



## HAITIAN ART SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

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### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY ED GESSEN

Welcome to issue number 5 of VEVE, the Haitian Art Society newsletter. I would like to share our latest news and bring you up to date on several of our recent initiatives.

- **New Organizational Structure.** As you are probably aware, the Haitian art Society has been under the directorship and guidance of the Waterloo Center for the Arts since our inception in 2003. We have applied for, and received, our official status as an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization, granted by the IRS. This will give us more autonomy and visibility in the world of non-profit organizations. As a condition of this reorganization, we will be establishing additional internal controls, create bylaws, write an administrative handbook, and put additional financial controls in place. We will also create an expanded Board of Directors, including new Officers. We are extremely excited about these changes and hope you will be as well. I am pleased to announce that we have officially received our new status.
- **New Board Member Elected.** I am pleased to announce that we have added Gardy St. Fleur to our Board of Directors. Gardy is an art consultant based in NYC. He was born in Haiti but moved to Brooklyn, NY as a youngster with his family. His father was an avid Haitian Art collector, so Gardy grew up surrounded by Art. He has built a clientele of celebrities that are interested in building their collections. Gardy has his own collection of Haitian work and specializes in emerging and contemporary artists. He is also the HAS Regional Chairperson for the Northeast, and recently held a local event in Brooklyn to meet several local members. This was attended Haitian Art Society members Paul and Claudine Corbanese, Matt Dunn, Rowynn Dumont, Larry Kent, Donna Thompson Ray and Gardy. Welcome Gardy!

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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- **Opportunities for Volunteers.** HAS will be expanding its Board of Directors to include two new Officers. We are looking to recruit a Treasurer and a Secretary. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please let us know. We especially need someone with finance, accounting, or bookkeeping skills to volunteer. The time commitment will be minimal, but our need is great! If you would be interested in participating, please contact Ed Gessen at [edgessen@gmail.com](mailto:edgessen@gmail.com)
- **Regional Chapters.** Since our members are widely dispersed, we are re-establishing geographically based satellite groups to help keep our members connected. The idea is to have local members get together for local activities. We plan to have regional groups across the United States. If you would like to join a regional satellite group, please contact your local regional Chairperson.
- **Annual Conference for 2022.** Our planned Annual Conference in San Diego had to be cancelled in 2021 due to the health situation. A lot of work and planning went into this event, but we felt like we needed to take this action for the benefit of all. We intend to resume this extremely popular conference in 2022. Although no date or location has been selected, we will keep you posted as plans emerge.
- **Membership Growth and Paid Memberships.** The Haitian Art Society has welcomed many new supporting members to our official HAS group and has grown our Facebook group to over 7000 total members, with 4200 active members. We are extremely excited to have expanded our reach to so many new art aficionados! As a newly formed 501 c 3 non-profit charitable organization, we depend entirely on paid memberships to fund our organization. We have no full-time employees, and we are a 100% volunteer group. We exist entirely through the generosity of our paying members. For as little as \$50 per year, you can help us continue this work. Please support our Society with your paid membership by [joining the Haitian Art Society](#).



Reine La Diabless, 2006 by Roland Rockville

## INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST FLORINE DÉMOSTHÈNE

BY GARDY ST. FLEUR, SAINT FLEUR ART ADVISORY

**GSF:** You have said that your signature technique of using colored ink on mylar allows unpredictability and removes the focus of perfection in your process since the chemical reaction of mixing these materials creates a natural marbling effect. How has embracing unpredictability and imperfection transformed your life personally?

**FD:** Living in Accra, Ghana has taught me that life does not move according to a set schedule. Everything is in flux. I had to learn how to work with the constant fluctuation of life, as for example; I had become accustomed to acquiring all the materials that I needed (in terms of making art) quite easily. All the shops were within an eight blocks radius in Manhattan. If one store didn't have an item, then surely another store would. Accra is not structured like that whatsoever. Artist materials are not necessarily sold in "logical" places. I went to over a dozen shops (most of them in the large open markets) searching for drawing paper. No one knew what I was talking about. They kept directing me to reams of copy paper. After three days of searching, I realized that I was thinking like an American and not a Ghanaian. There was this small gallery that I would walk by on my way to the bank and I decided to go in and take a look around. The owner of the gallery happened to be in that afternoon and she told me that she was wondering when I would come in. She stated that she saw me all over town, but she could not understand why I didn't come into her gallery (especially since I "looked like an artist"). I explained my drawing paper dilemma to her and she was able to solve it in an instant. She knew exactly what I was looking for and she drove me to a shop that was a few minutes away from her gallery. The shop was stocked from floor to ceiling with all sorts of drawing papers from the UK, Germany, China and Japan. I was shocked! The help that I needed had been in front of me the entire time. I just kept walking past it.



*But I Have To, 2019*

Collage on Paper

44 x 60 inches.

© Florine Démosthène

from the exhibit *Between Possibility and Actuality*.



## INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST FLORINE DÉMOSTHÈNE

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After that particular experience, I decided that I was too rigid with my art process, as well as my life. If I wanted to thrive in Ghana, then I was going to have to just “let go” and move with the flow of life. Nothing had to be perfect. Perfection is just a perception. I thought about the time and money I wasted looking for drawing paper. Why couldn't I just work with copy paper or post-its or notebooks? It was time to loosen the restraints that I had gripped my creative process.

**GSF: In what way do your Haitian roots inform your exploration of femininity and sensuality in your work?**

FD: Haitian women have always fascinated me, in that, there are things that I just never quite understood. There are so many unspoken nuanced programmatic behaviors that I have been enamored with for a very long time. I grew up in a very conservative family and sexuality, sex, and sensuality was not discussed openly. At times, I think that some of my works are attempting to rectify this conditioned behavior or perhaps, provide answers to the many questions that I have.

**GSF: You often use your body as a template in your artwork. Is this a form of self-discovery? If so, what have you learned about yourself during this process?**

FD: I use my body simply because I am a reliable subject to work from. I am there when I need to be. At the beginning it was difficult because I was not comfortable in exposing my physical self in any way. I didn't want to be judged or leered at. In time, I was able to release the burden of judgment and I focused my energy on the spiritual and emotional aspects of my work. In many ways, I have learned so much about my physical body. I learned that my body is not symmetrical in any way. I have incredibly long legs and fingers, my toes are gappy, and my head makes a wonderful shape. It may all seem trivial, but these kinds of quirks allowed me to appreciate and love myself more and more.

**GSF: What life experience or reference was the catalyst for your decision to construct a feminine heroine?**

FD: The construction of the heroine happened during my first trip to Ghana in 2009-2010. I developed this concept because of my interaction with Ghanaian women. At that time, I was not comfortable in my own skin. I did not understand what it meant to be a woman. I understood masculine energy quite well, but I was at a loss with feminine energy. It seemed to me that feminine energy was scripted in some way and it was in direct conflict with who I was (this had been a running theme in my life). I decided to create this quasi persona that would embody a woman who had special physical abilities. I was intrigued with how she would come to terms with these abilities and how she would navigate through the world. After much discussion with women that I met in Accra, I realized that these abilities would manifest first in the psychological and emotional realms. Once this heroine became mentally and emotionally ready, then she would engage with the physical aspects of her abilities. The majority of the work that I have created has delved into the mental, emotional and spiritual states of transformation. The body became the vehicle for this transmutation.

**GSF: How has the experience of living in Ghana and South Africa influenced your work?**

FD: My experiences in Ghana and South Africa gave me the courage to become more vulnerable in my personal life and in my art process. These experiences were simultaneously visceral and nebulous. Prior to visiting Ghana (and then moving to Accra in 2014), I was detached from my artwork and certain aspects of my life. I wanted to find the core essence of who I am and develop it into something substantial in my life. I wanted to be authentic in my art and in my life.

To find out more about Florine, please visit [florinedemosthene.com](http://florinedemosthene.com)

## UNTAUGHT, OUTSIDER OR KREYÒL?

BY LEGRACE BENSON, AUTHOR

At the 2019 conference of the Haitian Art Society, a well-known artist, educated in art schools in Europe and North America, reared in a comfortable urban environment, passionately asked why Haitian art always was presumed to be “outsider”, “primitive”, “naïve” or “self-taught”. His plaint echoed the voices of the urbane artists of the 1950’s and 1960’s. It also provides a rationale for calling certain visual works by Haitian artists “Kreyòl” art.

After the famous visit of André Breton and Wifredo Lam and Breton’s purchase of eight works by Hector Hyppolite, the art of those who had been educated in Europe or in Haiti with European criteria began to be overshadowed by the works of Hyppolite, Rigaud Benoit, Wilson Bigaud., Castera Bazile, Robert Saint-Brice. Jasmin Joseph, Pierre-Joseph Valcin, Préfète Duffaut, André Pierre, to name the most prominent. They say that in one of the vernissages at the Centre d’ Art Hyppolite and several others were present in this setting where the mode of gathering and refreshments were French and so was the dominant language. Hyppolite and others reported being uncomfortable in the milieu of unfamiliar social manners and an unfamiliar language in which unfamiliar art notions were discussed. The event was the visible entanglement of two distinctively different ways of being in the world.

It would not be long before some of the artists who had studied abroad or in Haitian studios following the European styles would feel displaced by those they called “naïfs”. The artists who had come in from the villages and towns beyond Port-au-Prince may have been somewhat naïve with regard to the life ways and visual art criteria of the Francophonic, schooled artists, but they were deeply imbued with and thus well-informed about the Kreyòl speaking life of the country. As has been common through history and right around the world, urban folk have disdain for rural people. It is to some extent unavoidable. Urban and rural districts require different acts of attention to layouts, surfaces, sounds, odors, foodways, flora, fauna and religious, moral and ethical requirements. Daily occupations and preoccupations are different. A ruling and economic class may have a second dwelling in the countryside, but the national center is in a city. Nearly always, until very recently, the center of international exchanges of all types is from a city. It is usual for densely connected urban people to regard those living in the countryside as ignorant, uneducated, and naïve.

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**The Crossing of a Red Fox,  
1972 by Jasmin Joseph.**

**Provenance: Ernst and  
Marian Shaw Lipschutz**

## UNTAUGHT, OUTSIDER OR KREYÒL?

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The disfavorable opinion is quite vigorously returned by those wise in the ways and work of the countryside. The relationship to the sky and its objects and events, to signals of weather changes, the feel of the air, the sounds of birds and other living creatures, the look of leaves, the shift in electric valence, the actions and sounds and eating habits of livestock are carefully attended to. The elders teach their wisdom to the young. Whatsoever religions prevail, they operate within this knowledge. Visibility and audibility in the city are shaped and constrained by buildings, streets, and roads, traffic, and multiple noisy activities. Moving about must take into account the somewhat unpredictable and perhaps dangerous actions of a large population, many of whom are not known personally. Vehicular traffic is exponentially greater and less predictable. The language that results is fully related to these and more differences between being in the world as an urban person or as a countryside person.

All these processes were in action when Haitians from the countryside, and those recently come to the city to work in modest jobs directed by others, began to produce the visual communications we call “art”. Each of their communications was inescapably individual, but every painting or sculpture was inescapably shaped by his or her experience of the home environment, its beliefs and social habits. Their art was as “self-taught” as that of Mark Rothko or Jackson Pollock. They all attentively observed the processes and the habits of attention of skilled craftspeople and various local or imported works to emulate.

Early on in the efflorescence in the second half of the 1930’s of a range of Haitian arts, music, dance, history, ethnography and philosophy began flourish. Prominently, Jean Price-Mars began vigorously to call attention to the African heritage that was especially well-preserved and continued among those living in the rural and village areas of the country. It was a follower of the thought of Price-Mars, Philippe Thoby-Marcellin, who took that message of the importance of heritage to the director of the Centre d’Art Dewitt Peters. Peters had glimpsed a stunning, colorful work when he passed through a village near Mont Rouis. Thoby-Marcellin trekked around the areas until he found the artist. He was cane cutter, small merchant, housepainter, hounfo decorator, and creator of marvelous little canvases of Vodou lwa Ezili, or Ogu, or scenes of village life: Hector Hyppolite. Philippe, is remembered as insisting that the works should be shown at the Center d’Art. According to reports from those present during that era, Director Peters was reluctant until he witnessed the responses of Lam and Breton.

The artist used the materials available: enamels left from house painting jobs, brushes fashioned from feathers bound to sticks, pieces of wallboard scrounged from building sites. Among his fabled trips, his credible sojourn as a cane cutter in Cuba would have brought him into contact with artists. His less securely documented but probable sojourn in New York’s Harlem would have put him in contact with works by Harlem artists if not the artists themselves. He may have picked up a bit of his scant English there. While there is no hint of any art school instruction, he was fully aware of his environment, wherever he was. He knew about paint and brushes so well that he could temporize with what was available. He knew from his Vodou instruction to the level just below oungan who the lwa are, their functions, and what their manifestations looked like. He had become skillful in depicting these on the walls of Vodou temples.

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## UNTAUGHT, OUTSIDER OR KREYÒL?

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Every artist is in some way to some degree self-taught. That is the process that makes the works distinctive. Is any artist since the first woman who figured out how to dip her hand in red ocher and press it against a rock “self-taught”? And isn’t the mark of every hand unique? Has any visual communication from prehistory to the present come out of an incommunicable other world? Such work could not be created or comprehended. Hyppolite’s work would have been meaningless to Breton and Lam had it not arisen of the artist’s personal yet distinctively human vision of a particular econiche of places and events and living beings situated in a common world? The Ezili the visitors saw was colors and shapes that, to paraphrase from an investigator of human perception of the early twentieth century, was information to specify “...woman says, ‘Love me.’” In the collection now in storage for the Musée de l’Art Haïtien there is Hyppolite’s depiction of a speed boat swinging swiftly past a shoreline. The kinetic energy of that moment is directly felt by viewers. Such a work can only proceed from the painter’s own developed, complex kinetic skill that knows in the body how it feels to be in that boat, what disturbed water looks and feels like, and how to move all that knowledge from inside to a flat and motionless surface.

To call certain works “Kreyòl” is to take the position that every artist is a unique human being that has a personal trajectory through a common world, but they have lived in a distinctive shared milieu that distinguishes them from contemporaneous artists who share a country, but not a daily habitat. To consider an artist whose work was of the same time and nation, sharing some of the same places and activities and the actively associated languages but whose works arise from their personal and ecological distinctiveness can respond to an artist’s distress that Haitian art had come to mean only the art once called primitive or naïve.

The art of Philomé Obin is instructive. It is strikingly different from the art of the first Kreyòl artists shown at the Centre d’Art. Obin lived in the small town of Limbé in the north through his early life. Unlike most of the Kreyòl artists, he attended primary and secondary school, speaking Kreyòl at home but only French at school. That already situated him in two linguistic environments, which entails two different ways of paying attention to the world and communicating to others about the surrounding events, people, and objects. He studied accounting with its highly developed systems from France going all the way back to colonial times. Aware of costs, he was notorious for his frugal use of paint, even after he became relatively affluent. He also studied drafting, a skill visible in his precise lines and strict containment of surfaces. He moved to Cap-Haïtien as a young man, living there during the Occupation, once arrested on suspicion of rebellious anti-occupation action, but able to talk his way out and back home. His first paid art works were portraits of fellow members of what is said to be the oldest Masonic lodge in Haiti. A devout protestant he strongly opposed Vodou, an attitude starkly opposite to that of nearly every one of the Kreyòls. Most of the Kreyòl routinely attended services in Roman Catholic or Episcopal parishes as well as Vodou services. Obin wanted to paint works about everyday life and about historical events, especially those occurring under the Occupation. He was aware of his educational privilege and wanted to use his work as visual history lessons for the then estimated 89% of Haitian who were unschooled. Perhaps his most famous works are the two he painted of the martyrdom of General Charlemagne Peralte, leader of the Caco anti-occupation army.

Already a professional taking commissions for portraits, he traveled to Port-au-Prince to show his latest historical work to Director Peters. Peters was not enthusiastic, but others urged him to include Obin.

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## UNTAUGHT, OUTSIDER OR KREYÒL?

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The works strongly contrasted with those of either the Avancés or the Kreyòls. There was no hint of the Surrealism, the abstractions, Cubism, or any other of the European contemporary arts. Any aspect of Vodou was absent, as well as the Eden or Paradise works that virtually exploded on the art market after Wilson Bigaud's success with his *Temptation in the Garden of Eden*. The landscapes by School of the North of Obin and his followers were of local village life, children going to school and, especially, the historical figures and events of the uniquely successful Haitian Revolution, the culminating battle of which had defeated the French army. Obin himself painted scenes from the recent Occupation contrasting Péralte's martyrdom with the famous arrival of the ship from which Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed the end of that 15-year ordeal.

Yes, there are many Haitian arts. Haitian artists like many everywhere and in all times are busy extending or breaking categories as well as unique presentations from within an existing esthetic formula. If we give names to groups of artists who share a common daily and visual language, let us be aware as writers and collectors that our categories all have amorphous, labile intersecting or separate boundaries. Let us be attentive to the artists who urgently implore us to pay attention to the works rather than to imposed categories and their limiting names.



Un dimanche de carnaval (a Sunday carnival), 1948 by Philomé Obin



## INTERVIEW WITH DONNA THOMPSON RAY, ART APPRAISER

BY LARRY KENT, COLLECTOR

**LK: As a certified appraiser, how did you get started with Haitian art?**

DTR: I'm a personal property appraiser and candidate member of the American Society of Appraisers, the nation's oldest multi-disciplinary appraisal association. My area of focus is fine art: paintings, prints, photographs, and sculpture with particular emphasis on art of the African diaspora. I grew up in southeast Queens where there has been a historically large and thriving population of residents from the Caribbean. As a photographer, I joined Coast-to-Coast: National Women Artists of Color, and went on to exhibit, curate, and write about art – always including art of the African diaspora -- particularly Caribbean art -- in my work. I later transferred my interests to art valuation.

**LK: Do you have a particular favorite artist?**

DTR: I do not have a favorite artist. I personally collect art of the African diaspora: traditional African art, photography, paintings, and prints. My collection was ignited out of personal relationships -- I would purchase the work of artists I knew, some of whom are friends. The collection includes Vladimir Cybil Charlier & Andre Juste, Seymour Bottex, Michael Escoffery, LaFortune Felix, Scherezade Garcia, Laura James, Rejin Leys, Mario Macilau, Emmanuel Merisier, Bruce Onobrokpeya, and Didier William, among others.

**LK: What was the most famous Haitian art collection you appraised?**

DTR: The most famous Haitian art collections I have appraised included the work of Hector Hyppolite, Luce Turnier, Antoine Obin, Prefete Duffaut, Sisson Blanchard, and Philippe-Auguste Salnave, among others. I appraised these collections for insurance coverage and sale of artworks.

**LK: What do most of your clients collect these days?**

DTR: Contemporary works. When operating as an art advisor, I have been recommending the editioned contemporary print portfolio, AQ/ARTQUAKE, that includes work by several artists of Haitian/Caribbean descent who are listed and collected by major museums/public institutions (Yale, Rutgers, NYPL/Schomburg, Smithsonian American Art Museum) and featured in mainstream art publications (Hyperallergic). Sale proceeds benefit artists and art institutions in Haiti.

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Erzulie, 1953 by Prefete Duffaut



Harbour town, 1946-48 by Hector Hyppolite

## INTERVIEW WITH DONNA THOMPSON RAY, ART APPRAISER

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**LK: What has been your biggest surprise item to appraise?**

DTR: My biggest surprise was a Hyppolite painting with a historically prominent provenance.

**LK: How can we as a Society improve relations with museums, galleries and collectors?**

DTR: Unless this has already been done, the Society would need to do some market research to find out how it can be helpful to museums, galleries, and collectors. What are their needs around Haitian art? What problem might the Society be solving? It strikes me that production of work by contemporary artists of Haitian descent would be an important avenue to develop within HAS. This is an area of work that I focus on. Good communication, and follow-up with these art players is also important. The timely publication of *Veve* is helping in that effort.

**LK: Where would you recommend we have the next HAS conference? How about Santa Fe, New Mexico?**

DTR: Honestly, I have no preference on next location of the conference. I would like to see more conversations with our Haiti-based collaborators, in-person, or through online discussions and talks.

**LK: What is your favorite museum to see Haitian art? Why?**

DTR: My favorite museum is Musée d'Art Haitien du Collège St Pierre in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. I have been a contributor to efforts in supporting the Musée d'Art Haitien since the 2010 earthquake. I became aware of the Musée's damages through the [Toussaint Louverture Cultural Foundation](#) (TLCF), and Smithsonian Institution's art conservation project in Haiti. I've been a supporter of TLCF's work and had the pleasure of visiting the Musée in August 2018, spending the afternoon with the treasured director, M. DuBois. TLCF also introduced me to the distinguished art historian, Dr. Michel Philippe Lerebours. As you already know, the Musée holds several works by Hector Hyppolite, Wilson Bigaud, Prefete Duffault, and Luce Turnier, among others. I am grateful to TLCF, Paul and Claudine Corbanese, for introducing me to this great institution of Haitian cultural heritage and accomplishment.

Visit [ATFA Fine Art Appraisals](#) for more information about Donna Thompson Ray.



Sunday Morning, Bainet, 1959 by Micius Stephane



## MEETING ARTIST ST. PIERRE TOUSSAINT IN THE 1970S

BY GLENN STOKES, STOKES HAITIAN ART

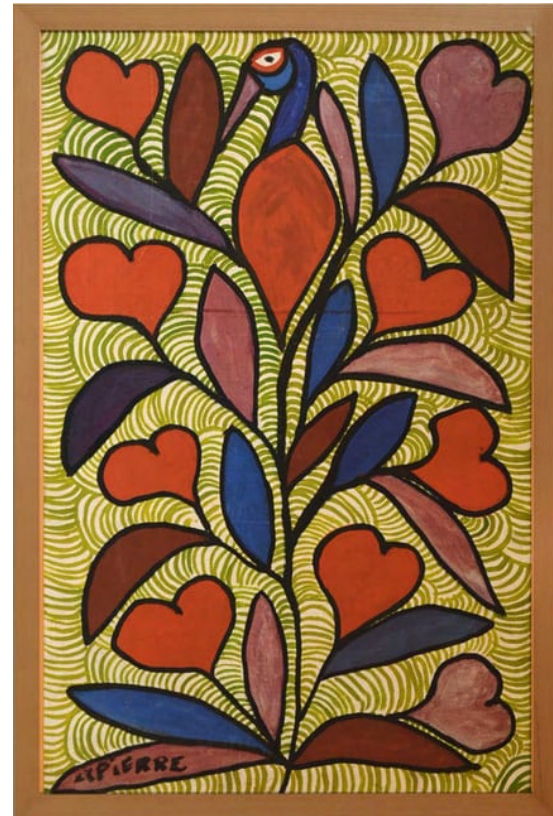
In the mid 1970's after having gone to Haiti more than 20 times on business (monthly pest control), I heard about a Haitian artist who painted in lines and painted on circular Masonite boards... not just on square or rectangular formats. In fact, I read a story and saw pictures of St. Pierre in a Time magazine article, which whetted my desire to look him up on one of my monthly trips.

My regular monthly trips to Haiti involved pest control at hotels, restaurants, casinos, and private homes. A typical trip to Haiti would be over a 2-3-day period. In my spare time I would go to art galleries, the Iron Market, the Baptist Mission, the Casino, beaches, etc. I liked Haitian art the first time I saw it.

One of my regular pest control clients was the best restaurant in Haiti, at the time, La Lantern in Petionville. And just above Petionville higher on the mountains was the Baptist Mission which had all manner of Haitian made artifacts (wood carvings, paintings, clothes, etc). Further up the same sinuous road on the mountain at the end of the car road was Furcy. Between the Baptist Mission and the Furcy was St. Pierre's art studio.

To locate St. Pierre, I made several inquiries along the road above Kenscoff and was able to locate St. Pierre's, which had a winding red dirt path from the car road to his front door. When I met St. Pierre I was surprised by how good his English was and his friendly, quite humble personality. He showed me several of his recently completed paintings, including a circular one, which I was particularly interested in. I bought 3 or 4 of his paintings with the circular one included. The next month, and the next month, and the next month, for a more than a year or so I made my way up mountains to see St. Pierre.

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Untitled, n.d. by Saint-Pierre Toussaint



Untitled, n.d. by Saint-Pierre Toussaint



## MEETING ARTIST ST. PIERRE TOUSSAINT IN THE 1970S

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It was very apparent from my first meetings with St. Pierre that he had very few art supplies to work with, so I offered to bring him what he needed (paints, Masonite pre-cut rectangular boards, paint brushes, etc.) on each of my future monthly trips. In return he would paint for me several paintings which he would sell to me at low price. These I would hand carry on my return airline flights to the States. Accordingly, over a 2-3 year period I accumulated a large collection of his paintings.

And as everyone knows his paintings are very repetitious and recognizable with all the lines and bold primary colors. I liked St. Pierre's paintings from the first time I saw them and continue to this day to admire his work for their balance, colors, and imagination.

It is incredible his ingenuity and imagination in using parallel lines of different colors to make discernible leaves, houses, fish, birds, dogs, shoes, beards, eyes, noses, smoking pipes, etc. And each painting is balanced and symmetrical. I have in my collection nearly a hundred St. Pierre's. And one last observation is that a St. Pierre painting can be recognized at a greater distance than any other Haitian painting that I have. I'm talking about more than a hundred feet. In a future story, I'll relate my meetings with Philome Obin in Au Cap (Cape Haitian).

Glenn Stokes, Stokes Haitian Art

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Untitled, n.d. by Saint-Pierre Toussaint

## READING A PAINTING: PHILOME OBIN'S *LA DEMOCRATIE EN MARCHE*, 1946

BY MATT DUNN, COLLECTOR

The first line of the caption of Philome Obin's painting from April, 1946 reads *La Democratie En Marche* or Democracy On the Move. The second line reads *Elie Lescot fuyant rapidement l'Ange de la Democratie* or Elie Lescot quickly fleeing the Angel of Democracy. Elie Lescot was the President of Haiti from May 15, 1941, to Jan. 11, 1946. According to his [obituary in the New York Times](#), he was a "harsh dictator" that ruled "by martial law and put sharp restrictions on the press". The Angel of Democracy is a white angel, wearing the color red, typically associated with war and courage. The angels in the clouds are both black and white. The dangerous sharks, which may represent Lescot's associates, are fleeing in the same direction as Lescot. Lescot is fleeing so fast that he drops his cane.

The Revolution of 1946, also known as Les Cinq Glorieuses, was a series of protests and urban unrest that culminated with the overthrow of President Lescot, who fled the country on January 11, 1946.

Initiated by university students in Port-au-Prince, whose newspaper, *La Ruche* [the Beehive], was banned by the government, the protests erupted into social unrest. Gérald Bloncourt was one of the founders of *La Ruche*. Bloncourt was also one of the founders of [Le Centre d'Art](#). In early December of 1945, André Breton visited Haiti for a series of lectures on surrealism and modern art.



*La Democratie En Marche*, 1946 by Philome Obin



## READING A PAINTING: PHILOME OBIN'S LA DEMOCRATIE EN MARCHE, 1946

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The students were inspired Breton's non-conformism, and staunch denunciation of dictatorship of all kinds, given powerful emphasis by his refusal to greet Lescot after his third lecture on the 20th of December. Emboldened by Breton's presence the writers of the paper decided that the special edition they were planning to honor Haitian independence on January 1, would instead be a tribute to Breton.

Printed on the second page of *La Ruche*, January 1946.

1946 will be the year of Freedom, when the voice of real democracy will Triumph over all forms of fascist oppression.

Down with all the Francos!

Long Live Democracy in Action!

Long live the Youth!

Long Live Social Justice!

Long Live The World Proletariat!

Long Live 1804!



Gérald Bloncourt, Paris, December 2017

They say that Haitian painters are “naive”, it’s a bit reductive. There is a wide diversity of painters in the country, there are vodou painters, dream painters, the school of Jacmel for example, modern painters, historical painters, surrealist painters, all the painters are not naive. All movements exist in Haiti. When we look at painting, we find this kind of traces of this cultural melting pot that is Haiti. The main part of Haitian painting that expresses the dream, anger, that points out injustice, the dictatorship, is a kind of weapon and this is what made Haiti famous. Almost all museums in the world have a collection of painters from our island.

GÉRALD BLONCOURT, PARIS, DECEMBER 2017



## NEWS BRIEFS

### VENICE BIENNALE ARTE 2022: THE MILK OF DREAMS

The 59th International Art Exhibition, curated by Cecilia Alemani, will open to the public from Saturday 23 April to Sunday 27 November 2022 at the Giardini and the Arsenale, featuring 213 artists from 58 countries; 180 of these are participating for the first time in the International Exhibition. 1433 the works and objects on display, 80 new projects are conceived specifically for the Biennale Arte. Artists Myrlande Constant, Célestin Faustin and Frantz Zephirin are included in the exhibition.

### THE ART GALLERY AT COLLIN COLLEGE, PLANO, TX

Haitian Art from the collection of Glenn and Yvonne Stokes. Opening with a reception on Thursday, February 24th, 2022, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Exhibition dates are February 24th through Thursday April 7.



Untitled (Ceremony), 1969 by Celestin Faustin (Haitian, 1948 - 1981), collection of Marcus Rediker

## VEVE CREDITS

VEVE is the newsletter of the Haitian Art Society. It is a benefit of membership and is published quarterly. It contains no advertising and features articles on Haitian Art, artists, collectors, members, current events, interviews, exhibitions and much more. Thank you to all our VEVE contributors.

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VEVE logo by Chawne Paige

Please send your article submissions for review and consideration to Matt Dunn at [mattdunndc@gmail.com](mailto:mattdunndc@gmail.com)

To join and become a HAS member visit <https://haitianartsociety.org/how-to-join>

Mission Statement: The Haitian Art Society, formed in 2003, is an international, non-profit membership organization designed to strengthen and expand interest in, and understanding of, Haitian Art and Artists. The HAS is a thriving community comprised of art collectors, gallerists, museum professionals, scholars, and researchers all connected by a mutual appreciation and affection for Haitian Art. We also produce an Annual Conference for members with symposia, private home collection tours, special exhibitions, and social events. We are an all-volunteer organization. Support us by [JOINING TODAY!](#)



**Saint Patrick, 2017 by Myrlande Constant**