiswanger, M.D., 1967.0007
Yves Michel, *Eternal Flowers (Madonna and Child)*, 1980, acrylic on canvas, gift of Mitchell D. Cohen, 1981.0019
Stivenson Magloire, *Divided Spirit*, ca. 1989, acrylic on canvas, gift of Dr. Walter E. Neiswanger, M.D., 1990.0018

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