

LIGHT WITHIN OURSELVES

HAITIAN ART IN IOWA

DES MOINES ART CENTER | APRIL 18 – SEPTEMBER 7, 2025



LIMYÈ NAN NOU MENM

ATIZAY AYISIEN NAN IOWA

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Organized in partnership with the Waterloo Center for the Arts, LIGHT WITHIN OURSELVES: HAITIAN ART IN IOWA showcases a selection of the rich holdings of Haitian art in the WCA's collection — the largest public collection of Haitian art in both Iowa and the United States. Founded in 1977 with a donation of work acquired by Dr. and Mrs. F. Harold Reuling during their travels in Haiti, the collection has since grown to include more than 2,000 pieces. This exhibition explores the vibrant diversity of Haitian artwork, featuring paintings, metalwork, ritual objects, and drapo (beaded and sequined banners). Rooted in historical themes, it considers the influence of the African diaspora and the enduring impact of colonialism on the Haitian people. The exhibition maps spheres of influence between artists of different generations and explores imagery in which spiritual traditions intersect with everyday life. Thousands of miles from the island of Haiti, Iowa has become a beacon for the preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

The information in this show is translated into Haitian Kreyòl, the first language of nearly 11 million people worldwide. Haitian Kreyòl has roots in French with influences from Portuguese, Aramaic, Spanish, West African languages, and Taíno, the language of the indigenous inhabitants of Haiti. It developed during colonial rule by the French through contact between European colonizers, African enslaved people, and the Taíno.

Enfòmasyon ki nan pwogram sa a tradwi nan lang kreyòl ayisyen, premye lang prèske 11 milyon moun nan mond lan. Kreyòl ayisyen gen rasin an franse ak enfluyans pòtigè, arameyen, panyòl, lang afrik lwès epi Taíno, lang endijèn Ayiti a. Li devlope pandan rèy kolonyal franse a atravè kontak ant kolonizatè Ewopeyen yo, esklav afriken, ak Taínos.



LIMYÈ NAN NOU MENM : ATIZAY AYISYEN NAN IOWA

18 AVRIL – 7 SEPTANM 2025

Òganize nan patenarya avèk Sant D'Atizay Waterloo a, LIMYÈ NAN NOU MENM : ATIZAY AYISYEN NAN IOWA, ap prezante on seleksyon atizay Ayisyen pami on rich seleksyon ki nan posesyon WCA — kise pi gros koleksyon zèv piblik Ayisyen nan Etazini. Fonde an 1977, Koleksyon sa kreye gras ak yon donasyon Dr. ak Mdm. Harold Reuling pandan yon voyaj an Ayiti. Koleksyon sa rive grandi aktyèlman a 2,000 pyès. Ekspozisyon sa eksplore divèsite vibran nan atizay Ayisyen tèlke penti, fè dekoupe, objè rityèl ak drapo. Rasinen nan tèm istorik, li konsidere enfluyans dyaspora Afriken avèk efè enpak kolonyalis sou pèp ayisyen an. Ekspozisyon sa make pwen enfluyans ant atis nan diferan jenerasyon epi eksplore kote imaj tradisyon espirityèl kwaze nan lavi chak jou. Sitiye a plizyè milye kilomet lwen zile Ayiti, Eta Iowa tounen yon limyè espwa pou prezèvasyon patrimwàn kiltirèl peyi a.

HISTORY OF THE WATERLOO CENTER FOR THE ARTS HAITIAN ART COLLECTION

The collection of Haitian artwork at the Waterloo Center for the Arts began in 1977 with a gift from local couple, Dr. and Mrs. F. Harold Reuling. They met artists and purchased artwork as they traveled in Haiti during their retirement years. Their interest became a passion, and they were compelled to share their beloved art with their community. As the curators at the Waterloo Center for the Arts learned about the artwork of Haiti, they in turn encouraged the Reulings to seek work by the most notable artists, featuring particular and unique subjects. Masterpieces showcasing the vitality and power of the Haitian experience entered the collection regularly.

At the same time the curators sought assistance from collectors and scholars. Marilyn Houlberg and Ute Stebich were instrumental in aiding research, interpretation, and defining a direction for collection efforts. Over the growth of the collection, the museum has focused its effort to fill in missing narratives and artists in an attempt to position itself as a champion of Haiti's culture and art. Today the collection holds more than 2,000 objects and is recognized as one of the largest publicly held collections of Haitian artwork in the world.

The work is unique, colorful, and expressive. Artists in Haiti are inspired, among other things, by the heroic legacy of a slave uprising that established their country as an independent nation, free of slavery, in 1804. Residents of North and South America as well as the Caribbean can appreciate the uniqueness of this experience, while also recognizing the common influence that African traditions, enslavement, and forced religious conversion conveyed to cultures where this history is shared.

OPPOSITE
Emmanuel Merisier (Haitian, 1929 – 2020)
People of Haiti 2010
Acrylic on canvas
54 x 40 inches (137.2 x 101.6 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2012.0209, Gift of the Artist

RIGHT
Ezene Domond (Haitian, born 1956)
Untitled (Market Scene with Madan Sara)
Oil on canvas
31 1/4 x 41 1/8 inches (79.4 x 104.5 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2007.0203, Gift of Janet Feldman

ISTWA SANT WATERLOO POU ATIZAY KOLEKSYON ATIZAY AYISYEN

Koleksyon zèv atizay Ayisyen nan Waterloo Center for the Arts te kòmanse an 1977 ak yon kado yo te resevwa nan men yon koup lokal, Doktè ak Madan F. Harold Reuling. Yo te rankontre atis e te achte zèv atizay pandan yo t ap vwayaje an Ayiti pandan ane retrèt yo. Kiryozite yo te vin tounen yon pasyon, e yo te santi yo oblije pataje atizay yo te renmen anpil ak kominote yo. Pandan konsèvatè yo nan Waterloo Center for the Arts t ap aprann sou atizay Ayiti, tou te arrive ankouraje Reuling yo pou chèche zèv atis ki pi remakab yo, ki prezante sijè patikilye ak inik. Sa ki fè Zèv ki montre vitalite ak pouvwa eksperyans Ayisyen an te antre nan koleksyon an regilyèman.

An menm tan, konsèvatè yo te chèche èd nan men kolektè ak entèlektyèl. Marilyn Houlberg ak Ute Stebich te jwe yon wòl enpòtan nan ede rechèch, entèpretasyon, ak defini yon direksyon pou efò koleksyon an. Pandan koleksyon an t ap grandi, mize a te konsantre efò li pou ranpli narasyon ki manke ak atis yo e pou eseye pozisyon tèt li kòm yon chanpyon kilti ak atizay Ayisyen. Jodi a, koleksyon an gen plis pase 2,000 objè e yo rekonèt li kòm pi gwo koleksyon piblik atizay Ayisyen nan mond lan.

Zèv yo inik, kolore, e ekspresif. Atis an Ayiti enspire, ase souvan, pa eritaj ewoyik soulèvman esklav ki te etabli peyi yo kòm yon nasyon endepandan, lib de esklavaj, an 1804. Rezidan Amerik di Nò ak Amerik di Sid, ansanm ak Karayib la, kapab apresye inikite eksperyans sa a pandan y ap rekonèt tou enfluyans komen ke tradisyon Afriken, esklavaj, ak konvèsyon relijiye fòse te pote nan kilti kote istwa sa a pataje.





HAITIAN REVOLUTION

Early in his explorations, explorer and colonizer Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) came ashore on the Caribbean island he dubbed Hispaniola. Slavery was brutal in this part of the world. Disease and warfare killed many of the indigenous Taíno population, while survivors, including Africans, escaped, creating hidden communities in the mountains. The far west side of the island became a French colony in 1697 and, later, the nation of Haiti, while the Spanish occupied the land to the east, in what is now the Dominican Republic. The enslaved African workforce produced sugar cane and coffee in both regions, creating the richest European colonies at the time. When French landholders began to lose control of the area, around 1789, enslaved peoples equaled over 87% of Haiti's population.

1804 was a pivotal year in the history of Haiti: slavery was abolished and independence from France was declared, 59 years before the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in United States. Widespread slave uprisings, bolstered by the mountains and forests of Haiti, brought freedom, creating the first free Black republic in the Americas.

REVOLISYON AYISYEN

Byen bonè nan eksplorasyon li yo, Kristof Kolon te vini sou Zile Karayib la ki ta vin rele Ispanyola, aktyèl jou aktyèl Ayiti ak Repiblik Dominikèn. Esclavaj te brutal nan pati sa a nan mond lan. Maladi ak lagè te touye anpil nan popilasyon endijèn Taíno yo, pandan kèk nan sa ki te siviv yo — ansanm ak Afriken ki te esklav — te chape epi yo te fòme kominote kache nan mòn yo. Bò lwès zile a, ki gen anpil mòn, te vin tounen yon koloni fransè an 1697, pandan ke Espay te kontwole pati lès la. Travay fòse Afriken yo te itilize pou pwodwi kann ak kafe nan tou de rejyon yo, sa ki te fè koloni fransè a vin pi rich nan tout koloni Ewopeyen yo nan epòk la. Lè gwo pwopriyete fransè yo te kòmanse pèdi kontwòl sou zòn nan, anviwon ane 1789, moun ki te esklav yo te deja reprezante plis pase 87% nan popilasyon Ayiti.

Ane 1804 se yon pwen tounan nan listwa Ayiti. Se ane sa a, swasann-dis-nef (59) ane avan Proklamasyon Emansipasyon te fèt nan Etazini, esklavaj te aboli e endepandans te deklare kont Lafrans. Gwo leve kanpe esklav yo, ki te jwenn sipò gras ak mòn ak forè Ayiti, te mennen viktwa e libète, epi te bay nesans premye repiblik Nwa ki te lib nan emisfè sa a nan mond lan.

OPPOSITE
 Wilmino Domond (Haitian, born 1925)
 Bois Caïman (Vodou Ceremony, August 14, 1791) ca. 1952
 Oil on board
 25 1/2 x 31 1/2 inches (64.8 x 80 cm)
 On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian
 Collection, 2010.0336, Gift of an Anonymous Donor

HAITIAN VODOU

The arts of Haiti are indelibly tied to the religion of Vodou. Haitian Vodou, known and distorted through popular media as voodoo, is primarily a blend of African spiritual traditions and Catholicism. Vodou, from the Fon word vodun, meaning spirit, deity, or mystery, was formed early in Haiti's history, when enslaved people taken from different parts of West Africa were forced to convert to Catholicism by the French and Spanish colonizers. Instead of abandoning their own beliefs, they overlaid their diverse cultural and religious systems with imagery readily found within Catholic religious culture. Catholic symbols, such as crosses, hearts, and Christian saints, feature prominently in the art of this exhibition. In the context of Haitian Vodou, though, they contain additional meanings.

Vodou is a spiritual system centering around one creator god, Bondye, deriving from the French, "bonne dieu" or "good god." A similar, all powerful "good god" is found in the religions of the Fon and Ewe peoples of West Central Africa. Haitians believe Bondye is so occupied by the world's problems that he needs assistance, which he receives from a subservient army of helpers or spirits, called loas. There are different symbols, colors, images, and even Christian saints associated with each loa. Every loa is responsible for a particular aspect of life, such as agriculture, fishing, travel, love, family, protection, and a myriad of other tasks.

Prosperè Pierre-Louis (Haitian, 1947 – 1997)
Untitled 1986
Paint on canvas
59 x 43 inches (149.9 x 109.2 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2013.0456, Gift of Donna Wood



VODOU AYISYEN

Atizay Ayiti yo konekte fon nan relijyon Vodou a. Vodou Ayisyen, ki souvan mal entèprete oswa karikature nan medya popilè kòm "voudou", se yon melanj prensipalman ant tradisyon espirityèl Afriken ak Katolik. Mo "Vodou" soti nan lang Fon, "vodun", ki vle di lespri, dye, oswa mistè. Fon yo te pote relijyon yo soti Dahomey (jodi a Benen), kote li te melanje ak relijyon lòt gwoup Afriken epi li te vin senkretize ak lafwa Katolik kolonis yo.

Senbòl ak imaj ki fasil yo te jwenn nan Katolik Women, tankou kwa, kè, ak sen kretyen, karakteristik enpòtan nan ekspozisyon sa a. Imaj sa yo ak senbòl fonksyone nan Vodou ayisyen an paske yo pote plis sans. Vodou ayisyen te fòme nan kòmansman listwa Ayiti, lè moun yo te pran nan divès rejyon nan Lafrik de Lwès kòm esklav e kolon franse ak panyòl te fòse yo konvèti nan relijyon Katolik. Olye yo te abandone pwòp kwayans pa yo, yo te kouvri divès sistèm kiltirèl ak relijye ki fasil pou yo abandone kilti relijye katolik yo. Vodou se yon sistèm espirityèl ki santre alantou yon bondye kreyatè, Bondye, sòti nan "bon bondye". Yon bon bondye ki pwisan nan relijyon Afriken yo nan Fon an ak Ewe nan Afrik Lwès. Ayisyen kwè ke Bondye se konsa konsènan pwoblèm monn nan li bezwen èd. Se poutèt sa, li gen yon lame sèvis pou ede oswa lespri, ki rele loas. Li gen diferan senbòl, koulè, imaj e menm sen yo ki asosye ak chak loa. Chak loa responsab pou yon aspè patikilye nan lavi — agrikilti, lapèch, vwayaj, renmen, fanmi, pwoteksyon, ak anpil lòt bagay toujou.



George Valris (Haitian, born 1953)
Vèvè for the Crossroads (Legba/Kalfou) 2000–2010
Sequined flag
40 x 33 inches (101.6 x 83.8 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2015.0092, Gift of Ted Frankel and Bill Gilmore



SYMBOLS AND LOAS

VÉVÉ

A very common symbol or visual element found at the heart of a Vodou ceremony is the vévé. It is usually drawn on the floor by an oungan (priest) or manbo (priestess), using flour or a mixture of cornmeal and ash. These symbols are pictorial beacons used to call forth specific Haitian spirits called loa. Every loa has his/her own unique vévé, although regional differences have led to different vévés for the same loa. When in use for ceremony, these symbols are quite temporary and quickly disappear during the proceedings. Artists' adoption of these symbols, which they emblazon on artwork and devotional objects, helps to maintain and preserve the visual spiritual culture of Vodou.

SNAKES

The depiction of snakes and serpents is common in Haitian art. Snakes may appear alone or as part of an intertwined pair. In many cases, these symbols are a reference to Damballah, one of the most important of all the loa, the primordial creator of all life and the first loa created by Bondye. Damballah is said to be an ancient source of wisdom and knowledge. He is often associated with the Catholic figure of St. Patrick and depicted as a great white or black serpent with a white egg or holy chalice.

Pairs of snakes commonly represent Damballah alongside his female counterpart Ayida-Wedo. She is often referred to as the great sky serpent or rainbow serpent and is the loa of fertility, rainbows, wind, water, fire, and snakes. Ayida-Wedo is also regarded as one of the ancient and significant loas. She is blended with the Catholic figure of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

SENBÒL AK LOA YO

VÉVÉ

Yon senbòl trè komen oswa eleman vizyèl yo jwenn nan kè a ak seremoni Vodou a se vèvé a. Yon senbòl oubyen eleman vizyèl ki trè komen nan kè yon seremoni Vodou, se vèvé a. Anjeneral, se oungan (prèt) oswa manbo (prètès) ki trase l atè a, ak farin frans oswa yon melanj farin mayi ak sann. Senbòl sa yo se tankou yon siy vizyèl ki sèvi pou rele sèten lespri ayisyen yo rele lwa. Chak lwa gen pwòp vèvé pa li, menm si gen diferans rejyonal ki fè gen plizyè vèsyon vèvé pou menm lwa a. Lè yo sèvi ak vèvé sa yo nan seremoni, yo pa dire lontan yo disparèt byen vit pandan aktivite a. Lè atis adopte senbòl sa yo epi mete yo sou travay atistik oswa objè devosyonèl, sa ede konsève ak prezève kilti espirityèl vizyèl Vodou a.

KOULÈV

Reprezantasyon koulèv ak sèpan souvan parèt nan Atizay Ayisyen an. Yo ka parèt swa kòm yon sèl koulèv oswa kòm yon pè koulèv ki mare youn ak lòt. Nan anpil ka, senbòl sa yo fè referans ak lwa Damballah. Damballah se youn nan lwa ki pi enpòtan nan tout panteyon Vodou a, li se kreyatè prensipal lavi, e premye lwa Bondye te kreye. Yo konsidere Damballah kòm sous ansyen sajès ak konesans. Yo souvan asosye l ak sen Katolik Sen Patrix, epi yo reprezante l kòm yon gwo sèpan blan oswa nwa, ak yon ze blan oswa yon gode sen (kalis).

Lè gen yon pè sèpan ki reprezante Damballah, li souvan parèt ansanm ak konpayèl li, Ayida-Wedo. Ayida-Wedo se gwo sèpan syèl la, oswa sèpan lakansyèl la. Se lwa fètilite, lakansyèl, van, dlo, dife ak koulèv. Li konsidere tou kòm youn nan lwa ki ansyen ak enpòtan anpil. Yo konn asimile li ak figi Katolik ki se Notre-Dame de l'Immaculée Conception (Manman Mari).

OPPOSITE
Myrlande Constant (Haitian, born 1968)
Dambalah Wedo Et Ayda Voir Preeace 2000–2010
Sequined flag
51 x 56 1/2 inches (129.5 x 143.5 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection, 2015.0109,
Gift of Ted Frankel and Bill Gilmore

MERMAIDS

There are several representations of mermaids within this exhibit. This mythical water creature can be found referenced in lore by Europeans, Africans, and the indigenous Taíno peoples of the Caribbean. In Haitian Vodou, depictions of a mermaid or mermaids are a direct reference to the loa La Sirène. Half human female and half fish, La Sirène is a mysterious dual-natured spirit who seduces and tricks while occasionally granting favor. She is associated with the sea, beauty, love, music, and wealth. Other symbols found often found alongside her image include combs, mirrors, and a golden horn.

CROSSES

A ubiquitous symbol in Haitian art, the cross has many associations. It can represent the Christian cross, a crossroads, the four cardinal directions, the intersection of life and death, or the intersection of this world and the spirit world. As a result, the cross is also related to a variety of loas. Its characteristics change depending on the loa with which it relates. The loa most frequently symbolized by a cross is Papa Legba, the keeper, master, and guardian of the crossroads. He is the first loa to be invoked in a ceremony, where he serves to open communication between the natural and spirit worlds.

SIRÈN

Gen plizyè reprezantasyon lasirèn nan ekspozisyon sa a. Bèt dlo mitik sa a jwenn referans li nan lejand ki soti lakay Ewòp, Afrik, ak pèp endijèn Taíno nan Karayib la. Nan Vodou Ayisyen, reprezantasyon lasirèn oswa plizyè sirèn se yon referans dirèk ak lwa La Sirèn. La Sirèn se yon lespri ki gen de nati — mwatye fi, mwatye pwason. Li gen yon mistè sou li, li ka sedui ak twonpe, men pafwa li bay favè tou. Yo asosye La Sirèn ak lanmè, bote, lanmou, mizik, ak richès. Lòt senbòl ki souvan parèt bò kote li oswa nan reprezantasyon li, se peny, miwa, ak yon kòn an lò.

KWAZE

Kwa a se youn nan senbòl ki pi prezan nan Atizay Ayisyen. Li pa sèlman reprezante kwa kretyen an, men tou li gen plizyè lòt sans ak referans. Li ka senbolize kwa relijye, yon kwazman wout, kat pwen kardinal yo, kwazman ant lavi ak lanmò, oswa kwazman ant mond sa a ak mond lespri a. Sa vle di kwa a ka fè referans ak plizyè lwa diferan. Se kontèks la ak lòt senbòl ki antoure kwa a ki ede idantifye kiyès nan lwa yo ki ap manifeste. Lwa ki pi souvan asosye ak kwa a se Papa Legba. Se li ki gadyen, mèt, ak pòtè kle kwazman an. Li se premye lwa yo envoke nan yon seremoni pou l ouvri chemen pou kominikasyon ant mond natirèl la ak mond lespri a.

OPPOSITE
David Boyer (Haitian, born 1976)
Untitled (Baron La Croix), ca. 2014
Mixed media: buttons, circuit, metal
25 1/2 x 19 1/2 x 1 1/4 inches (64.8 x 49.5 x 3.2 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2014.0033, Purchased by the Waterloo Center for the Arts





KÈ AK PONYA

Kè a, jan nou ka imajine, se yon senbòl lanmou. Nan Vodou, li ka fè referans ak lwa Èzili Freda. Èzili Freda se lwa lanmou, seksyalite, bote, féminite, ak liks - li se tankou Venus nan Vodou a. Yo konn asimile li ak figi Katolik Vyèj Mari. Men, kè a tou gen yon lòt referans ki pre, men ki diferan: Èzili Dantor. Dantò se yon lòt lwa ki pa menm ak Freda malgre non yo sanble. Yo konn reprezante Dantor ak yon kouto ki ap pèse kè a. Èzili Dantò se lwa ki bay pwoteksyon ak kouraj pou fanm, timoun, ak tout moun sosyete a neglije. Se li yo konsidere kòm patwòn Ayiti, e se li yo te rele pandan Revolisyon Ayisyèn nan. Yo konn senbolize li ak figi Katolik "Vyej Nwa Czestochowa", ki se yon Vyèj Mari nwa ki gen mak sou figi li.

HEART & DAGGER

The heart, of course, is a reference to love. In Vodou, it may be a nod to Erzulie Freda. Referred to as the Venus of Vodou, she is the loa of love, sex, beauty, femininity, and luxury. She is also blended with the Catholic figure the Virgin Mary. The heart may also reference another loa, Erzulie Dantor, a very different figure. References to Dantor include a dagger piercing the heart. She is known for her fierce protection of women, children, and the neglected in society. Dantor is the patron loa of Haiti and the loa called upon during the Haitian Revolution. She is often blended with the Catholic figure of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, who is represented as being dark skinned with scars on her face.

ABOVE
 Pierrot Barra (Haitian, born 1942)
 Untitled (Erzulie Freda)
 Mixed media: beads, doll, sequins
 21 x 12 x 11 inches (53.3 x 30.5 x 27.9 cm)
 On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
 2010.0752, Gift of Christa Saffran



FÉ KOUPÉ (METALWORK)

Renowned for their genius in transforming discarded materials into dramatic works of art, Haitian artists discovered that cast off oil drums could be recycled into unique metal cut-outs.

This art form was probably first practiced by Georges Liautaud (1899–1991). He worked as a blacksmith for the Haitian American Sugar Company, maintaining the railroad tracks. Liautaud became highly sought-after for the elaborate cemetery crosses he forged in his spare time. He likely began to use discarded oil drums as materials because they were plentiful and available for free. His work inspired others to experiment with the medium, and other outstanding artists such as Murat Brierrre, Gabriel Bien-Aime and Serge Jolimeau emerged.

Haitian metal artists craft their works by hand using simple tools. To prepare a drum for use, the artist or an apprentice removes the ends, which are then used for smaller sculptures. A vertical slit is cut along the length of the cylinder with a hammer and chisel. Next, the drum is stuffed with straw and paper and set on fire to burn off any paint or chemical residue. After the drum cools down, it is flattened. The metalworker climbs onto the body of the drum and uses their weight and strength to open it up. The flattened drum becomes a rectangular sheet measuring approximately four by six feet. The metal is then hammered to make it softer and easier to cut. Any excess charred oil, paint or rust is rubbed off before the artist draws designs on the metal sheet using a piece of chalk. Then the figure is cut out with a hammer and chisel. The finished piece is signed by the artist and coated with varnish.

Most Haitian metal artists live and work in the Noailles district of Croix-des-Bouquets, situated on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, the capital city of Haiti. The symbolic significance of metal appeals to these artists. Metal is considered sacred to Ogou, the Haitian loa of war, whose assistance helped lead the Haitian people in their fight to gain independence from the French.

OPPOSITE BELOW
 Georges Liautaud (Haitian, 1899 – 1991)
 Sirènes late 1950s
 Steel
 Overall (each): 70 x 18 x 2 inches (177.8 x 45.7 x 5.1 cm)
 On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian
 Collection, 2010.0361, Gift of an Anonymous Donor

FÉ KOUPÉ

Renome pou jeni yo nan transfòm sa lòt moun jete an bèl travay atistik, atis Ayisyen dekouvri ke yo te ka resikle barik lwil vid pou fè eskilti an fè ki pa tankou lòt.

Se Georges Liautaud ki sanble te premye moun ki pratike Atizay sa a. Li te travay kòm bòs fè pou Haitian American Sugar Company (HASCO), kote li te okipe antretyen ray tren yo. Nan tan lib li, Liautaud te vin gen gwo repitasyon pou kwa simityè li te fè yo, ki te rich ak detay. Li sanble li te kòmanse sèvi ak barik lwil abandone paske yo te fasil pou jwenn e yo te gratis. Travay li te enspire lòt atis eseye mwayen sa a, e se konsa atis eksepsyonèl tankou Murat Brierrre, Gabriel Bien-Aimé ak Serge Jolimeau te parèt.

Atis metal Ayisyen yo travay ak men yo, ak zouti senp. Pou prepare yon barik pou travay, atis la oswa apranti li koupe de bout barik la — yo sèvi ak bout sa yo pou fè eskilti ki pi piti. Yo louvri barik la ak yon fant vètikal sou longè silenn lan, yo sèvi ak mato ak dal. Apre sa, yo plen barik la ak pay ak papye epi yo mete l nan dife pou boule tout penti oswa rezidi chimik ki te ladan l. Lè barik la fin refwadi, yo fè l plat. Atis la monte sou barik la epi sèvi ak tout pwa ak fòs li pou l louvri l. Lè sa a, fè a tounen yon dra plat ki mezire anviwon kat pa sis pye. Yo bat fè a pou l vin pi mou e pi fasil pou koupe. Yo retire tout rèl lwil boule, penti oswa rouy avan atis la trase desen li sou fè a ak yon mòso krèt. Apre sa, yo koupe fòm yo ak mato ak dal. Lè travay la fini, atis la siyen l epi li mete yon vèni pou pwoteje li.

Pifò atis metal Ayisyen yo ap viv ak travay nan katye Noailles, nan Croix-des-Bouquets, ki sou liy Port-au-Prince. Materyèl la gen anpil senbòl pou atis sa yo. Fè a se yon materyèl sakre pou Ogou, lwa lagè nan Vodou Ayisyen an, ki te ede pèp Ayisyen nan lit yo pou endepandans kont Lafrans.

DRAPO (FLAGS)

Traditionally, these stunning and elaborate beaded banners, known as drapo or drapeau, represent and honor Vodou deities or loas. The banners may be used in religious ceremonies and hung in altar rooms and, if consecrated, are considered sacred objects. In fact, many of the artists who make them are also religious leaders.

The representation of the various loas, each aligned with a particular aspect of life, vary widely but are generally identifiable thanks to a recurring set of characteristics, such as names, physical attributes, colors, symbolic objects, and the presence of saintly counterparts drawn from Catholic prints. They may also be signified by special pictogram designs known as *vévés*.

More recently, these drapo have become recognized and appreciated as secular art objects. Many are now produced not for the temple but for the collector's market. Consequently, this art form has seen revolutionary changes in stylistic variations, materials, and techniques as new artists enter the arena, many of them bringing with them experience working in Haiti's garment-making factories.

DRAPO

Tradisyonèlman, banni bèl ak rafine sa yo ki fèt ak pèl, yo rele drapo oswa drapeau, sèvi pou onore ak reprezante divinite oswa lwa Vodou yo. Yo itilize yo pandan seremoni relijye, epi yo pann yo nan chanm lotèl. Si yo benyen (konsekre), yo vin tounen objè sakre. Anpil fwa, atis ki fè drapo sa yo se tou lidè relijye.

Reprezantasyon vizyèl chak lwa — chak gen lyen ak yon aspè espesifik nan lavi — ka varye anpil, men yo fasil pou rekonèt gras ak yon seri imaj ak senbòl komen. Pa egzanp, chak lwa ka make pa non li, ka gen aparans fizik tipik, ka idantifye pa koulè espesifik, objè senbolik, imaj sen Katolik ki asosye ak li, oswa pa vèvè (piktogram sakre) ki reprezante li.

Jounen jodi a, drapo sa yo ap jwenn rekonèsans tou kòm objè atistik sekilè (men anpil toujou kenbe fòm tradisyonèl yo ak sans espiyèl). Anpil nan yo pa fèt pou tanp ankò, men pito pou mache koleksyonè yo. Sa fè at sa a evolye anpil, ni nan estil, ni nan materyèl, ni nan teknik, sitou avèk nouvo atis ki rantre nan domèn nan, anpil ladan yo gen eksperyans nan faktori rad Ayiti.



OPPOSITE
Roudy Azor (Haitian, born 1980)
Reine-Sire, Marassas, La Sirène 2000–2010
Sequined flag
49 x 54 inches (124.5 x 137.2 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection,
2015.0089, Gift of Ted Frankel and Bill Gilmore

LIGHT WITHIN OURSELVES: HAITIAN ART IN IOWA
LIMYE NAN NOU MENM: ATIZAY AYISIEN NAN IOWA

DES MOINES ART CENTER
APRIL 18 – SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

DES MOINES ART CENTER
18 AVRIL – 7 SEPTANM 2025

LIGHT WITHIN OURSELVES: HAITIAN ART IN IOWA is co-curated by Elizabeth Gollnick, associate curator at the Des Moines Art Center, and Chawne Paige, executive director of the Waterloo Center for the Arts.

Elizabeth Gollnick, konsèvatè asosye nan Sant D'A Des Moines, ak Chawne Paige, direktè egzekitif Sant D'Atizay Waterloo a, ki sevi kom konsèvatè pou egzibisyon **LIMYÈ NAN NOU MENM: ATIZAY AYISIEN NAN IOWA**.

BOOK DESIGN GRAFIS DIZAYNÈ
Connie Wilson

PHOTOGRAPHY FOTOGRAFI
Jerry Grier

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COVER
Frantz Zéphirin (Haitian, born 1968)
Le Dieu, La Vie, La Mort II
Oil on canvas
32 x 26 inches (81.3 x 66 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection, 2009.0019, Gift of Janet Feldman



J.A.J. Lubérisse (Haitian)
Untitled (Erzulie Dantor)
Acrylic on canvas
30 1/8 x 12 inches (76.5 x 30.5 cm)
On loan from the Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian Collection, 2007.0882, Gift of Janet Feldman



EDMUNDSON ART FOUNDATION, INC.
4700 GRAND AVENUE | DES MOINES, IOWA 50312
DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG

Please scan here to learn more about these artworks through the research of students in Grinnell College's Haitian Art & Digital Culture course.



Tanpri eskane la pou aprann plis sou travay atistik sa yo atravè rechèch elèv ki nan kou Atizay ak Kilti Dijital Grinnell College.