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A THOUGHT-PROVOKING
LEAFLET ON VODOU: HISTORY,
WORLDVIEW AND RITUALS.
YOU CAN READ THE LEAFLET
AS YOU GO THROUGH THE
EXHIBITION OR REFER
TO IT AFTERWARDS.
FOR ADULTS AND TEENS.



#### **EXHIBITION COMPANION**

During your visit, if objects, symbols or words raise questions, look around and listen. You will most likely find texts or audiovisuals that help put things into perspective by explaining Vodouists' point of view.

#### **DIFFERENT MEANINGS**

Vodouists and non-Vodouists often attribute different, and sometimes opposite, meanings to certain objects, symbols or words associated with Vodou.

For example, for those who practise Vodou, human remains have a positive association because they represent ancestors. When ancestors are close by, the living can communicate with them and benefit from their help and experience.

#### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

To better understand the significance of human remains in Vodou, ask yourself questions about how you perceive the deceased.

- What types of objects that belonged to deceased loved ones do you keep? Photographs, personal objects, locks of hair, ashes?
- What significance and role do you attribute to these objects? How would you feel if they disappeared?











COULD CERTAIN EPISODES IN HAITI'S HISTORY HAVE GIVEN RISE TO THE CLICHÉS SURROUNDING VODOU?

Persecuted in Haiti, Vodouists saw Vodou banned, faced anti-superstition campaigns and were forced to convert to Christianity. And Vodou has been distorted in the mass media and portrayed as evil.



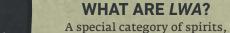
## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POSSESSION IN VODOU?

Possession is a special way of communicating with the *lwa*. In a universe where everything is interconnected, Vodouists consider it normal for humans to be able to temporarily house the energies of the *lwa*.



#### WORLDVIEW

Reality consists of spirits and spiritual entities whose energies permeate everything in the universe.



MANIFESTATIONS OF THE GRAN MÈT (GOD)

#### WHERE? EVERYWHERE

- Everyday places
- Sacred places



#### **WHO? ANYONE**

Especially Vodouists, who communicate more easily with *lwa* 



WHY?
To keep the

**ENERGIES** 

in the world **BALANCED** 

or to restore their balance



### **POSSESSION**





#### HOW?

- People let LWA USE THEIR BODIES.
  - They do not suffer.
- After, they RETURN TO THEIR USUAL STATE.
- Length of time and intensity vary.

#### WHEN? ANY TIME

- Daily activities
- Spiritual ceremonies





## THE IMPORTANCE OF SECRET SOCIETIES IN VODOU

Vodouists have differing perspectives on the relevance of secret societies.

There are hundreds of LWA (spirits), divided into many rites. Some rites are practised by Vodouists organized into SECRET SOCIETIES:

- Bizango
- Sanpwel
- Zobop
- Vlenbendeng



#### **COLONIAL PERIOD**

- Vodou banned
- Vodouists punished
- Slavery and oppression

#### **TODAY**

Secret societies are not viewed the same way by all Vodouists.

# **ROLES** of secret societies



Helped organize the FIGHT FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

## MARKS OF VIOLENCE

on objects and figures

**FOUGHT** 





DEFENDED





FOR



**AGAINST** 



They ensure

JUSTICE

where

the state
is absent.



Vodou
OFFICIALLY
RECOGNIZED
in Haiti in 2003.



They defend Vodouists.



POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

was gained in 1804.