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### *Saluting Vodou Spirits: Haitian Flags from the Fowler Collection* Opens at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Aug. 8

Vodou, the most common religion in Haiti and a way of life for the vast majority of Haitians, is rooted in African religious belief systems, with borrowings from Roman Catholicism, Freemasonry, and Haiti's native Taino culture. Haitians create elaborate ceremonial art to honor and serve the Vodou spirits. The most celebrated genre of Vodou sacred art is the lavishly decorated ritual flags called drapo, and approximately forty of these flags will be on display in the exhibition 'Saluting Vodou Spirits: Haitian Flags from the Fowler Collection' at the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History from Aug. 8 through Dec. 12, 2004.

Made of satin, velvet, or rayon, and adorned with sequins, beads, or appliqué, these flags are presented at the beginning of Vodou ceremonies to salute the spirits and to marshal the energies of their devotees. 'Saluting Vodou Spirits' features highlights from the Fowler's collection of more than 120 drapo, and includes dazzling works dating from the early 1900s to the 1990s as well as five newly commissioned beaded flags by women artists, who have only recently begun to work in this medium.

Each drapo is typically dedicated to a single spirit (lwa), incorporating sacred colors and symbols specific to that spirit. The designs reflect Vodou's intense process of cultural synthesis, wherein African symbols are juxtaposed and merged with sources as diverse as Catholic processional banners, French military ensigns, and Masonic flags and aprons. Often the flags measure approximately 3' x 3', feature a geometric-design border, and are fringed. The flags chosen for this exhibition salute the spirits most closely associated in myth and legend with the events of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804): Ogou, general of the Vodou pantheon, the snake patriarch Danbala, and Ezili Danto, celestial earth mother and divine warrior.

This exhibition is a prelude to a larger fall exhibition at the Fowler Museum of the work of Haitian American artist Edouard Duval Carrié, entitled 'Divine Revolution: The Art of Edouard Duval Carrié' (Oct. 10, 2004 to Jan. 30, 2005). Some of the works that will be presented in 'Divine Revolution' are sequined renditions of Duval Carrié's paintings, in the tradition of Vodou flags. Both exhibitions are curated by Donald Cosentino, a scholar of Haitian art and professor in UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures who curated the Fowler's acclaimed 1995 exhibition 'Sacred Arts of Haitian Vodou.'

'Saluting Vodou Spirits' will be on view in the Fowler Museum's Goldenberg Galleria. The Fowler is open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5 p.m.; and on Thursdays, noon until 8 p.m. The museum is closed Mondays and Tuesdays. The Fowler Museum, part of UCLA's School of the Arts and Architecture, is located in the north part of the UCLA campus. Admission is free. Campus parking is available for \$7 in Lot 4. For more information, the public may call (310) 825-4361 or visit [www.fowler.ucla.edu](http://www.fowler.ucla.edu).

**Related Programs:**

Saturday, September 18, 2004 1-4 pm

A World of Art Family Workshop: Vodou Beaded and Sequined Flags Create flags by applying beads and sequins inspired by Haitian artistry. Free for Fowler members; \$5 materials fee for non-members. Reservations required: 310/825-8655.

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