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AMERICA'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

AUGUST 30, 1949 • VOL. 13, NO. 18

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COVER: Fall sweaters are curve-hugging, look like blouses—are part of American Look (see page 76). Sweater set by Tish-U-Knit. Photograph by Arthur Rothstein.

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Haiti
Paints

Native art flourishes in "Black Republic," sophisticates buy it

Before November, 1944, nobody suspected that a vigorous native art was possible in Haiti, small island-nation in the Caribbean. An anthropologist had pronounced the plastic arts dead there. The change came after DeWitt Peters, American artist and teacher, opened an art center in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital. One fall day in 1944, a dusty cartdriver arrived at Peters' center bringing a painting, his own.

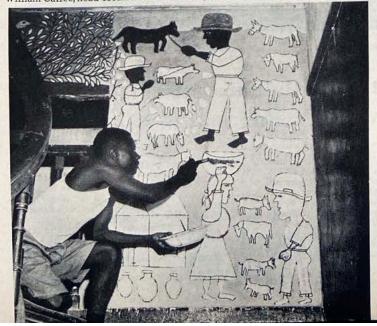
With that start, Peters found other Haitian painters, encouraged them. The result is a virile, prolific native art, now famous. Last season, a Haitian show toured the U. S., hitting New York, the West Coast and Florida. Avid collectors bought 100 works of art at prices ranging from \$75 to \$750 each. The tour is to be resumed in the fall, will include a November show at New York's Haitian Art Center. The full story of Haiti's sudden and dramatic upsurge in painting—with an analysis of its origins in vodun, Haiti's religion—is told by Selden Rodman in Renaissance in Haiti, recently published by Pellegrini and Cudahy.



Favorite subjects of devout Castera Bazile are the Virgin, angels and worshipers. Illiterate, imaginative, Bazile, at 25, is a self-taught painter. He began with a few cans of furniture enamel.

(Continued on next page)

Toussaint Auguste has first try at mural. Technique was learned recently from William Calfee, head of American University (Washington, D.C.) art department.



Tempera mural by Cedor at Centre d'Art, Port-au-Prince. This non-profit center sends work of Haitian artists to Europe and America.





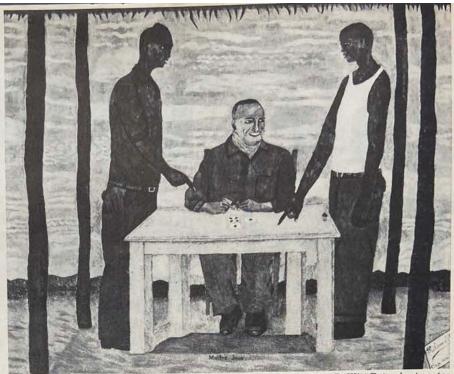
Mardi Gras is part of Haiti's French tradition. Bat-like wings, devil mask and long fingers on a celebrant make frighteningly fantastic costume.



Vodun priests make designs of ashes and flour on the ground to call up spirits of the gods before rites. The snake is a Haitian religious symbol.



Ritual symbols in a vodun altar painting. Vodun is Haitian religion of African origin, in which Catholicism has become strongly mixed over years.



"Maitre Jeux," by Philomé Obin, the first Haitian to bring a painting to DeWitt Peters' art center in Port-au-Prince. Obin had painted—off and on, without notice or encouragement—for 36 years.



"Sacrifice of the Cock," by Hector Hyppolite, vodun priest whose pictures were bought by British intellectuals Julian Huxley and Stephen Spender. Both African and Catholic symbols appear.

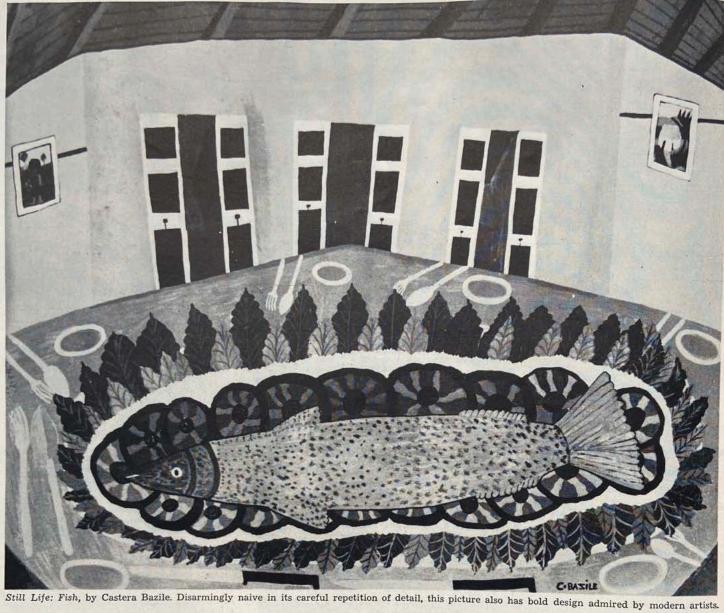
Self-taught Haitian artists have rich sources in vodun and native life

The exciting vodun religion of Haiti is a large part of daily Haitian life. Vodun symbols, powerful and sometimes startling to unaccustomed eyes, are drawn upon naturally and unself-consciously by Haitian artists. This is one source of the sheer power in much of their work. This savage quality, combined with a naive simplicity, gives these Haitian pictures their disquieting attraction. The naive quality is admired by

many sophisticated artists who wonder how long the Haitians can keep their simplicity and what will happen if they lose it.

Haitian artists are so far largely untroubled by the danger of becoming sophisticated. At Port-au-Prince, they see the work of contemporary American and European painters. They go home and paint pretty much as they had before. They remain mostly untaught, except by each other.

(Continued on page 64)



Primitive Haitian artists unconsciously paint like modernists

"Vodun Dancers," by Enguérrand Gourgue, depicts a ceremonial dance. It is not unlike work frequently seen in galleries on New York's 57th Street.

"The Birds," by Micius Stephane. This picture has truly childlike directness. Nobody could accuse this artist of having studied perspective or anatomy.

