



CANADIAN  
MUSEUM  
OF HISTORY  
-  
MUSÉE  
CANADIEN  
DE L'HISTOIRE

# VODOU



Cover photo: Manbo Zila, Detail, MEG, Johnathan Watts



Bizango life-size figures, MEG, Johnathan Watts

**EXPERIENCE A FASCINATING ENCOUNTER WITH HAITIAN VODOU THROUGH THE WORLD'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF AUTHENTIC CEREMONIAL OBJECTS.**

**“We want you to look at what that strange object looking at you says to your inner self.”**

– Rachel Beauvoir-Dominique, co-curator of the Vodou exhibition

**“Right now you might be picturing evil spells and vodou dolls, but this exhibition invites you to look behind the stereotypes and experience the rituals of Vodou.”**

– Richard W. Lariviere, President of The Field Museum, Chicago

## A TRAVELLING EXHIBITION

PRODUCED BY THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY IN COLLABORATION WITH THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION, PROMOTION AND PRODUCTION OF HAITIAN CULTURAL WORKS.



Ibo Point, CMH



**UNLOCK THE POWERFUL SOUL OF HAITI**

Even after centuries of condemnation, demonization and caricature, Vodou remains very much a part of the lives of the people of Haiti and the Haitian diaspora. The resilience of Vodou can be seen in the **persistence of its beliefs**, its **communication with the world** of the ancestors and *lwa* (spirits), and an enduring conviction that it has the **power to heal and protect**. The production of Vodou ritual objects is yet another expression of its **vitality**. Their **inventiveness** and their expressive power, as well as their rich detail, make them not only works of art but also symbols of the history and culture of an entire people.

### CONTENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

This exhibition gives visitors an exclusive introduction to Haitian Vodou through the eyes of actual practitioners, who **dispel any prejudice** against an often-misinterpreted spiritual practice. A variety of interpretive tools (texts, soundscapes, documentary footage and audiovisual materials) provide information and firsthand accounts of these current spiritual practices, and demonstrate both the public and more secret aspects of Haitian Vodou.

The exhibition features approximately 300 ritual objects from the Lehmann Collection, **the world's largest collection** of Haitian Vodou artifacts.

Also displayed are symbols of the *lwa*, used during the ceremonies: flags, paintings, jugs, statues, etc.

The exhibition also presents seldom-seen objects used by *oungans* (priests) and *manbo* (priestesses) during healing ceremonies: magic bundles, drums, a power-harnessing installation, etc. Finally, **VODOU** offers visitors a unique opportunity to see the **spectacular mirrors** and unusual **life-sized figures** used by a Bizango secret society.

## LOGISTICS

The Canadian Museum of History will send the artifacts to the borrowing venue fully packed, and will make the transportation arrangements for the incoming and outgoing shipments. Exhibition text, graphics, audiovisual material and accompanying illustrations will be provided in English and French in electronic format. Specific requirements for display will be supplied. The intellectual content can be edited in English only. The borrowing museum is responsible for producing its own graphics, and for construction of a portion of the exhibition furniture.

## ACCOMPANYING MATERIAL

- A comprehensive communications and media package will be available in English and French, in electronic format.
- A catalogue produced by the CMH.
- Background information on the collection and the Foundation for the Preservation, Enhancement and Production of Haitian Cultural Works (FPVPOCH) will be available.
- Suggestions for activities (both educational and event planning) will be available upon request.

## SIZE

7,500 to 10,000 square feet (700 to 930 square metres).

The exhibition's rare and precious artifacts will require strict security and environmental controls.

## AVAILABILITY

The exhibition will be available for periods of a minimum of 12 weeks.

AVAILABLE FOR  
A LIMITED TIME



Guard Zazi Maza Wangol, MEG, Johnathan Watts

# ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION PARTNERSHIP

This unique exhibition was developed by the Canadian Museum of History (CMH) in collaboration with the Foundation for the Preservation, Promotion and Production of Haitian Cultural Works (FPVPOCH). The exhibition was presented at the CMH from November 2012 to February 2014.

This presentation followed a successful European tour of the exhibition, organized by the Ethnography Museum of Geneva (MEG) in Switzerland in collaboration with the FPVPOCH, the Tropenmuseum of the Netherlands and a consortium of European partners.

**“I spent my first 18 years in Haiti, and I never had the chance to experience something like this!”**

– Canadian visitor originally from Haiti, Gatineau

**“Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share other people views.”**

– Canadian visitor, Gatineau



Secret Society Vodou: Resist, Defend and Fight, CMH

## ABOUT THE CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

The Canadian Museum of History is Canada's national museum of human history, and is one of the most visited museums in Canada. It collects, studies, preserves and presents material objects that illuminate the human history of Canada and the cultural diversity of its people. It is home to major collections of social, historical and Aboriginal artifacts.

## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR THE PRESERVATION, PROMOTION AND PRODUCTION OF HAITIAN CULTURAL WORKS

Established in 1989, the Foundation is responsible for safeguarding the Lehmann Collection, which contains over 2,000 Haitian Vodou objects. The collection was started by Marianne Lehmann, a Swiss woman who has lived in Port-au-Prince since 1957. The Lehmann Collection is the largest of its kind in the world, representing the many facets of Vodou spirituality while demonstrating its importance to Haitian daily life.



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## CONTACT

Rosalie Côté

Advisor, Products and Sales

Business Partnerships and Information Management

rosalie.cote@historymuseum.ca

Tel.: 1-819-776-8522 | Toll-free: 1-844-776-8522

100 Laurier Street, Gatineau QC K1A 0M8 CANADA

historymuseum.ca/travelling

Ézili Freda as a Doll, CMH