
PARSONS

Revolisyon toupatou

Curated by Jonathan Square and Siobhan Mei

Anna Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery

66 5th Ave, Manhattan 10011

January 1 2025 - February 15 2025

Gallery Hours: 12pm-6pm, seven days a week

Reception & Artist Talk: Thursday, January 23, 2025, 6-8pm

Parsons School of Design proudly presents *Revolisyon Toupatou*, an exhibition of Haitian art and fashion curated by Professor Jonathan Square and Professor Siobhan Mei (University of Massachusetts Amherst). On view at the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Gallery from January 1 to February 15, 2025, this bilingual exhibition (English and Haitian Creole) explores the enduring legacy of the Haitian Revolution in contemporary art and fashion, showcasing the work of 19 Haitian artists.

At the heart of *Revolisyon Toupatou* is the role of fashion and textile arts in narrating Haitian history and identity. The exhibition features Haiti's Olympic uniform, designed by **Stella Jean**, which debuted at the opening ceremony on the Seine on July 26, 2024. In collaboration with Haitian artist Philippe Dodard, Jean incorporated his artwork *Passage* into the designs, blending Haitian cultural heritage with contemporary fashion. Similarly, dresses by the designer-duo, **The Gayo Twins**, are inspired by the colorways and motifs of traditional Haitian dress, specifically children's school uniforms, paying homage to time-honored styles while reimagining them through a contemporary lens. Garments from **Waina Chancy** of Atelier NDigo and **Daveed Baptiste** are deeply engaged with the power of color and texture to tell embodied histories of movement, diaspora, and joy. The practice of millinery is also centered in this exhibition—**Saphyra and Rainier Saint Fort** of SAINT FORT brand present a selection of decadently decorated hats and **Ervenotte Lassus-Harbord's** interpretation of chapo pay (Haitian straw hats) pay homage to Vodou lwa (gods) such as Ezili Dantor. A headwrap by **Paola Mathé** of Fanm Djamn evokes the historical significance of the textile madras in Haitian fashion and in the transatlantic slave trade.

Revolisyon toupatou also offers visitors the opportunity to explore works by Haitian visual artists that intervene at the intersections of materiality, spirituality, and historical representation. **Naderson Saint-Pierre's** portraits of Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière, a fearless fighter who served as a soldier during the revolution and Catherine Flon, a symbol of Haitian independence remembered for her role in sewing the first Haitian flag in 1803, are, like countless other women, underrepresented in the Haitian revolutionary pantheon, which has often celebrated male leaders at the expense of recognizing the contributions of women and queer individuals. Multi-media artist **Gina Samson** and fashion designer **Prajé Oscar** are equally engaged with the history and impact of revolutionary iconography—their respective works depict important military leaders such as Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines. **Madjeen Isaac's** vibrant nature-scapes combine the worlds of the Caribbean and urban life in New York City through an attentiveness to the power of ancestral histories. **Stanley Wany** and **Steven Baboun** also take ancestral knowledge as starting places for their large-scale expressive works in fabric and textiles. **Franck Godefroy's** ethereal black and white photography work celebrates both the mystery and familiarity of the dressed human body, while **Elizabeth Momplaisir's** watercolors emphasize the importance of black joy and self-love. Anchoring the exhibition are two drapo (flags). In Vodou, drapo—beaded flags often depicting lwa—are important sacred and decorative objects. **Edmond Raymond's** vibrantly stitched sequin drapo features the vèvè (Vodou symbol) for Ezili Dantor, an lwa revered as a symbol of strength, independence, and maternal devotion. Situated next to Raymond's drapo, is a re-imagining of the U.S. American flag by **Natacha Thys**. In *Papa Legba Says, Here's Your Flag!*, Thys combines the Haitian coat of

arms with the American flag, channeling a potent message from the Vodou lwa Papa Legba, a gatekeeper between the spiritual and physical worlds.

This bilingual exhibition is inspired by @renderingrevolution, a social media platform exploring Haitian visual culture founded by co-curators Siobhan Meï and Jonathan Square. Over four years Square and Meï compiled, translated, and shared research relating to Haitian art and fashion and they are delighted to have this digital project result in a brick-and-mortar exhibition that brings people together in physical space to learn from and about the powerful work of contemporary Haitian designers and artists. Given that Square and Meï are scholars by training, the exhibition is also attentive to the methods of humanistic research today. For example, a large-scale installation by sociologist **Charlotte Hammond**, presents her body of scholarship on pèpè, the used clothing trade in Haiti. The exhibition also features a robust (yet cozy!) reading space that includes the many texts—scholarly and creative—that informed the vision for the exhibition.

For more information on the exhibition please contact Jonathan Square (squaj264@newschool.edu) and/or Siobhan Mei (siobhanander@umass.edu) or visit <https://renderingrevolution.ht/exhibition>.

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