Call for Papers
KOSANBA, A Scholarly Association for the Study of Haitian Vodou
International Colloquium XI
In conjunction with the 27th Haitian Studies Association Conference
Université de Montréal, Québec, Canada
Wednesday, October 21– Sunday, October 25, 2015

Trees Take Us to the Gods:
Vodou and the Environment

Under the Aegis of Klèmezin, Minis Azaka, and Bway Gede

The Lwa of agriculture and of hard work and of common folks, Klèmezinn and Azaka, the male and female "seed," make things grow, while Bwa [Brav] Gede announces the death of all, as surely as our sun itself will die someday! So-called nature religions are anchored in scientific phenomena and their manipulations, recognizing that all fragile creatures are one, sharing both DNA and purposeful intent. The mineral, vegetal, and animal kingdoms are the foundations of our lives on a creative and living planet. We create the environment and are created by it, simultaneously, as an indication of our cosmic powers as agents. In Vodou and other indigenous African religions the notion of environment suggests a philosophical, religious, cosmological belief and attitude of embedded continuity tacitly comprehended.

The colloquium seeks to explore the intimate connections between animate and inanimate objects, so perceived, in the natural and the hard sciences, the built environments we inhabit that include the world of dreams, and the frightful powers we possess communally as destroyer. We will also bring to the fore Vodou’s divine knowledge and collective capacity for healing and renewal within nature’s endless cycle of life.

The Congress of Santa Barbara’s 11th International Colloquium highlights this mission of return to source and renewal inherent in Haitian Vodou, in other African-derived religious systems in the Americas, and in indigenous African religions. Environment encompasses not just the plants and the trees so dear to Gran Bwa, the agricultural work of Kousin Zaka and Kouzinn, the labor and travay of Klèmezinn Klermeil, the rivers and oceans, but also health and medicine, the built environment, families and gender relations, the sociopolitical environment, and more. On that basis, our use of "environment" implies an all-encompassing surrounding, or even notions of "ecology" which suggest more strongly the continuous reciprocity of human beings embedded in and influencing that surrounding. This is in keeping with the ethos of Vodou in which all are tied, in which each cell, each molecule are copies of the transcendent all—fractals revisited.

In its 11th colloquium, KOSANBA aims to inspire conversations and discussion on nature and environment and divine knowledge across the Atlantic. We wish to underscore how this substantial and significant compendium of traditional knowledge and practices have proven largely effective in sustaining spiritual and corporeal over time, for individuals as well as the collective in Haiti and beyond.

This forum hopes to include the contributions of researchers, scholars, and practitioners in Vodou and other African-derived systems. KOSANBA welcomes papers/presentations on
issues such as, though not limited to:

* New and old theoretical lenses and frameworks for discussing sacred knowledge
* Shifting religious practices and ideology
* Worldviews and "world sense" in the context of nature
* Philosophical and cosmological beliefs and attitudes embedded in nature/environment
* Nature’s role in restoration and equilibrium
* Environmental concerns and healing practices
* Religious healing in the face of natural disasters
* Water, earth, fire and their roles in Vodou
* Vodou and ecology
* Medicinal plants and their curative function
* *Manje Lwa* and ritual feeding of the spirit
* Kombit and agricultural contracts
* Arts and other curative practices used for healing and restoring universal balance
* Importance of mortuary rites and burial practices in maintaining cosmic order
* Dynamics of religious communities in new environments, new nations and *peyi blan*
* The transformation of lives for new converts and initiates away from the native land

Please submit a whole panel of no more than four presenters (a fifth person may chair or moderate a panel), or an individual paper by **May 31, 2015** to the Program Committee. Each presentation should be no more than fifteen minutes (2,000 words or 7–8 pages in length), allowing time for discussion. An abstract of approximately 300–500 words with the title of the paper should be submitted on one page; on a separate cover page, the name(s) of the presenter(s), together with institutional affiliation(s), if applicable, and the title of the presentation(s) should also be included. Full panel submissions should submit one file with all of the applicants’ abstracts and required information. Additionally, applicants must provide current contact information such as mailing address, telephone numbers and e-mail address, also to be submitted by **May 31, 2015**. All proposals will be peer-reviewed, and you shall be informed of a final decision on participation by June 30, 2015.

Papers should be submitted online to the Program Committee at KosanbaConference@gmail.com.

One must be a member of KOSANBA to present a paper at the conference. Registration is also required for all presenters. Registration fees are required for non-members to attend the conference. All those who are scholars and/or practitioners are invited to submit an application in order to join the association.

Registration information will be posted at http://www.research.ucsb.edu/cbs/projects/haiti/kosanba/.

**Questions?** Please email KosanbaConference@gmail.com, phone 805-893-3914, or visit http://www.research.ucsb.edu/cbs/projects/haiti/kosanba/.