SAVING HAITI’S HERITAGE

CULTURAL RECOVERY AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE
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SOVTAJ PATRIMWÀN KILTIRÈL AYITI: YON EKSPERYANS PREZÈVASYON APRÈ 12 JANVYE 2010

SAUVETAGE DU PATRIMOINE D’HAÏTI: UNE EXPÉRIENCE DE PRÉSERVATION APRÈS LE 12 JANVIER 2010

By Richard Kurin

Foreword by G. Wayne Clough

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Washington, D.C.
With appreciation for all of those who aided Haiti’s culture in a time of need, for the benefit of Haiti’s children, and with respect to their ancestors.
HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT

The aim of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was to rescue, recover, safeguard, and help restore Haitian cultural materials damaged and endangered by the January 12, 2010 earthquake and its aftermath, and train Haitians in conservation skills so they could carry on that work into the future. By October 2011, the project had treated more than 30,000 items and trained more than 100 Haitians.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was organized by the Smithsonian Institution with the Government of Haiti, Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the Presidential Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, in partnership with the U.S. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The project has been supported by the U.S. Department of State through U.S. AID, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and The Broadway League and Broadway community. Additional funding has been provided by Affirmation Arts Fund, Peggy Burnet, Smithsonian magazine, National Haitian Art Society, Macondo Gallery, Waterloo Center for the Arts, Friends of the Art Center, Jerome and Thao Dodson, Paul Peck, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Program partners included the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), UNESCO, and the William J. Clinton Presidential Center. The project was managed by the Smithsonian Institution. FOKAL served as fiscal agent in Haiti. The Haitian government Steering Committee consisted of the Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN), Musée du Panthéon National Haitien (MUPANAH), Bibliothèque Nationale (BN), Archives Nationales d’Haïti (ANH) and Bureau National d’Ethnologie (BNE).

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was a broad-based collaborative effort, achieving an extraordinary result in the aftermath of an unprecedented disaster. All of those who supported the project, worked at or deployed to the Cultural Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince, or otherwise contributed are recognized through the book and in the appendices, and are to be congratulated for their good and timely service to help save Haiti’s cultural heritage.

As the project neared its end, Richard Kurin, the Smithsonian’s Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, nominated the Cultural Recovery Center’s Manager and Chief Conservator for special recognition. Secretary Wayne Clough awarded the Gold Medal for Exemplary Service to Olsen Jean Julien and Stephanie Hornbeck. This rarely given honor recognizes extraordinary achievement in service of the best ideals of the Smithsonian Institution.
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FOREWORD

When I first heard about the earthquake in Haiti, I could imagine the impact because in a previous life I was an earthquake engineer. I expected the damages and loss of life to be extensive, but nonetheless, was not able to fully anticipate the extensive destruction that actually occurred.

At the Smithsonian, our hearts went out to the people of Haiti, particularly since many people there had previously worked with us. We knew we had to help, and that our assistance should be shaped around a cultural relief effort, something that others were not doing and did not have the capacity to do. We also had a unique, powerful asset, Richard Kurin, our Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, who had extensive contacts with a number of key people in Haiti and saw this effort as a call to duty.

It turned out that offering aid is one thing, but getting it done is quite another. Sometimes luck helps. First Lady Michelle Obama, who had publicly expressed an interest in helping Haiti, visited the Smithsonian soon after the earthquake, and she and I had a moment behind the scenes where I mentioned our intentions. She said she would help and shortly we found a strong ally in the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Our joint efforts brought together the leading cultural institutions of our nation, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, and Institute of Museum and Library Services. Coupled with the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield and the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, and with the support of the U.S. Department of State, these like-minded institutions formed a team working with key friends and organizations in Haiti to create the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.

As word of the initiative spread at the Smithsonian, employees across the Institution pitched in to help, including members of our facilities group who helped establish our base in Haiti. In time, dozens of curators and conservators from the Smithsonian and other cultural organizations served as volunteers at the Cultural Recovery Center to aid in stabilizing and restoring art, and to train Haitians to carry on the work. Today more than 30,000 works of art and culture have been stabilized and this number will increase over time. It is a remarkable accomplishment.

I have visited Haiti twice to see the work of the Cultural Recovery Center first hand. One strong impression—in spite of the enormous destruction—the Haitian people remain resourceful. On my first visit to Port-au-Prince, as a group of us stood in the rubble of what once was a magnificent Cathedral, we heard music. Behind the rubble and under the roof of a rough enclosure, a Haitian children’s choir and orchestra were practicing. This same choir toured the U.S. and performed publicly at our National Museum of American History in a testament to the power of hope.

As the Secretary of the Smithsonian, I could not be more proud of the work of our people who generously gave their time and worked under challenging conditions. I am profoundly grateful to my colleague Richard Kurin for his leadership, our partner organizations and their leaders who helped us in so many ways, and First Lady Michelle Obama who believed in the promise of our plans. Finally, I express my great admiration for our friends in Haiti who believed in the effort and without whose advice, support, and help we could not have done the work.

Someone asked me what I thought the long-term impact of our work would be. U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont, a Smithsonian Regent with a long standing interest in Haiti, said it best, “Fifty or a hundred years from now no one will remember that the United States gave several billion dollars in aid to Haiti, but the Haitians will remember that the Smithsonian helped save their history and art.”

G. Wayne Clough
Secretary of the Smithsonian
The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project has sought to rescue, recover, safeguard, and help restore Haitian artwork, artifacts, documents, media, and architectural features damaged and endangered by the catastrophic January 12, 2010 earthquake and its aftermath.

This book documents that effort.

It tells the story of how—in the midst of one of the most devastating tragedies in human history—dedicated, caring professionals from Haiti, the United States, and indeed, around the world, came together to help people save their culture.

Ultimately that good work is part of an ongoing process, profoundly enmeshed in Haitian society and truly in Haitian hands. Yet, given the emergency situation resulting from the earthquake, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was a necessary and vital means of assisting Haitians in that task. The project took shape in the days that followed the earthquake. It developed in tangible form as the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center, or Centre de Sauvetage de Biens Culturels as it was known in Haiti—a three-story building and compound in the Bourdon section of Port-au-Prince, equipped with conservation studios and storage facilities, and work site for dozens of Haitian, American, and international conservators, trainees, managers, and support staff. The project achieved many of its goals, and continued its work through 2011.

During its course, the project treated more than 30,000 cultural items, including more than 4,500 paintings and 500 works on paper, some 3,500 artifacts and sculptures, 17,000 rare books, and thousands of historical and archival documents. In some cases, items were literally pulled out of the rubble. In other cases, items were cleaned and safely stored. Still others received more advanced conservation treatment, ranging from minor repairs to full restoration. Among the treasures of Haitian heritage saved were the surviving murals at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and virtually the whole collection of the famed Centre d’Art. The project treated collections from a number of galleries including Hyppolite masterpieces from the Nader Museum, Marianne Lehmann’s world renowned collection of Vodou art and artifacts, rare books from the collection of Georges Corvington and those of the National Library of Haiti. In addition, the project supported improvements in storage and climate control at MUPANAH, Haiti’s National Museum, and worked with ISPAN, the national heritage organization, in securing and treating public architectural ornamentation.

Importantly, from its inception, the project offered numerous courses, workshops, and apprenticeships in conservation and collection management to more than 100 Haitian participants so as to build local capacity to carry on the work.

Additionally, the project generated a documentary film for television, a major cover article in Smithsonian magazine, a website, exhibitions in New York, in Washington at the National Museum of African Art, and at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, along with other programs and events. The project generated considerable media coverage—including several New York Times and CNN features, and brought to public attention the fact that Haiti—despite the earthquake, poverty, and other ills—is nonetheless a land of incredible people possessed of unconquerable spirit and immense creative talents.

Now, the primary impetus for continuing and leading the work initiated by the project rests in Haiti. Thanks to a commitment from the Government of Haiti and additional support from the U.S. Department of State/U.S. AID the project will transition to life as a Haitian institution. Happily, relationships developed through the project are likely to result in continued collaboration with and support from those well beyond Haiti’s shore.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was organized by the Smithsonian Institution with the Government of Haiti, Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the Presidential Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, in partnership with the U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The project has been supported by the U.S. Department of State through U.S. AID, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities,
Institute of Museum and Library Services, and The Broadway League and Broadway community. Additional funding has been provided by Affirmation Arts Fund, Peggy Burnet, Smithsonian magazine, National Haitian Art Society, Macondo Gallery, Waterloo Center for the Arts, Friends of the Art Center, Jerome and Thao Dodson, Paul Peck, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Program partners included the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation, Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), UNESCO, and the William J. Clinton Presidential Center.

The project was managed by the Smithsonian Institution. FOKAL served as fiscal agent in Haiti. The Haiti government Steering Committee consisted of the Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN), Musée du Panthéon National Haitien (MUPANAH), Bibliothèque Nationale (BN), Archives Nationales d’Haïti (ANH) and Bureau National d’Ethnologie (BNE). Numerous non-governmental cultural organizations in Haiti provided advice and guidance.

Many people are responsible for the existence and the accomplishments of the project. I have tried to acknowledge all in this volume. There were a few key people whose leadership made the crucial difference in the initiation of the project and bringing it to fruition. The First Lady of Haiti, Elisabeth Préval, and the First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, both immediately grasped the significance and importance of safeguarding Haiti’s cultural heritage and lent their support and prestige to the project from its outset.

In Haiti, Patrick Delatour, Minister of Tourism and Chair of the Haitian Presidential Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, and Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, Minister of Culture and Communication, provided the leadership; Michèle Pierre-Louis and Lorraine Mangonès, respectively President and Executive Director of FOKAL, provided organizational support and Geri Benoit, currently Haiti’s Ambassador to Italy and formerly Commissioner for the Smithsonian’s Folklife Festival on Haiti, supplied contacts and encouragement. Olsen Jean Julien provided the continual and attentive management for the project, and Patrick Vilaire the inspiration as well as hands-on involvement in its various activities.

For the Smithsonian, Secretary Wayne Clough provided the leadership and encouragement for me to proceed. Our efforts were thoroughly supported by Rachel Goslins, the Executive Director of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Cheryl Mills, Counselor and Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, played a key role in enabling the project and seeing it through. Corine Wegener, the President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield was instrumental in motivating and developing the project. Stephanie Hornbeck, who had retired from the Smithsonian only a week before the earthquake, answered the call to serve in Haiti and led the expert conservation effort. That effort was supported by dozens of conservators and collections managers across the Smithsonian and by conservators organized by Eryl Wentworth and Eric Pourchot at the American Institute for Conservation. I am grateful to these colleagues, and believe that future generations of Haitians will appreciate their efforts as well.

Richard Kurin
Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.
Pwojè Sovtaj Patrimwàn Kiltirèl Ayiti te bay tèt li objektif sove, pwoteje ak ede restore travay atis aisyen, atefak, dokiman, ak eleman achitekti tranblemanntè 12 janvye 2010 la ak konseksan li yo andomaje oswa menase pou disparèt.

Se jefò sa yo liv sa a prezante.

Liv sa rakontè kijan, nan mitan youn nan pi gwo katastwòf limanite potko jann konnen, divès pwofesyonèl aisyen, ameriken ak sa ki soti toupatou nan mond lan te rive mete konpetans yo ansanm pou ede yon popilasyon sove patrimwàn kiltirèl li.


Sant la te tabli nan yon batiman 3 etaj avèk anpil posiblite pou travay la fèt. Konsa, batiman sa a te genyen plizyè estidy o pou fè restorasyon, espas depo, espas travay ki kapab akeyi anmenntan plizyè dizèn pwofesyonèl aisyen, konsevate ameriken ak konsevate lòt peyi, jessen ak moun ki nan ti pèso-nèl la. Pwojè a te reyalize anpil nan objektif li yo e li te kontinye travay jis nan fen ane 2011 la.

Nan moman pwojè a ti ap dewoule, yo rive trete plis pase 30,000 byen kiltirèl, ki gen ladan plis pase 1,500 des sa sou soumpe, 3500 objè etnografi ak eskilti, 17,000 liv la ki ra e plizyè milye dokiman istorik ak papye achiv. Nan anpil ka, sa de bagay yo rive kòmsan anba dekkon. Nan lòt ki ka yo, se de zev ki ki te gen tan netwaze epi yo mete nan depo ansekkirite. Genyen lòt ankò yo te gen tan trete yo byen trete, lè se pat ti reparasyon sete bon jan restorasyon.

Miral Legliz Sainte Trinité ki te chape yo ak koleksyon wòdpòte Centre d’Art fé pati trezò kilti aisyen an pwojè a ede sove. Pwojè a te trete jou zev ki te soti nan koleksyon plizyè galeri, an–patikiley kòk byen enfònta Hector Hyppolite ki te soti Mize Neyader. Li te trete travay sou koleksyon objè vodou Marianne Lehmann lemond anty konnen, liv ra ki ra soti nan koleksyon George Corvington ak nan Bibliyotèk Nasional. Anplis, pwojè a ap sòl travay ameliorasyon rezèv ak kontwòl ki dia nan MUPAHAN (Musée Panthéon National Haitien). Li te sipòte ISPAN, anògis leta ki la pou pwoteje patrimwàn bati, nan soti objè, estati ak moso achitekti ki te dekore batiman ak plas piblik tranblemanntè a te andomaje.

Yon lòt aspè enpòtan nan pwojè a se te fòmasyon an. Soti depi nan kòmansman, pwojè a rey-alize plizyè kòu, atelye ak estaj pou fèm plis pase 100 pwofesyonèl aisyen nan konsevasyon ak jessen koleksyon. Fòmasyon sa yo te fòt pou ranfòse kapasite pwofesyonèl w aisyen yo nan domèn nan.


Koulye a, pi gwo jefò pou kontinye epi menyen travay pwojè a sot kòmans an rete nan men ay–isyen yo. Gras ak angajman Gouvènman Aisyen an ak yon lòt konkou Depatman Deta Ameriken, pwojè a ap vanse pou li toumen yon enstitisyon piblik aisyen. Erezman, kontak ak relasyon ki soti dey lo nan kòmans a koprè nou kontinye kolaborasyon yo epi jwenn lòt sipò moun pa ta imagine, pou nale pi lwen.
Se Smithsonian Institution ak Gouvènman Ayisyen an, atravè Ministè Kilti ak Komisyòn Prezidansyèl pou Rekonstriksyon an ki te òganize Pwojè Sovtaj Patrimwàn Kiltirèl Ayisyen an. Sa te fèt ak kolaborasyon US President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities. Pwojè a te jwenn gwo sipò nan men Depatman Deta Ameriken atravè USAID, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities ak Institute of Museum and Library Services. Li te jwenn sipò tou nan men Broadway Community ak Broadway League ak Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation, Fondasyon Konesans ak Libète (FOKAL), International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCCROM), UNESCO ak William J. Clinton Presidential Center te kolabore ak pwojè a.

Se Smithsonian ki te jere pwojè a. Jesyon sa te fèt gras ak konkou FOKAL ki te jwe wòl ajan fiskal ann Ayiti ak enpetisyon te fèt moun pou jwenn sipò ak informasyon presans pou moun pou rekonstriksyon kiltirèl. Se Ministè Kilti ak Komisyòn Prezidansyèl, Ministè Tòris ak Komisyòn Rekonstriksyon an, anpil en institisyon kiltirèl presan sou Ayiti a nan travay sa a ki te fòt ak kolaborasyon men veye dlo.}

Richard Kurin
Sousekretè pou Istwa, Zafè Atistik ak Kilti Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

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PRÉFACE

Le Projet de Sauvetage du Patrimoine Culturel Haïtien s’est donné pour objectif de sauver, de restaurer et d’aider à conserver des œuvres d’art haïtiens, des artefacts, des documents, des sons et images et des éléments architecturaux endommagés et menacés par les dégâts engendrés par le séisme du 12 Janvier 2010.

Ce livre documente cet effort.

Il raconte comment, au milieu d’une des tragédies les plus devastatinges de l’histoire humaine, des professionnels haïtiens, américains et de bien d’autres pays du monde ont joint leurs efforts pour aider une population à sauver ses biens culturels.

En définitive, ce précieux travail fait partie d’une démarche profondément ancrée dans la société haïtienne et prise en charge par les Haïtiens eux-mêmes. Mais, étant donné la situation d’urgence résultant du tremblement de terre, le Projet de Sauvetage du Patrimoine Culturel Haïtien était une manière pertinente d’accompagner les Haïtiens dans cette tâche. Il a pris corps dans les jours qui ont suivi le séisme et s’est développé sous la forme concrète du Centre de Sauvetage de Biens Culturels, ainsi connu en Haïti. Ce centre occupe un bâtiment de trois niveaux établi sur la route de Bourdon, à Port-au-Prince. Il est équipé de studios de conservation et d’espaces de stockage et dispose de lieux de travail pour des dizaines d’haïtiens, de conservateurs américains et internationaux, de stagiaires, de gestionnaires et du personnel de soutien. Le projet a atteint plusieurs de ses objectifs et poursuivi son travail jusqu’à la fin de 2011.


La formation a été un autre aspect important du projet. Depuis ses débuts, le projet a offert de nombreux cours, ateliers et stages en conservation et en gestion de collection à plus de 100 Haïtiens, afin de renforcer les capacités locales en matière de conservation.

De plus, le projet a produit un film documentaire pour la télévision, un important article de Smithsonian Magazine, un site web, des expositions à New York, à Washington, au Musée National d’Art africain, et à la Clinton Presidential Center à Little Rock, ainsi que d’autres programmes et événements. En suscitant une large couverture médiatique, y compris à travers plusieurs publications du New York Times et de présentations du CNN, le projet a attiré l’attention du public étranger sur le fait que, malgré le séisme, la pauvreté et d’autres maux, Haïti demeure une terre peuplée de gens incroyables, doués d’un esprit insoumis et d’immenses talents créateurs.

Maintenant, la principale force d’impulsion pour la poursuite et la direction des travaux initiés par le projet réside en Haïti. Grâce à l’engagement du Gouvernement d’Haïti et une aide complémentaire du Département d’Etat Américain le projet s’apprête à se muer en une institution haïtienne. Heureusement, les relations développées à travers le projet sont susceptibles de donner lieu à une collaboration continue et des formes de support pouvant aller bien au-delà des rives haïtiennes.

Comme partenaires du projet, on peut citer le Comité Américain du Bouclier Bleu, la Fondation de l’Institut Américain pour la Conservation, la Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL), le Centre International d’Études pour la Conservation et la Restauration des Biens Culturels (ICCROM), l’UNESCO et la William J. Clinton Presidential Center.


À la Smithsonian, le secrétaire Wayne Clough m’a gratifié de son leadership et de son encouragement pour travailler. Nos efforts ont été indéfectiblement supportés par Rachel Goslins, Directrice Exécutive de la Commission Présidentielle pour les Arts et les Humanités. Cheryl Mills, Conseillère et Directrice de Cabinet du Secrétaire d’État Hillary Clinton, a joué un rôle fondamental dans la mise en place et le suivi du projet. Corine Wegener, Présidente du Comité Américain du Bouclier Bleu, a joué un rôle moteur dans le développement du projet. Stephanie Hornbeck, qui a laissé la Smithsonian une semaine avant le séisme, a répondu à l’appel pour servir en Haïti à la direction des efforts techniques de conservation. Ces efforts ont été soutenus par des dizaines de conservateurs et gestionnaires de collection de la Smithsonian et de conservateurs organisés par Eryl Wentworth et Eric Pourchot à l’American Institute for Conservation. Je suis reconnaissant envers ces collègues et crois que les futures générations d’Haïtiens apprécieront aussi bien leurs efforts.

Richard Kurin  
Sous secrétaire pour l’Histoire, l’Art, et la Culture  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC
At 4:53 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, an earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Haiti. Centered in the region of Port-au-Prince, the nation’s capital, it lasted for thirty-five seconds. As Haitians immediately experienced, the result was catastrophic.

According to the Haitian government, more than 300,000 people may have been killed in the earthquake and its aftermath. Hundreds of thousands of others were injured. More than a million Haitians were displaced from their homes. The nation’s infrastructure, fragile before the disaster, was devastated. Hardest hit was Léogâne, closest to the epicenter, Port-au-Prince, and nearby Jacmel.

Thirty-five seconds!

The National Palace, residence of Haiti’s president, was severely damaged in the earthquake. Photos by (below) Ken Solomon and (right) Dawne Pullman.
The path of human life is sometimes paved by exceptional events that seem to create a radical rupture, initiating a new beginning. For most Haitians and for the country itself, the January 12 earthquake means a milestone that marks the border with a completely different life. For most children, adults, and families, it seems that things will never be the same again. In addition to the loved ones that we lost, the family house that has been patiently built with savings of a generation, the school that our parents, grandparents, and ourselves attended, the church of the neighborhood where a small community of family and friends use to meet every weekend, all this has vanished before our eyes in a matter of a few seconds.

Life will never be the same again.

Thirty-five short seconds that seemed like an eternity. A few seconds sufficient enough to bring our official residence down, collapsing slowly at our feet, five feet away from where I was standing; this huge cloud of dust rising from the city below carrying desperate cries of sorrow and calls for help; crowds of wounded children and adults turned white with the dust, running around, not knowing exactly where to go.

And nobody to help.

With more than seventy percent of the population living under the poverty line, life was already precarious and difficult for the majority of Haitians. The January 12 disaster brings much more privation, much more struggling to cover even the most basic human needs. There is hope at the horizon because of the huge machine of disaster relief set up by the international community. I discovered later that a great number of people from very remote countries of the world’s continents—even those with very limited resources—have contributed their support to the Haitians. It is as if the January 12 disaster had brought all these people together; as if there was the sudden realization that the whole planet was a small village and those Haitians in need were part of the same small community. President Obama declared, “we are all Haitians today!”

But Haitians fear that such solidarity might be just a temporary generous reaction; that the structures in place in the country will not be able to take over; that hell may come back again as a daily pattern of life.

The rebuilding of Haiti will need the support of the international community and a long-term commitment to be present alongside the Haitians to help face the challenges of rebuilding differently and creating solid, accessible, and efficient public services. The rebuilding process will need above all the commitment of Haitians themselves in enhancing our sense of dialogue and our culture of solidarity to preserve our institutions.

Elisabeth D. Préval earned her MBA from George Washington University and is the former First Lady of Haiti.
The effects in Port-au-Prince were particularly harsh. Decades ago, the city was home to only a few hundred thousand inhabitants. Due to a host of policies, rural people from around the country had flocked to the city for jobs and opportunities, swelling the population to over three million. Tens of thousands of homes were built on the sides of the city’s hills and in poor slums—basically shanty towns with makeshift materials and with no regard to building codes. Many homes were built on unstable land, filled-in areas that had suffered subsidence problems.

People were killed by falling rubble and debris. This made the earthquake profoundly democratic, as not only the poor suffered massive losses. More well-off Haitians lived in houses made of concrete, and when these too came down, inhabitants were crushed inside. Wood houses, built at the turn of the last century and preserved as historical buildings in the capital, replete with their gingerbread decoration, generally survived best—the wood swaying with the tremors rather than giving way.

Immediately, Haitians went to the rescue of their families, friends, and neighbors. Thousands were physically pulled from the rubble by Haitian hands. Those with tools and equipment used them to leverage concrete, pry refuse, chip away brick, and crack cinder block in order to locate survivors and clear them from collapsed houses, workplaces, schools, and stores.

For some, rescuing relatives meant sawing away limbs under the most primitive of conditions. It was horrid and heartbreaking. Many Haitians had even grimmer tasks. They sought to remove loved ones killed in the earthquake. In some areas of Port-au-Prince, bodies were brought out and stacked like cordwood. Relatives wore makeshift masks and used scented cloth and cotton to disguise the smell of death. Others had to bear the sorrow of deceased family members buried in rubble they could not remove. Neither they nor their loved ones could rest in peace.

In the first days, people set up makeshift “homes” outside, on the streets, in parks, and in open fields. Survivors scavenged for food. Rumors of more destruction spread surprisingly quickly through the city. One was that the region would be hit by a tsunami triggered by the earthquake. Such had actually occurred in the 1770 earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince. Now, Haitians looked for nearby trees to climb in case a giant tidal wave flooded the city. That rumor and the fear it occasioned is captured brilliantly by Galland Semerand in a painting completed in the days that followed. The canvas depicts a beautiful, almost idyllically peaceful, verdant Port-au-Prince with light pastel and rainbow colors. Yet close inspection reveals collapsed buildings, upturned vehicles, and a tree of life and death. The tree is littered with dead bodies. In nightmarish fashion, Haitians climb up the trunk of the tree, crawling over their deceased neighbors seeking higher ground, survival, and even solace as they approach the sun.

“Everyone was covered in grey dust,” said one survivor, referring to the pervasive pulverized concrete cloud that engulfed several neighborhoods. “It was like we were all ghosts. We weren’t even sure we were really alive.”
Cultural expression always accompanies disaster—indeed, it is the way we humans process the unfathomable. Whether laments, prayers or songs of woe, ritual meals or the donning of funerary garments, it is the only way we can give meaning to the awful, and go on living without descending into total despair or madness.

Those first nights after the earthquake were desperate ones. Haitians lamented the dead. When they could, they conducted burial rites in typical fashion, often a mix of Catholicism and Haitian Vodou. Bodies that were not carted off out of the city for mass burial were put in coffins, family and neighborhood burial sites—until they ran out of room.

At nightfall, with no homes to go to, Haitians took to the streets—and sang. Hymns and anthems were sung for hours collectively by thousands and thousands. Frightened but together, joined by tragedy, a society survived without food, water, or shelter by singing through the night. The will to survive, to overcome immense hardship and deprivation is at the heart of what is often characterized as resilience—a social trait honed over Haiti’s long history.

Quickly, within a day, the world beyond Haiti began to witness the horror of the earthquake and its aftermath as the media rushed in to report. Television coverage by CNN and others captured both the awesome scale of the destruction as well as the intimate drama of its impact upon the injured, dispossessed, and stunned survivors.

Impressively, nations and people around the planet reacted in an amazing outpouring of empathy and support. Rescue teams, doctors, nurses, soldiers, and engineers were sent by scores of nations. The airport had to be re-opened by the U.S. military with temporary equipment. Food and water, medicine, tarps, and supplies came in by plane, ship, and helicopter, and overland by truck from the neighboring Dominican Republic.

The massive and logistically complicated effort saved countless lives. It also provided hope to Haitians. Despondent over their losses, they could take heart that the world cared. Whatever cause might be attributed to the earthquake, whether the antipathy of nature or the mystery of divine will, Haitians would soon learn that their fellow human beings from around the planet wanted to help them survive.

The earthquake took its toll on every aspect of Haitian life. It devastated Haiti’s rich cultural heritage. Historic buildings, museums, libraries, archives, galleries, churches, theaters, artists’ workshops, and marketplaces were damaged and in many cases destroyed. The National Cathedral, a towering pink and white edifice in downtown Port-au-Prince, looked like it had been struck by bombs. Half of the historic Centre d’Art collapsed, each floor like a layered cake brought to the ground. The other half stood like an eerie anatomical cut-away, its walls stripped away. The Nader Museum, with more than 16,000 paintings, was leveled. The historic section of Jacmel—on the list to be recognized as a world heritage site—suffered acute damage and lay in ruins. Libraries, archives, and galleries were covered in dust, disrupted and endangered.
Haitians mourned their loved ones and buried them in cemeteries that rapidly ran out of room.

Photos by Lynsey Addario/VII Network

The remains of destroyed and damaged paintings in the rubble of the Nader Museum. Photo by Corine Wegener
THE CLOUD OF DUST, THE LOOK OF DISBELIEF

PATRICK DELATOUR

The world was stunned by the earthquake that struck Haiti with a rare intensity. Port-au-Prince was devastated. It wasn’t the first capital city to have suffered such a fate, but with the magic of modern media, images of destruction raced around the world quickly. Its scale was massive, and it had a huge audience. The whole world became a village, a giant lakou or Haitian courtyard in which all could be seen.

In Haiti, the earthquake of January 12 shook us like the trumpet that awakens an entire garrison. The moment is now enshrined indelibly in our memory. Everyone was enveloped in it, and everyone was desperate to extricate themselves from the cloud of dust that chokes, the look of disbelief of one who knows its horrors.

Port-au-Prince, Léogâne, Petit Goave and Jacmel suffered unprecedented destruction. In Port-au-Prince the Capital was gone, the National Palace, the Palace of the Ministries, the Law Courts, the Legislative Building, City Hall. The National Cathedral, the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Church, and the Church of Saint Louis de Gonzague, were erased. The Iron Market, the General Tax Directorate, banking institutions, universities all destroyed.

The capital, laboriously developed between 1915 and 1934 was wiped off the map. Only the broad avenues of its core—famed throughout the Caribbean—remained, and offered rare views toward the bay in a dramatic, almost beautiful, if disturbing way. Due to long term policies of over-centralization, the city had become a megalopolis of absurd proportions, a place of urban disorder and intense improvisation—which helps explain the magnitude of the disaster that betrayed the promise of a better life for its citizenry.

With hundreds of thousands dead, more injured, and even more homeless, this was the Apocalypse.

Days after the earthquake I was given the responsibility by the President to chair the Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, to conduct a comprehensive inventory of the destruction to public buildings, places of worship, schools and universities, hospitals, private homes and businesses, hotels, roads and infrastructure. The results were overwhelming and damning—the “volume of debris” became our measuring instrument. More than 300,000 homes were destroyed. There was enough debris to perhaps fill a dozen superdomes.

Yet, with all in ruins, all seeming lost, the survival instinct is strongest of all, and our heritage gave it shape. We had to persevere and move ahead. But how? Questions were asked. Should we rebuild the capital or move it elsewhere? Should we build upon our heritage or build a new heritage for future generations? What of the rubble should we keep and what of it should we discard? At a time of crisis, such as the January 12 earthquake, a people decide what is most important to them.

Patrick Delatour is an architect of historical monuments, served as Minister of Tourism for Haiti, and chaired the President’s Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction of Haiti.

[Upper left] Haiti’s National Cathedral in Port-au-Prince before the earthquake. Photo by Kesler Pierre

[Lower left] Destruction of the National Cathedral in the earthquake. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian

[Upper right] Worship in the National Cathedral before the earthquake. Photo by Kesler Pierre
CHAPTER TWO

HAITIANS TO THE RESCUE

After trying to save people’s lives, the next thing to save is peoples’ reason for living.—Olsen Jean Julien

Invaluable and irreplaceable art, salvaged from the rubble, was now in danger of being lost.—Axelle Liautaud, member of the board, Centre d’Art
In the days following the earthquake and the rescue of survivors, numerous Haitians sprang into action to save the cultural heritage they cherished. Workers at the National Library boxed up books that had been dislodged by overturned shelves. Centre d’Art staff members climbed up the remains of their once proud headquarters, now three stories of rubble, to pull out surviving paintings and cut metal sculptures. Georges Nader and members of his family did the same at their leveled museum. At an Episcopal school, parents and teachers climbed into a precariously listing, terribly damaged building, in order to retrieve musical instruments dear to their children.
The Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, with a long history in Haiti, was home to invaluable artistic murals until its roof and walls collapsed in the earthquake.

The Cathedral had fourteen larger than life-size murals painted on its walls in the early 1950s by some of Haiti’s master painters associated with the Centre d’Art. Only three survived the earthquake in recognizable, though damaged form—the Baptism by Castera Bazile, the Last Supper by Philomé Obin, and Native Procession by Préfète Duffaut.

Protecting the murals to assure their survival was a difficult task because the building had completely collapsed. Local technicians, under my supervision, tried to secure the perimeter to limit access to the murals and possible looting. We constructed a wooden scaffold to help support the damaged walls with the murals that had been left standing. We rigged plastic sheeting over the top of the scaffold to protect the frescoes from the elements. We also collected many fragments of the murals that had been damaged and destroyed, and secured them, so they could be used in restoring the art work. Additionally, we saved some ornamental ceramics, by Jasmin Joseph, decorating the arches of the Cathedral and the remains of the terribly damaged church organ.

It was our hope at the time that the murals could be saved and restored, and thus appreciated as part of Haitian and human patrimony.

Patrick Vilaire, a sculptor, specialist in ceramics, and the use of new energy sources, is President of the Foundation for Iconographic Research and Documentation, and the Founder of Gataphy. He is a Knight of the French Order of Arts and Letters, a Research Associate of the Smithsonian, and winner of the 2010 Édouard Glissant Prize.
Another cultural leader, Daniel Elie, the Director of ISPAN—Haiti’s cultural heritage bureau, sought to document the destruction. This was not easy for him to do. His office was destroyed. He lost several members of his staff. Telephone service, spotty before the earthquake, was overwhelmed. His government vehicle was crushed. Nonetheless he raced around the capital region, camera in hand, to document the status of cultural sites, publishing the ISPAN Bulletin digitally and distributing it on the world wide web so that friends and specialists everywhere would have a well-documented report on the status of Haiti’s built heritage.

Why? Why were these Haitians so concerned with the survival of their cultural heritage in light of what must have seemed like overwhelming, basic concerns?

Haitians have long understood the importance of their culture as the keystone of their society and rooted deeply in a complex, dramatic history. This is the identity of the Haitian people. If we let this go, the next generation in Haiti will not know where they came from. It was a duty we had to fulfill.—Gerald Alexis, art historian
HAITI'S HISTORY

Haiti’s ancestors—overwhelmingly people of African descent, began their history on the island soon after Columbus’ voyages. Columbus, who came in 1492 and again in 1493, named the island—at that time occupied by indigenous Taino people, La Isla Española, later popularized as “Hispaniola.” Columbus and his compatriots found gold. In establishing a colonial outpost, the Spanish needed labor for mining gold, building fortifications, and farming. The native Tainos, massacred in resistance to colonial rule and easy prey to diseases brought by the conquistadores, did not serve the purpose. The Spanish looked toward Africa and started importing slaves in 1501. By the end of the sixteenth century, the population included about 1,000 Spaniards and 12,000 people of African descent. Spanish settlement became concentrated in Santo Domingo, which became not only the name of the colonial town on the island’s southeastern coast, but also that of the whole colony. Pirates and other colonial powers established outposts on the less inhabited parts of the island and in 1665, King Louis XV recognized Saint Domingue as a French colony.

Tobacco drew the first French colonial settlers, followed by indigo and sugar cane cultivation. Slave labor was needed, and expanded. In 1697, with the Treaty of Ryswick, the Spanish recognized the French claim on the western third of the island.

The Treaty opened the way for large-scale immigration of French colonialists—some 40,000 over the next century. The massive growth in plantation agriculture produced increasingly lucrative sugar cane, indigo, and later coffee and cotton for export. Saint Domingue’s colonial plantation economy depended upon enslaved Africans and their descendants who would work the fields, grow, harvest, process, and ready for transport their agricultural produce. Overseen by colonial officials, plantation owners, and white workers, the African population maintained oral traditions from their native lands, particularly religious and spiritual ones. This was no easy feat, as they were stripped of clothing and every tangible possession that might possibly remind them of their homes. They were discouraged from learning and speaking their mother tongues, and so their languages died out, though words and phrases fused with the colonial French and became a new language, Kreyòl.

Plantation slavery in Saint Domingue was particularly brutal, inspiring a Haitian cultural historian to later point out that the long and harsh period of slavery prompted its people to hold more dearly the “next life” because this one was so bad. Reflecting the Code Noir promulgated under French monarch Louis XIV, slaves were property and had abysmally few rights; they were subject to myriad abuses and humiliations. They could not freely marry, assemble, carry weapons, or engage in commerce. Forbidden from practicing anything but Catholicism, their beliefs were denigrated, and any surviving or adapted ritual practices hidden from public sight. Various forms of expression and communication, drumming, for example, were restricted. Slaves were purposefully kept illiterate.

Inspired by the American and then the French Revolution, gens de couleur libres or free people of color, “mixed race” métis and mulattos in the colony and in the Caribbean rejected discrimination and advocated for more rights claiming they too were French citizens and subject to treatment under the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Slaves—whose number had grown to more than 500,000, dwarfing the free white population—grew rebellious. Revolts long a feature of slave society, grew in scale in the northern, large plantation areas of Saint Domingue in 1791, forcing many French colonialists to flee. A famed Vodou ceremony led by Dutty Bouman at Bois Caïman gave spiritual shape to the rebellion. Conflicts and alliances between rebel leaders, French, Spanish, and British colonial forces on the island ensued. French authorities abolished slavery in 1793 to gain the support of Black rebels against the Spanish and the British.

Foremost among the rebel leaders was Toussaint Louverture, a former slave, wealthy freeman, and brilliant military strategist. Commanding an army of about 4,000, he ultimately brought order to the colony, defeating the British and the Spanish and by 1801 taking control of the whole island. He invited back the colonial French hoping to revitalize plantation agriculture with the fair labor of freed slaves. He encouraged trade with the United States and European powers, promulgated a new colonial constitution so that all could live “free and French,” and declared himself governor-for-life.

When Napoleon came to power, France’s new ruler tried to reverse the course of the freedom movement, sending an army of 20,000 men to defeat Louverture, re-take the colony, and re-institute slavery. Though Louverture was captured, taken to France, and died in prison, his successor and mentee Jean-Jacques Dessalines fought Napoleon’s army. Weakened by yellow fever, the French troops were defeated. Capping the successful revolution, in 1804 Dessalines declared the former colony independent, giving it back the name Ayiti or Haiti, a Taino word meaning “land of mountains,” and though selected as Governor-General by other leaders, he declared himself Emperor later that year. Haiti became the first free Black independent nation in the Western Hemisphere.

It still took years, even decades for this newly-won nation to ensure its boundaries. After Dessalines was assassinated in 1806, two of his fellow revolutionaries
and successors, Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion divided up the nation, the former creating the state and then Kingdom of Haiti in the north and the latter the Republic of Haiti in the south. In 1809, Spanish colonialists re-took the eastern part of the island, regaining the colony of Santo Domingo and later declaring independence. Henri Christophe built an elaborate palace and a fortress, to be known as “The Citadel,” to defend the country against re-conquest. Haiti was reunited again in 1820 and two years later took back the east until 1844 when a revolt led to the formation of the Dominican Republic.

The revolutionary movement in Haiti had numerous consequences. In 1803, Napoleon faced a hostile British navy. He knew that defending French territory in North America would be difficult given the need to send troops to Haiti to stem the revolt. As that effort failed, Napoleon could not depend upon any future revenue from the lucrative colony. With a war to fight in Europe, he consolidated his resources and sold France’s land to the United States. The Louisiana Purchase and the territorial expansion of the United States is in part a legacy of the Haitian freedom movement.

As slave-holding and trading was still practiced in the United States and through the Americas, other nations feared Haiti would provide an example to be seized upon by slaves and sympathizers. No country recognized Haiti’s independence. France, Great Britain, and the United States imposed an embargo on trade with Haiti which crippled its economy. That was lifted in 1825 when France recognized Haiti in return for a payment of 150 million gold francs as a fee for property lost in the revolt. Though that amount was later reduced it was not paid off for decades.

It took fifty-eight years for the U.S. to acknowledge Haiti’s sovereignty—and in 1862, in the midst of Civil War, Abraham Lincoln recognized Haiti. Haiti had long become a symbol of freedom for many African Americans—thousands emigrating there in the 1820s, others visiting in mid-century. Frederick Douglass became the U.S. emissary to Haiti in the late 1880s.
International isolation bred in Haiti the necessity of self-reliance and turned much of its social and cultural life inward. Its people developed a strong ability to improvise and “make do.” The absence of civic institutions in the slave society prior to independence meant that the new nation lacked the infrastructural roots for transportation, communications, educational, civic, and political systems needed to develop into a healthy, growing nineteenth century nation. Unlike other nations of the Americas which achieved independence later in the century or those of Asia and Africa which won their freedom from colonial rule in the mid-twentieth century, Haiti had no structural base upon which to build a national economy or polity. This resulted in an ensuing lack of economic growth, industrialization, and modernization as well as political instability over the course of its history. There have been some periods of political stability and economic growth, as for example the last quarter of the nineteenth century, yet overall these have been short-lived. Persistent economic failure has produced endemic poverty; political failure produced ineffective government and public services. Political instability, fear of German influence, and the protection of financial interests prompted the U.S. to invade Haiti in 1915 and then govern for nineteen years until 1934.

While some of Haiti’s infrastructure grew during the occupation period, modern political life was stifled. After the U.S. left, leadership was characterized by a pattern of dictatorships, coups, and failed governments, notably those of the Duvaliers, François “Papa Doc,” and Jean-Claude “Baby Doc,” who ruled from 1957 to 1986. Their rule was mimetic to the growth of accountable public institutions and a robust civil society. Transitional military rule briefly gave way to the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a leftist priest who generated the enthusiasm and hopes of Haiti’s poor. His short-lived presidency ended with a military coup d’état which was reversed in 1994 when President Bill Clinton threatened a U.S. invasion. Aristide was returned to power and when his term ended in 1996, his former prime minister, René Préval, was elected president. It was the first peaceful, democratic transition of leadership in Haiti’s history. Préval served his term, and in 2000 Aristide was again elected president. A rebellion in 2004 led to his departure—according to several sources he resigned; his account was that he was essentially kidnapped by U.S. authorities and spirited off to exile in Africa. The head of the Supreme Court, Boniface Alexandre, lawfully took power as acting president, backed up by U.N. troops which still remain. In 2006, Préval was again elected president.

Haiti, with a population of just under ten million, is one of the world’s poorest. Per capita income is about $700 per year, with more than seventy percent of the population below the poverty line before the earthquake. The government has depended upon foreign aid. Remittances from the Haitian emigrant population of about two million living in the Dominican Republic, the U.S., Canada, France, and The Bahamas account for well over fifty percent of the economy. Adult literacy is about sixty percent, and most university educated Haitians live outside the country. About two-thirds of Haitians live in rural areas, and most lack running water, access to healthcare and other amenities, and have largely deforested the environment in search of firewood.

HAITI’S MATERIAL CULTURE

For what Haiti has lacked in political stability, material wealth, industry, technological infrastructure, and other attainments, it makes up in a fierce, determined, almost anarchistic dedication to the ideas of freedom and independence, and an uncanny, exuberant dedication to artistic creativity.

The history of Haiti’s Taino people and colonial settlement is told in archaeological artifacts found in Haitian museums. The history of Haiti’s struggles against slavery and for freedom is written in rare nineteenth century volumes found in Haiti’s public and private libraries and evidenced by historical documents found in its archives. Depictions of those struggles as well as idealized, romanticized, and symbolic renditions of Haitian life are found in the paintings of its art galleries. Expressions and representations of forbidden African cultural traditions are represented in metal sculptures and artwork in museums and galleries. Perspectives on national identity, politics, social life, and events of the day, expressed in meetings and assemblies, musical performances, plays, literary readings, and folk theater are found on old photographs and newer sound tapes, film, and videotapes found in numerous private collections.

Simply, these source materials document Haitian identity, providing a record of struggle and victory, perseverance and persistence in the face of five centuries of crisis, travail, and turmoil. They inform Haiti’s living culture, its values, attitudes, and sensibilities. With the earthquake, all of these sources of history and expression were endangered. Their loss would be a terrible blow to international scholarship, literature, and the arts, but even more so, Haitians would be cut off from and deprived of a source of strength which has, in spite of their differences, sustained them all. As Axelle Liautaud of the Centre d’Art expressed it, “The reason why there is still a country, despite all our troubles, is our strong culture.”
RESPONDING TO THE EMERGENCY, PLANNING FOR RECOVERY

PATRICK DELATOUR

My post-earthquake charge from the president was both simple and immensely complicated: restore the institutions of government, assess the damage, manage the homeless, and develop the first tools for national reconstruction.

Just weeks before, at Christmas-time, we relished the fact that Haiti was finally on the upswing with political stability, strong economic growth, and a surging tourism sector. Now, after the earthquake, the government was counting and burying hundreds of thousands of dead and figuring out how to rescue the survivors of this unprecedented disaster.

As strong as the world’s outpouring of support was, it was not prepared for the scale of the disaster or the needs it spawned. There was no organizational capability for quickly resurrecting an infrastructure, there was no ready stock of tents and temporary shelters, nor the capacity to produce them quickly, and there was no sufficient readily available funding to re-start the economy and move the recovery effort along.

We set up our emergency commission of senior government officials and private sector leaders in temporary quarters, our team deeply affected by the devastation—both personal and institutional. One group had to assess the physical damage to buildings and infrastructure and plan for the excavation, demolition, and removal of rubble. A second group had to plan and make arrangements for temporary shelters to house the displaced population. A third worked on the longer term planning for rebuilding and reconstructing the city and its surrounding region.

We worked quickly and professionally, acquiring and analyzing data, constructing maps, and exploring alternatives in what sometimes appeared to be an impossible task. But in just three months we were able to develop a realistic, viable, and detailed plan for Haiti’s recovery and reconstruction—a plan that earned praise from the world’s donor nations, the U.N., the World Bank, and private sector industries, and a commitment of the resources to make it a reality.

Iron sculpture by Damien Pauld.
Photo by Anaïs Gailhbaud/Haiti Cultural Recovery Project
January 12, 2010, 4:53 p.m. The earth shook. At first I thought it was nothing; it was not much later that I would realize the gravity of the situation. Complete chaos in Haiti. Thousands dead, massive destruction.

Soon after I learnt that the Nader Museum, founded by my father in 1992 to promote Haitian art, was destroyed. When I went there the next day, I thought all had been lost. 20,000 paintings, forming the largest private collection of Haitian art, were all under the rubble.

Weeks after the catastrophe, when I had the time and energy to assess the magnitude of the loss, I decided to attempt to salvage as many pieces as I could, even if damaged. After all, our national heritage, pieces of Haitian art that gave the people the sense of community and of being one, was at stake.

The first step in saving the collection was to retrieve all the paintings from the rubble. This was to take six months to accomplish and we were eventually able to recover about 16,000 paintings of which 3,000 were damaged. I realized that the most important paintings and sculptures were the most severely damaged, as they were not in storage but were rather displayed on the walls. To save them would take skill and materials not found in Haiti.

Georges Nader, Jr., operates the Nader Gallery and oversees the family collection at the core of the Nader Museum.

[Upper] Henri Christophe by Hector Hyppolite.

[Lower] Erzulie et Ses Soeurs by Hector Hyppolite. Photos courtesy of the Musée/Galerie Nader
Following the earthquake many cultural institutions, the "guardians" of Haiti’s historical heritage, survived, some with only minor damage—among them the National Library, the National Archives, and the Library of the Saint Louis de Gonzague Congregation. Others unfortunately were seriously damaged or completely destroyed.

Among these were several private residences of historians and researchers. These residences were home to invaluable libraries and private collections. Assuring their safety and security was extremely urgent given the devastation and the imminent threat of bad weather in the weeks following the earthquake.

I have been involved for many years in the cultural field, and in my capacity as President of the Foundation for Iconographic Research and Documentation, I immediately launched a large operation to rescue an entire segment of our heritage in danger of disappearing. Our basic goal was to provide security and shelter for these special collections.

The initial phase of this operation would not have been possible without the full support and financial assistance of the Haitian foundation, FOKAL, and some in-kind help from UNESCO. We mobilized members of our foundation, the staff of these various private collections, the Gataphy Group, which has experience in the demolition and excavation of buildings, and many volunteers.

We had to buy all the equipment needed for the work—and it was no easy task as most shops and specialty stores had collapsed. We also had to secure each of the sites at risk.

We concentrated on the following collections and sites:

- The collection of Georges Corvington, considered "the historian of Port-au-Prince," on Cheriez Street, uptown, in the upper town of Port-au-Prince, known as Bois-Patate;
- The collection of the heirs of Dr. André Constant, who was one of the writers of the Capois school of thought, at Saint Cyr, near the Champ de Mars;
- The collection of Roger Gaillard, who was a writer and historian specializing in the history of Haiti from the nineteenth century and the period of occupation of Haiti by the United States from 1915 to 1934, at the rue Camille Leon, in the upper town area known as Bois-Verna;
- The collection of the heirs of Enock Trouillot, a well known writer and ethnologist who was for many years the curator of the National Archives in Haiti, in the Morne Lazarre area near Pétion Ville;
- The art collection of the Museum of Haitian Art, College of St. Pierre, property of the Episcopal Church, at the corner of Capois and Legitimate streets. Here our teams helped assemble and safeguard the scattered pieces of art work so they could eventually be restored with the help of qualified experts.

We also provided material aid to the Library of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit which includes one of the largest historical documentary collections in the country.

With these ad hoc interventions, we were able to shelter all the collections mentioned above, and keep them in the hands of their rightful owners so they could later be treated and restored. Thus, we helped assure that this precious heritage would be passed on to future generations.
The National Cathedral, destroyed. Photo by Kesler Pierre
On January 12, 2010 I was home in New York. I didn’t hear about the earthquake that hit my hometown until late that evening. I didn’t learn of the massive devastation until the next day. I have both family and friends in Haiti, and it was impossible to get information on anyone’s well-being. Subsequently I learned my family members were okay, but I had lost friends. Watching the news coverage converted my initial emotional reaction to resolve. I had to get there and try to help.

Commercial air travel had been suspended. I contacted relief organizations to no avail. Two weeks later I was able to take an American Airlines flight to the Dominican Republic, then a bus across the border into Haiti. I spent the next six weeks volunteering at the Haitian Community Hospital. As I have no medical skills, I did whatever I could do: serving as translator, trying to comfort the injured, unloading trucks, unclogging toilets. Time off from the hospital was spent attending to my personal concerns, these were, my loved ones, and the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption—Haiti’s National Cathedral.

I was very familiar with the structure of the Cathedral; I’d been all over it—in the bell towers, in the crawlspace between the ceiling and the roof, places where the public generally doesn’t get to go. For the past eleven years I’d been trying to raise awareness that the stained glass was endangered and in dire need of restoration, but my efforts had been met with a mix of lukewarm interest and outright apathy from both the Church and government officials. Construction on the Cathedral began in 1884, and its windows were fairly intricately painted. There were chancel windows designed by Frederick Cole, an artist of some note, and the Cathedral had been the site of countless ceremonies attended by Haiti’s sitting presidents, other high-ranking government officials, and members of the diplomatic corps. The stained glass wasn’t just lovely, it was part of a historic building.

I’d been restoring the glass of landmark buildings in the United States for decades and didn’t understand why no one in Haiti thought saving the Cathedral’s art glass a worthwhile endeavor. Then the quake hit, and almost miraculously much of the stained glass had been spared.

The damage to the Cathedral was evident from almost any vantage point in Port-au-Prince; ordinarily you would be able to see the bell towers no matter where you were; now, there was only sky where they used to be. Looking at that absence was a little disorienting, similar to looking at the hole in the Manhattan skyline after September 11, 2001.

Before entering the wrecked Cathedral for the first time I hesitated expecting someone to stop me. No one did. I hesitated some more, recognizing the inherent physical danger of entering this severely compromised structure. I left my gear at the threshold and walked through the door. I had to climb over rubble; it was all twisted metal and hanging debris. News photos had prepared me for this. What I hadn’t expected was the silence. This area had always been a cacophony of street vendors, motor vehicle traffic, and life; now it was positively peaceful. I closed my eyes shutting out the view of wreckage so at odds with the serene feel of the place, and remembered a ceremony I attended here many years ago.

It was a midnight mass and all the lights in the Cathedral had been turned off. Each person in the crowd held an unlit candle and we all stood in the pitch darkness. The priest entered through the main door at the rear of the Cathedral; the same one I had just used. He held a lit candle, and when he spoke, leading us in a hymn, he shared his flame with the parishioners to either side, and they in turn shared their flames. As light spread through the Cathedral toward the altar, the vibration of our combined voices grew and I remember thinking, there really is something here—something powerful.

I opened my eyes on the devastation. If it was a sacred site before, it still was one now, maybe more so given all the people who died here. Something huge and powerful was still here, and standing in the quiet, looking at all the sharp, broken edges both above and below, I had the sense that I was standing in its mouth. I was sweating, which in Haiti you do a lot of— but this was a cold sweat. This ruined Cathedral could crush me at any moment. I heard a trickle of falling stones and that sent me running out the door. My heart was pounding; standing once again at the threshold I caught my breath and waited a moment. Nothing collapsed; I picked up my camera equipment, and went back in to photograph. I knew I had to do whatever I could to save what was left.

The damage to the Cathedral was evident from almost any vantage point in Port-au-Prince; ordinarily you would be able to see the bell towers no matter where you were; now, there was only sky where they used to be.

Kesler Pierre, who grew up in Port-au-Prince and migrated to Brooklyn, New York, is a professional stained glass conservator, amateur photographer, and folk artist.
SAVING THE CENTRE D’ART FROM RUIN

AXELLE LIAUTAUD

The Centre d’Art is called the birthplace of Haitian art. Since its creation in the mid 1940s by a group of Haitian artists and two American artists—De Witt Peters and Selden Rodman—it has been at the center of cultural life in Haiti. It has played an essential role in the creation of the murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. It has donated the masterpieces that formed the permanent collection of the Museum of Haitian Art.

The Centre d’Art has been an inspiration for me throughout my life, filling me with pride and with the conviction that at the heart of our culture lay invaluable treasures providing us with endless sources of inspiration. Pierre Monosiet, Luce Turnier, Albert Mangonès, Lawrence Peabody, and Francine Murat were all close friends and mentors. When Francine Murat asked Antonio Joseph, Jr., and me to become members of the board I felt privileged.

In December 2009 Francine, aged ninety, broke her leg and suffered a stroke. She was slowly recovering but her absence from the Centre was worrying me. I met with Maryse Desrosier to talk about the urgent need to put the board in charge. I needed to consult the bylaws, to know what the procedures were. Maryse sent me a copy of the bylaws on January 11, 2010.

On January 12, the earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince. Immersed in my personal grief and emergencies—my ninety year old father suddenly homeless, my brother trapped beneath the rubble of a house for days, my cousin killed—I finally got to the Centre days later. I saw the collapsed building. Some of the structure was still standing but could topple at any time. Art was scattered all over and hanging from the gaping top floor. Most of the fencing walls were down and bands of thieves were raiding the property, taking whatever they could and terrorizing the neighborhood.

As a personal initiative, I put a team of construction workers to the task of building a fence around the Centre using some of the tin and wood from the collapsed roof. Construction materials were hard to find. My driver found stores around Marché Salomon that were selling at top prices through half opened doors. No one was allowed in: you paid and got your goods on the sidewalk. A friend and I put our cash together, as the banks were closed, and we managed to buy enough tin and wood to finish the fence. We also paid a group of brave but untrained and unarmed young men to keep away the looters.

I contacted Lorraine Mangonès, member of the board and Director of FOKAL (a Haitian educational and cultural foundation). Meanwhile, some Centre d’Art employees, directed by Maryse Desrosier and Henry Celestin, had started to retrieve the artwork from the collapsed building, stacking everything in a container they had managed to find. Because of the amount of rubble in the yard and the danger caused by the partly collapsed structure with constant aftershocks, the container had to be kept on the street in front of the Centre. The situation had become more uncontrollable. Armed bands were attacking the Centre and trying to open the container.

Lorraine convinced the board of FOKAL to pay a security company to provide a twenty-four-hour watch on the Centre.

Retrieving the artwork was continuing at a fast pace. The danger of looters and aftershocks was real and the workers were eager to finish. The first container was soon full.

A second container was needed, but containers were in great demand. People used them for anything from storage to housing. Their prices were high and we had no resources. After weeks of looking I finally got one on loan from a friend.

A planned meeting of the board with Francine had to be cancelled because her health condition had suddenly deteriorated. In February, Francine Murat, who had been the head and the heart of the Centre d’Art for fifty years, passed away. She was followed days later by Jacques Laroche, another board member. We also learned that the driver, who had left the Centre on January 12 in the Centre d’Art car minutes before the earthquake, had been killed while driving; he was crushed by falling buildings.

The Centre now had no director, a non-functioning board missing two members, and no access to Centre d’Art bank accounts. In order to legally take over, the board had to replace two missing members. Invaluable and irreplaceable art, salvaged from the rubble, was now in danger of being lost, slowly cooking in the heat and humidity of the containers, while discussions about what to do dragged on.

Axelle Liautaud is a designer, art expert, and historian, and Centre d’Art board member.

The historic Centre d’Art, with offices, galleries and workshops, collapsed in the earthquake.

Photos by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian (above) and L. H. Shockey, Jr./Smithsonian (right)
CHAPTER THREE

INTERNATIONAL AND AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS MOBILIZE

The devastation to Haiti and the potential loss of its rich cultural history, and the courage and vision of our partners, gave us the chance to galvanize support around this tragedy and make a concrete and lasting contribution.

—Margo Lion, Co-Chair, U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities

My first reaction upon hearing of the earthquake was to contact my Haitian friends and colleagues to see if they were safe. There were many of them.
THE SMITHSONIAN’S HAITI CONNECTION

In the summer of 2004, in recognition of Haiti’s 200th anniversary of independence, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival had featured a living exposition of cultural traditions entitled Haiti: Creativity and Freedom from the Mountains to the Sea on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. More than 150 Haitian artists, musicians, craftspeople, story tellers, herbalists, boat builders, farmers, cooks, ritual specialists, and merchants had performed and demonstrated their traditions over a two-week period to almost a million visitors.

I’d been the Director of the Smithsonian’s Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage that produces the Festival and had been intimately involved in developing the Haiti program along with my colleagues, Festival Director Diana Parker and Curator Diana N’Diaye. We’d worked closely with a leadership group in Haiti. Leslie Voltaire had been President Aristide’s Minister of Haitians Abroad who’d first brought the idea of featuring Haiti at the Festival to me and laid the governmental groundwork for its production. A triumvirate of co-curators—Geri Benoit, Patrick Delatour, and Patrick Vilaire, later to be designated Commissioners by the Haitian government, were our key partners. Geri Benoit, a foreign affairs specialist and former wife of René Préval, involved in a woman’s crafts and development cooperative, was the lead organizer. Patrick Delatour, a historical architect who’d years before been a Smithsonian fellow and who’d help restore the Citadel, shaped key themes and design elements. Patrick Vilaire, an artist, grass roots organizer, cultural thinker, and community developer provided the inspiration for developing the presentations.

In partnership with the Smithsonian, they’d organized dozens of scholars to carry out field research in Haiti, conduct scores of interviews, document living cultural traditions, and ultimately identify and arrange for selected Haitians to travel to Washington for the Festival. Others in Haiti, like Gisele Fleurant, the head of a large crafts cooperative, were enlisted to round up items for sale at the Festival. Georges Nader was enlisted to mount a temporary art gallery in the Festival’s Marketplace, adjacent to the Smithsonian Castle and the Freer Gallery of Art. A Haitian student finishing his graduate training at Columbia University, Olsen Jean Julien, was hired to coordinate the program, attending to all the logistics involved. It was a massive effort over the course of two years, and particularly challenging as the Aristide government was dissolved, replaced by a new “interim” president and a new administration only months before opening.

President Boniface Alexander gave the keynote speech to open the Festival on the National Mall. I asked Senator Christopher Dodd, a Regent of the Smithsonian who knew Haiti from his Peace Corps days in the Dominican Republic, to present Geri Benoit, Patrick Delatour, and Patrick Vilaire special certificates at the opening ceremony. It made them Smithsonian Research Associates, and I hoped that status might be helpful in protecting them from possible political intrigue and repercussions once they returned to Haiti.

The Haitian artists, musicians and others charmed and educated visitors over the course of the ten days of the Festival, appeared on the Today Show, and reveled in the positive attention they received—especially given the instability back home. The Festival took place coincidently with a World Bank sponsored donors’ conference on Haiti. Haiti’s Prime Minister Gerard Latortue, in a Washington Post op-ed, pointed to the Festival program as illustrating the creativity and industry of the Haitian people, who, if given the opportunity, could do wonderful things back in their own country. Donors committed $1.2 billion to Haiti, about $250 million more than initially expected.

Producing the Festival program had good results and spawned all sorts of positive impacts in Haiti. It also cemented ties between and among those involved—we’d worked hard through challenging times and had developed a strong trust in each other.

Our hearts went out to the people of Haiti.

–G. Wayne Clough, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution
Patrick Vilaire, a sculptor, community developer, and curator sought to protect endangered rare book collections, like that of Georges Corvington. New York Times reporter Marc Lacey asked him about saving old books in light of the catastrophe, "The dead are dead, we know that. But if you don’t have the memory of the past, the rest of us can’t continue living," Patrick responded.

“Oh my goodness!—The Haitians can’t catch a break!”—That was my response as the CNN Breaking News alert flashed on my computer screen. However, in less than twenty-four hours, I found myself making cold calls and sending e-mails all across the country and the world. You see, I work for a person who is all about action. "We can’t save lives, provide shelter or food, but we have the expertise to help the Haitians save their cultural heritage," Richard Kurin declared. And, after that comment, we went to work. There was no script. You did what needed to be done.—LeShawn Burrell-Jones, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary, Smithsonian Institution.

Several dozen Haitian cooperatives, crafts and artisanal organizations, galleries and businesses participated in the Festival Marketplace in 2004. Photo by Jeff Tinsley/Smithsonian
NOW, SIX YEARS LATER

Now, some six years later, I was e-mailing and on the telephone. I asked Diana N’Diaye to see what she could do to track down our friends and find out about each and every Haitian who participated in the 2004 Festival program.

I reached Geri first, and fairly easily. She was now Haiti’s Ambassador to Italy. She too was desperately trying to get information about her family back home. Communications were impossible. I knew Patrick Delatour was Minister of Tourism, but couldn’t reach him. Olsen had just recently stepped down as Minister of Culture and Communication, and no one I knew had heard from him either. I scoured news reports to see if I could find any clues as to their safety and the safety of others.

I had a few intense discussions with Wayne Clough, the Secretary of the Smithsonian. Wayne is a trained engineer and geologist who specialized in earthquakes. He immediately understood full well the disaster in Haiti, its human and physical toll. I told him of the Smithsonian’s history with Haiti and our direct ties to a number of key leaders there. We both knew there was not much the Smithsonian could do with regard to the rescue of human life, or in providing food or health care or other such basic survival services. But we thought we might be able to help in areas of our expertise—providing some type of support to cultural and educational organizations.

I told Wayne that I was disappointed in the Smithsonian in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Many organizations in New Orleans and the Gulf region sought help as the flooding damaged and threatened important collections and archives. The Smithsonian posted information on its website and participated in emergency calls with a network of national and regional cultural organizations, but we’d done precious little when it came to on-the-ground action. In spite of larger institutional inaction, the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage had joined with colleague Lonnie Bunch, Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, to bring New Orleans musicians to the 2004 Festival program.

We still hadn’t reached Patrick Vilaire until on January 23 a front-page story in the New York Times reported on his activities. He had a brilliant quote and it was so typical of Patrick to be focused on saving Haiti’s heritage in the midst of the chaotic and difficult situation around him.

Slowly news of others started coming in. Several artists and musicians had perished. Others had survived, though most were in difficult straits. Coverage of the Nader Museum’s total devastation hit hard. It continued to be difficult to get information about Jacmel, a center of Haiti’s crafts production.

Wayne had worked in New Orleans, part of a scientific task force studying the impact of Katrina and trying to help prevent such a catastrophe in the future. I told him the Smithsonian might be able to help in Haiti, and he said “go for it.” We were then uncertain about just exactly what that might mean.

Through the recently appointed State Department liaison to the Smithsonian Larry Wohlers, I alerted officials in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of our high-level contacts in Haiti and the Institution’s willingness to help with cultural relief and recovery matters. We both thought cooperation with UNESCO as the lead international intergovernmental cultural agency made sense, and sought clarity through our diplomatic mission in Paris on how they were proceeding. We started to gather information on cultural sites, collections, and people in order to assess the damages.

News started to come in from Haiti. It was gut-wrenching.

Patrick Delatour was alive. He had been appointed by President Préval to head the commission dealing with the emergency and reconstruction. This was an enormous job made all the more onerous because Patrick’s parents had died in the earthquake. Their house had collapsed upon them. I had been in that house. Patrick’s parents had an art gallery within. Back in 2004 they’d given me a painting to donate to the Smithsonian. It hangs in the conference room of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. With precious little time to grieve, Patrick had the weight of his beloved country on his shoulders.

I heard from Geri that Leslie Voltaire was working with Patrick. Leslie, an architect and urban planner, would become Haiti’s liaison with the United Nations and with the Clinton Foundation in dealing with the response to the earthquake.

Diana N’Diaye and I heard from Olsen through one of his relatives. It had taken him days to get a message out. It was welcome, but jarring, “Je suis en vie,” “I am alive.”

We still hadn’t reached Patrick Vilaire until on January 23 a front-page story in the New York Times reported on his activities. He had a brilliant quote and it was so typical of Patrick to be focused on saving Haiti’s heritage in the midst of the chaotic and difficult situation around him.

I wanted to travel to Haiti to do nothing more than express solidarity with these good professional friends, and of course, try to figure out the best ways to help them. But I knew that would have to wait until they were ready—the priority was clearly to rescue survivors, get the injured under care, and the dead buried. Then we’d look at a plan of action for culture.
THE SMITHSONIAN CONSIDERS HOW TO HELP

L. H. (HUGH) SHOCKEY, JR.

On January 29 and again on February 4, I joined other Smithsonian colleagues for meetings called by Richard Kurin to discuss how the Smithsonian might help Haiti culturally in light of the devastating effects of the earthquake. The central discussion of both meetings focused on how could the Smithsonian help Haiti utilizing Institutional resources, and what could we offer if we were able to partner with other organizations.

With these meetings the Smithsonian plotted how for the first time in its history it could become involved in cultural recovery outside of the United States.

The central idea was that we should take a supporting role in facilitating Haitian efforts to recover their own heritage. This was important given our respect for our Haitian cultural colleagues as well as our practical concern that any initiative be sustainable long after the Smithsonian ended its involvement.

We discussed the possibility of physically aiding the damaged collections in Haiti, necessarily involving Haitians as part of the process. I spoke up about my own past experiences with disaster recovery and explained that the process can involve inexperienced individuals directed by specialists. While the specifics of what we would be doing to help in Haiti remained to be defined, these initial meetings helped narrow the focus of how to approach the recovery effort and helped sketch an idea that could be proposed to Haitians and other agencies to gain support.

L. H. (Hugh) Shockey, Jr., MS, AIC-PA, is an Objects Conservator at the Lunder Conservation Center in the Smithsonian American Art Museum where, in addition to traditional conservation responsibilities, he is active in raising public awareness of conservation and preservation of material culture.

HELPING THE MUSEUM COMMUNITY

FORD W. BELL

Among the important tasks of the American Association of Museums (AAM), as the United States’ leading museum service organization, is our work to develop a cohesive and responsive community among museums—and not only among U.S. museums, but including those in all countries around the globe. Art, culture, history, science, nature, living collections, childhood, and lifelong learning: all of these are things that museums dedicate themselves to every day, but none begins or ends at anyone’s border. Knowledge belongs to all of us, just as it comes from all of us. It is a part of the museum mission to ensure that this knowledge—our shared heritage, evidence of human achievement, and the glories of the natural world—is available to all. This is the essence of a museum, just as it is the essence of community.

Like so many tragedies, even those on a grand scale, there was an opportunity hidden somewhere in the Haiti disaster. A country, a distinct and proud culture, suffered a devastating blow. All of us are impacted because that country and culture are part of our global heritage, a part of what museums celebrate and share. All of us, therefore, have an obligation to respond. In the museum community, the Haiti earthquake, just like Hurricane Katrina five years before, reminded us vividly of how dependent we are upon one another, institutions and individuals, and what we can accomplish when we respond together, as a true community.

This is why we at AAM welcomed the chance to host a key meeting on February 5 at our headquarters in Washington, D.C., led by the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield; that meeting gave rise to the relief effort organized and led by the Smithsonian Institution. It seemed a small step at the time, but it resulted in something much larger, thanks to the efforts of Richard Kurin, and a whole community of colleagues.

Museums, at their best, educate, inspire, and preserve. This is our mission. It never ends at a single border. In Haiti, a cohesive and caring global community of museums continues the effort of recovery. We are proud to be a part of it.

Ford W. Bell is President of the American Association of Museums, Washington, D.C.
RESPONDING TO CULTURAL DISASTER
The way I started to think and talk about Haiti’s cultural disaster, was to draw parallels between Port-au-Prince and Washington. If we had a terrible disaster in Washington in which the White House, the Capitol, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, and all the museums had collapsed, we’d surely rescue people first, and then we’d deal with the deceased. At some point after that we’d think about going into the rubble and pulling out the Declaration of Independence, the Star-Spangled Banner, the treasures in the National Gallery of Art, the rare books, and so on. These are the foundational items that speak to who we are as Americans. Similarly, Haitians have their treasures, their icons, the objects that express and represent the Haitian experience. People do not shed these things lightly.

I convened meetings of Smithsonian colleagues to explore what we might do. Initially I focused my thinking more on the mid-term. We could, as we’d done after Katrina, invite Haitian artists and musicians to the Folklife Festival, buy and promote the sale of Haitian crafts so as to get some money into their hands and allow folks to revive their cultural businesses. I called Lonnie Bunch who immediately committed funds to help.

Other suggestions were made. One staff member noted that Haitian scientists were probably deprived of their research facilities and possibly even their homes—maybe they and their families could be housed at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, where they could continue their work. Another staffer, Hugh Shockey, an Objects Conservator from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, spoke of his experience in rescuing objects from disaster sites. If you didn’t do this type of work relatively quickly, you had less to work with later on, he argued. He also emphasized training Haitians to do recovery and basic conservation work. Johnnetta Cole, the Director of the National Museum of African Art, an anthropologist who’d worked in the Caribbean, and gone on to the presidency of Spelman College, elaborated on this most emphatically. Haitians had to be involved and fully engaged from the get-go, and training and skills development had to be built into any project as a core element—and we all agreed. Hugh’s suggestion that the Smithsonian might play a more immediate, direct role in a cultural response struck a chord. Hugh had the training and experience for such work—I didn’t know how many others or who at the Smithsonian might be similarly qualified. Nor did I know who else to enlist in such an effort if we went in that direction.

At a fateful meeting on February 5, I found out. Ford Bell, the Executive Director of the American Association of Museums, was hosting a meeting called by Corine Wegener, the President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield. It included representatives from various U.S. government agencies and organizations and from professional associations concerned with cultural heritage. Participants at first shared what was known about the situation in Haiti. Information was slowly coming in. Daniel Elic’s ISPAH Bulletin was eye-opening, with graphic images of all sorts of buildings—the National Palace, the National Cathedral, churches, and so on all destroyed. How the Haitians were organized was completely unknown—the Caribbean Archives Association had put out an emergency call for a detailed list of conservation supplies, but how they would be delivered, deployed, and used was unclear.

We went around the table, talking about authorities and responsibilities, what different organizations might and might not be able to do. I was impressed by Cori’s experience and perspective—we’d never met, but I knew of her good work as a U.S. Army Civil Affairs Officer in stabilizing the situation at the Iraqi National Museum following the infamous looting in the wake of the U.S. invasion. Eryl Wentworth, the Executive Director of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), was well-respected by all, and had her hand on a cadre of experts trained in the rescue of collections in disaster situations.

What was apparent was that no organization had any connections to Haitian cultural leaders. Those connections would be needed if we were to get permission and have support to launch a cultural rescue mission on Haitian soil. Also apparent was that no one had such a duty as an institutional responsibility. The U.S. government agencies had no charge or funding for such a task. The NGOs would undertake such work voluntarily, but needed someone to fund the effort, clear the way diplomatically, and provide an organizational infrastructure.

Snow was in the air. I imagined all those collections in Haiti in the rubble, exposed to the elements, just getting rained on, blown around, and wasting away. Five hundred years of history and cultural expression documenting an amazing story of the struggle for freedom being lost—just because we couldn’t figure out a way to help. To me it was the Iraqi Museum and Katrina debacles all over again, as we helplessly watched from the sidelines.

Since there was no plan and I was the last to speak, I said we needed one. I noted our high-level contacts in Haiti and the Smithsonian’s desire to help, and was determined to see something through. I also saw that with folks like Cori and Eryl various elements of a plan could come together.
Though I had never been to Haiti, news of the earthquake filled me first with horror, then with anxiety. As President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, the U.S. branch of an international non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the protection of cultural property during man-made and natural disasters, I knew it would fall to our relatively new organization to try and coordinate a U.S. response for cultural heritage. Our main concern thus far had been training U.S. military units about the importance of cultural heritage protection during armed conflicts. We had never before sought to rescue or safeguard a whole country’s cultural heritage, especially on the scale that might be needed in Haiti.

In the days after the earthquake we began working with colleagues in the International Blue Shield network to gather information on damage to museums, libraries, and other cultural sites. We quickly circulated a “Haiti Watch List” via e-mail. While it was all good information, I knew the next steps had to be on the ground and for that we had to rally our U.S. partners.

With the American Association of Museums providing a venue, I invited representatives from U.S. government agencies and cultural heritage NGOs to meet in Washington, D.C., on February 5. The purpose of the meeting was to share information about disaster response for cultural heritage in Haiti.

Going around the room it quickly became apparent that no such plans were underway, either from the U.S. or internationally. Many of us present were not surprised, having been witness to the lack of an emergency response for cultural heritage after the looting of the Iraq Museum, Hurricane Katrina, and subsequent disasters. Even after those experiences, the cultural heritage community had yet to develop an effective international organization to provide an emergency response akin to other types of humanitarian assistance. The International Blue Shield was good at collecting information and providing expertise, but we all knew it did not have the infrastructure to send a team to Haiti. The American Institute for Conservation had developed the Collections Emergency Response Teams (AIC-CERT) as a response to Hurricane Katrina, but their funding was for domestic disasters. It seemed that we had a lot of organizations that wanted to help, but no plan and no money. We were at a standstill.

Among those I had invited to the discussion was Richard Kurin, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution. Richard informed us that he was in communication with Haitian colleagues and indicated the Smithsonian’s willingness to help. He expressed his surprise and frustration at the lack of action, not just for Haiti, but for emergency response for culture in general. Richard pledged to see what he could do. I was, as they say, “cautiously optimistic.” So imagine my surprise when Richard called me a couple of weeks later and said, “I’m going to Haiti next week—do you want to come?” It was the beginning of a wonderful partnership that crystallized into the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

Corine Wegener is President of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield and a Curator at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. She served in the U.S. Army as a Civil Affairs Officer and aided in the recovery efforts at the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad.
With yet another blizzard forecast for Washington, D.C., that afternoon, we joined a group of government and NGO representatives in the conference room of the American Association of Museums on February 5 to discuss how the U.S. might assist in Haiti. Corine Wegener of the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield indicated that we were already late in mounting a response. The desire to help was evident; the capacity to help was not. The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) had volunteers and a domestic response system in place, but no funding, no contacts in Haiti, and no experience with international assistance. We pointed out that artistic and cultural works would not magically show up for conservation; the collecting organizations and individuals would have to request assistance.

As we dashed for home in the snow, there seemed to be little hope that we could play a meaningful role in Haiti.

However, on February 10, before the roads in D.C. were clear again, we were buoyed by the Smithsonian Institution’s offer to support a response team. FAIC responded immediately by putting out a call for volunteers to the AIC Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT). We began wrestling with questions of housing—(would we stay in tents?), medical insurance, inoculations and medications, liability issues, and how to provide meaningful assistance without equipment and a place to work.

We knew we could help, but there were still a lot of questions about how.

Eryl P. Wentworth is Executive Director, American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) and the Foundation of the AIC (FAIC); Eric Pourchot is the Institutional Advancement Director, FAIC.

Centre d’Art paintings were hurriedly stored in a truck container.

Photo by L. H. Shockey, Jr./Smithsonian
How does one mourn and create a new life at the same time?
That was the question in my mind when my friend Richard Kurin and I met in Rome, in February, one month after the earthquake that would change the lives of those who survived it, profoundly and forever.

In this time of sorrow and despair, there was also the opportunity for introspection and reflection about how to better create and coordinate development programs with Haiti that really could make a positive difference in people’s lives. However, what I needed at the moment was courage and once again my Smithsonian family provided that. Richard brought friendship and compassion that would quickly transform into action.

Our thoughts were mainly about living cultural heritage. Haitians use their arts for survival. They are incredibly creative. How to encourage Haitian artistry and craftsmanship whether in music, art, food, or fashion—so that living artists could benefit from a world more attuned to and supportive of their creative produce? We needed to figure out ways artists could find support around the world. And the world, by buying Haitian, would support the recovery and rebirth of the Haitian people and their economy.

So in the wake of snow flurries which had not been seen for twenty-four years, and always considered as a miracle by Romans, we went to the office of Gianni Alemano, Mayor of Rome, to present a plan for how European cities could help Haiti build back a better life by supporting and encouraging festivals, performances, exhibitions, and marketing programs featuring Haitian artists and its living cultural heritage—a concept dear to Italians.

Mobilizing all sorts of organizations and forces in this direction was key. Since in addition to leading the Embassy of Haiti in Italy I was also Permanent Representative of Haiti to the United Nations Agencies in Rome, I sought additional partners. Information-sharing gatherings quickly became support meetings. People wanted to grieve with us and be involved in our discussions and projects to get Haiti back on its feet. So using our cuisine, art, music, film, several gatherings were organized—in Los Angeles with Deepak Chopra, in Warsaw with former First Lady Maria Kaczyńska, and in Rome with the great soccer goal keeper Dino Zoff.

Geri Benoit is Haiti’s Ambassador to Italy. A former First Lady of Haiti, she was a Commissioner and Curator for the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program on Haiti.

I came back from that meeting and spoke to Larry Wohlers and John Dickson, head of Western Hemisphere Affairs for the State Department’s public affairs operation who was traveling to Haiti. I needed him to enlist the help of the U.S. Embassy and U.S. agencies in Haiti. While at one point I had thought about rescued Haitian collections coming to the U.S. for safe storage and treatment, I realized that such would run entirely counter to Haitian sensibilities and even provoke suspicions about U.S. interests. Instead, I envisioned the establishment of a cultural recovery base in Haiti, seeing it as an encampment of tents, generators, secure fencing, portable toilets, vehicles, and equipment—much as we produce for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. I asked Smithsonian staff to start coming up with budgets. One technical advisor came up with a budget of about $20 million for the infrastructure and personnel funds for such an operation. I thought this was a highly inflated and totally unrealistic amount. It put most of the resources into the hands of relief providers. I was convinced we could develop a viable project for a much more modest amount, and also place most of the responsibilities and resources into Haitian hands.

A few days later, I e-mailed Cori and asked for her help, “We are looking at the following as an emerging plan—though it is just that, as a lot would have to fall into place particularly with State, U.S. AID, and DoD. But since nothing is moving now, we need to step up and see if we can make something work.” I outlined the elements:

- State Department would help secure Haitian government permission for a U.S. cultural recovery effort through discussions with Patrick Delatour.
- Smithsonian would work with State, U.S. AID, and Department of Defense to secure a designated location, tents, sea containers, a few vehicles, and equipment in order to establish a modest cultural base in Haiti.
- Smithsonian would use its own resources and seek funding and support for operations from the U.S. government, NGOs, and private donors.
- Smithsonian would employ Patrick Vilaire and
Following the earthquake in Haiti, the strongest earthquake to hit the region in more than two centuries, basic humanitarian aid was at first the utmost priority. At some point though, cultural relief would also be needed. Staff of the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) set up a group of volunteers, and launched the Helping Heritage in Haiti (HHH) effort which I decided to chair.

How could ICCROM, an organization devoted to the conservation of cultural heritage, respond and assist Haiti in the face of this natural disaster? Coordination with various international organizations made sense in order to avoid any overlapping and duplication of efforts. An international meeting called by UNESCO’s Director-General, Irina Bokova, for mid-February in Paris and involving Haiti’s cultural officials would provide an opportunity to organize a coordinated response to address needs in the cultural heritage field.

During this post-earthquake period I was in contact with my friend Richard Kurin, Under Secretary at the Smithsonian. He was making a short trip to Rome prior to the UNESCO meeting, and mentioned the possibility of joining forces with ICCROM to help save Haitian cultural collections, and train Haitians in conservation work, a prospect I welcomed very warmly.

Our common approach was then discussed days later during a working lunch with Geri Benoit, Ambassador of Haiti to Italy who expressed her support and promised to convey her endorsement to Haitian officials, including the Minister of Culture attending the UNESCO conference the next day.

Richard and I both reinforced the approach to work under the guidance of the Haitian authorities for “the preservation and restoration of movable cultural property and train Haitians in this work” at the UNESCO meeting. The representative of the U.S. delegation to UNESCO supported this statement and underlined the need to set priorities for necessary action. It was the term “action” that stuck in my mind when returning to Rome, and briefing my HHH group of colleagues.

I thus started to define with the ICCROM HHH group a method for urgent action in planning a training course in a time-frame which is not the one usually followed for regular courses. It had to be a “crash-course,” mainly to be held in the field rather than in a classroom. It had to closely associate Smithsonian experts and those who have experience in post-disaster recovery. In only three months, a full training program was set up and an agreement was signed in June 2010 with our partner, the Smithsonian Institution.

Mounir Bouchenaki is the Director-General of ICCROM. An archaeologist, he was formerly Assistant Director-General for Culture for UNESCO.
HAITI—MAKING CULTURE A MOTOR FOR RECONSTRUCTION

FRANCESCO BANDARIN

Haiti’s cultural wealth also provided much-needed psycho-social relief to the large numbers of communities affected by the disaster.

Cultural life, in all its facets, plays a central role in Haitian life. When the sector was hit hard by the 2010 earthquake, UNESCO responded quickly, working with the authorities and local communities to revitalize cultural activity. The Haitian authorities affirmed the importance of culture by recognizing it as a key component of the social pillar of the Action Plan for National Recovery and Development for Haiti, and the Organization worked closely with them to undertake emergency actions during the first weeks, and months following the disaster.

Emergency efforts to prevent further damage ranged from preventing illicit trafficking of art and the protection of heritage sites from looting and collapse, to salvaging library, archival, and museum objects. UNESCO also helped artisans to restart their businesses, which constitute a vibrant cultural and economic sector in Haiti. These early interventions stabilized the situation and prevented further significant damages and losses. They also have laid the foundation for the long-term recovery of the culture sector.

Haiti’s cultural wealth also provided much-needed psycho-social relief to the large numbers of communities affected by the disaster. By creating mobile libraries in camps for displaced communities, supporting theatre performances, and organizing creative workshops for children and youth, the culture sector contributed significantly to improving the every day reality for many Haitians.

Responding to the national authorities’ call for increasing coordination among the many actors ready to support the recovery of the culture sector in Haiti, an International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of the Haitian Cultural Heritage (ICC) was established. At its first plenary session in July 2010, the ICC adopted recommendations that provided a roadmap for programs for action that have since been elaborated with a number of national and international partners into a strategy for medium- and long-term recovery. UNESCO convened a large conference in April 2011 as a stepping stone towards mobilizing resources for the implementation of the programs for action.

UNESCO is now starting these longer-term recovery efforts, aiming to assist Haiti in rebuilding a free and vibrant society for all—by improving the material and social conditions for artists, creators, institutions, and communities by protecting and reinvigorating heritage spaces; by coordinating and raising awareness of valuable cultural resources; by building up sustainable infrastructures; and by fostering creativity through education. A widespread movement of solidarity was born the day after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. We should maintain this momentum through sustainable partnerships and lasting commitments for the country to undertake the long and challenging task of reconstruction.

Francesco Bandarin is the Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO.
The next day, in Paris, the UNESCO meeting was chaired by Irina Bokova, and Haiti’s Minister of Culture and Communication Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue. The Haitian delegation included among others Lassègue’s cultural advisor Magali Comeaux Denis, and ISPAN Director-General Daniel Elie. Scores of delegates from dozens of cultural organizations were in attendance. The presentations by the Minister and Daniel were stunning in demonstrating the complete and overwhelming scale of human, physical, and cultural destruction of Haiti’s capital region.

No specific plan was offered on how to address the cultural needs and challenges—and it was clear to me that with no funds, bereft of staff, communications, and expertise, there was little capacity to do so. There were also some fundamental issues—with so many Haitian cultural sites—historic homes, churches, museums, libraries, and galleries in private hands, how could government be most effective? Did the Haitian government organizations even have the capacity to accept and coordinate international help if offered?

Mounir addressed the assembly about training. I spoke about intangible cultural heritage and also the need for a cultural base camp. Carolyn Wilson of the U.S.-UNESCO mission spoke of the need to get fencing to protect cultural sites from looting. Others spoke with compassion and conviction about wanting to help.

The UNESCO conference would result in a report of the discussions, the formation of an International Coordinating Committee for Haiti months later—to which I was appointed, to be followed by more discussion, planning, and attempts to raise funds. UNESCO had come forward quickly following the earthquake with some funds and in-kind support in Haiti to help salvage, box, and store collections, and fence off sites. This was good work—but I knew that a much larger scale activity was required, and with the rainy season approaching in Haiti, UNESCO could not move quickly enough to raise money, organize an effort, and get things moving on the ground.

Back in Washington, conferring with the State Department and with Secretary Clough, it was apparent to me that if something of sufficient impact was to be done, the Smithsonian would have to take the lead. We could work with ICCROM on training, we could work with U.S. Blue Shield and AIC, and within the Smithsonian on mobilizing expertise. I was confident we could gain the support and collaboration of Haitian officials and partners. What we needed though was the logistical support and cooperation of the U.S. government and funding.

For that, with Wayne Clough’s approval, I turned to the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The Secretary of the Smithsonian is an ex officio member of the Committee. First Lady Michelle Obama is the honorary chair. It is a very prestigious group composed of the heads of the various U.S. agencies and organizations—the Library of Congress, the Chairs of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Secretary of State, and Secretary of Education, as well as private, appointed members, like my friend Yo-Yo Ma, architect Tom Mayne, actress Sarah Jessica Parker, and others. It is co-chaired by George Stevens and Margo Lion; Mary Schmidt Campbell is the Vice-Chair and Rachel Goslins the Executive Director.

I discussed the prospect of a Haiti cultural recovery project with Rachel. She immediately understood its significance in light of other national and international cultural disasters. It was the type of project the President’s Committee could play an important role in helping succeed. Since so many in the arts community were doing concerts, telethons, and other events to benefit the victims of the earthquake, we thought it would resonate with the Committee’s membership. I presented the project to one of the Committee’s subgroups at a meeting on February 25. Actress Kerry Washington, Black Entertainment Television co-founder Sheila Johnson, and others were genuinely supportive of the idea. Bryan Lourd, Managing Director of Creative Artists Agency was aiding Sean Penn in his humanitarian relief effort in Haiti and offered his help. Artist Chuck Close offered to provide a painting for auction to raise money for the project. The moral clout of having the President’s Committee behind the project and ties of its members to possible funding buoyed my sense that we could develop a viable project.
When the Smithsonian approached us for support of its recovery and restoration efforts in Haiti, we knew we wanted to help. The urgency of ensuring that Haiti’s rich cultural legacy be saved provided an opportunity for the President’s Committee to demonstrate the Administration’s deep understanding of the irreplaceable value of a nation’s cultural heritage to the story of its people.

Our challenge was to mobilize partners and resources very quickly—difficult under any circumstances and, in the context of the federal government, especially daunting. Fortunately, one of the institutional roles of the Committee is to act as a nexus between the private sector, the White House, and the other federal cultural agencies. And so we began looking for the right private partner to bring immediate support to the project, support that would bridge the gap between the Smithsonian’s fast-approaching start date and the moment when federal resources might become available. At the same time, we reached out to our partners in the major federal cultural agencies—the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services—to request contributions from their discretionary funds as well as to lend their special expertise to the effort. We contacted First Lady Michelle Obama, the honorary Chairman of the Committee, and her staff, who were especially supportive and helpful at critical junctures in the early stages of the project.

Happily, we were able to identify the perfect private partners in The Broadway League, who themselves were eager to contribute aid to Haiti, understanding the crucial importance of salvaging the country’s cultural legacy for the future of all art forms, including but not limited to the theater. Our federal cultural partners came on board enthusiastically as well, and, in what may be record time, the Committee was able to gather the commitments, and political will to move the project forward. Building a partnership, especially one that is public/private and inter-agency, can be a tough uphill challenge. But the devastation to Haiti and the potential loss of its rich cultural history, and the courage and vision of our partners, gave us the chance to galvanize support around this tragedy and to make a concrete and lasting contribution to the remarkable work of the Smithsonian.

Margo Lion is the Co-Chairman of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues.

Mistakes have been made in the past, in times of great tragedy or upheaval, by not protecting and prioritizing a country’s cultural heritage. This is a huge opportunity for us to say, “we get it.”—Rachel Goslins, Executive Director, U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
Many parts of Haiti’s society were affected by the earthquake, and its cultural heritage was no exception. As part of the U.S. Department of State’s broader response to the earthquake, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and the Humanitarian Information Unit worked to identify and distribute information about at-risk cultural heritage sites in Port-au-Prince and throughout the country to disaster-response stakeholders. Direct grants from the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation assisted the Haitian government and its Institute de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN) in its assessment of damage to and conservation of historic buildings. The Department also provided funding and expertise for the development of the International Council of Museums’ Emergency Red List of Haitian Cultural Objects at Risk. This initiative allowed Haiti and the international community to preserve local cultural heritage by discouraging looting of sites.

Through our Embassy in Port-au-Prince, the Department of State provided logistical support to the Smithsonian to bring together American, Haitian, and international organizations for a cultural recovery project. Working with the Smithsonian and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, the Department was able to provide crucial funding for the project.

As Haiti recovers, the United States will continue to be a steadfast partner in the preservation of its rich history and cultural heritage. Working together, we will safeguard a key source of Haiti’s national pride and reinforce the bonds of mutual understanding and respect between our two countries for future generations.

Ann Stock is the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.
In touch with Patrick Delatour and others, I was set to go to Haiti the first week of March. I would go with Cori Wegener and Diana N’Diaye. With Cori, we’d work on plans for what we were calling a cultural recovery base, and with Diana we’d look at what we could do for living artists, musicians, and purveyors of Haiti’s culture.

We trusted one another and we all saw the utter necessity of an immediate initiative that could rally public and private institutions, provide training, and help us develop protocols to organize future operations of conservation: an initiative that would effectively build a bridge out of the chaos. —Lorraine Mangonès, Executive Director, FOKAL—Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (Open Society Foundation, Haiti)
PARTNERS ARE LIKE FRIENDS; WHEN HARD TIMES COME, THEY ARE THERE FOR YOU

PATRICK DELATOUR

If you are lucky, partners are like friends; when hard times come, they are there for you.

In 2004, Haiti mounted a massive presentation of its living cultural heritage on the National Mall of the United States in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. It was a thoroughly collaborative project, occurring on the 200th anniversary of Haiti's Independence. I was one of the co-curators of the living exposition and one of the three Commissioners appointed by the Government of Haiti to ensure its production. That challenging but immensely successful experience forged a strong professional relationship, and personal friendship between key people at the Smithsonian and leading cultural figures in Haiti.

Renewed over the years, those relationships became exceedingly important after the earthquake. Richard Kurin reached out to me and our team to see what he and the Smithsonian could do to help with regard to the safeguarding and recovery of Haiti's cultural heritage. As I, the architect of historical monuments and former curator, had become Minister of Tourism in the Government, and now appointed to lead the Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, I was in a position to enable the important task of recovering, restoring, and preserving our heritage.

Richard and I met in Port-au-Prince the first week of March 2010 to figure out how a cultural recovery project might work. I was at the time formulating the overall plan for Haiti's reconstruction, a plan that recognized the importance of culture in the representation of the Haitian people, as well as its centrality to our tourism industry—a major force in rebuilding the economy.

By the end of April, much work had been done by the Smithsonian with and among Haitian cultural institutions. I led a Government technical mission to the United States, holding discussions with leaders from the Departments of State and Commerce, U.S. AID, and others. With Richard, I discussed the historic role of the "monuments men," the U.S. Army unit authorized by President Roosevelt to recover and repatriate looted Nazi art after World War II. I envisioned the effort in Haiti in similar historic terms—a way of recovering our national memory by safeguarding the collections, archives, libraries, museums, and other markers of our national identity. Rescuing our cultural heritage was a form of empowerment, a means by which Haiti could reclaim and re-develop its spiritual legitimacy.

As we forged the initial agreement between the Government of Haiti and the Smithsonian, two things were foremost in my mind—consistent with our overall policy approach. First, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project would have to support the rebuilding and reconstruction of Haitian state institutions. The project would have to cooperate closely with Haitian officials charged with responsibilities for our cultural patrimony. The project would have to operate within the legal framework of Haiti, gaining permission from both public and private sector organizations to do its work. Second, the project would have to encourage the building and development of Haitian capacities to safeguard its cultural heritage. The employment and training of Haitians through the project was an important goal.

On behalf of the Smithsonian and the Government of Haiti, Richard and I signed a memorandum of understanding to proceed with the project on April 20, 2010. Haiti's Ambassador to the United States, Raymond Joseph, co-signed as a witness. I was pleased as Minister of Tourism and Chairman of the Emergency and Reconstruction Commission to initiate the partnership, to play a role in facilitating contacts between various associated organizations, and to ensure, on behalf of the Government, the smooth running of the project.
The first task, establishing a cultural recovery base, would be quite complicated, I realized. It was simply impractical to buy or rent tents, generators, portable toilets, flooring, and other equipment in the United States and ship them to Haiti. The backlog of materials for rescue and other forms of humanitarian assistance trying to get through Haiti’s Toussaint Louverture Airport, or by road from the Dominican Republic, or through Port-au-Prince’s damaged port was overwhelming. The cost of transport would be astronomical.

Bryan Lourd put me in touch with some of Sean Penn’s staff thinking that perhaps they had some tents we could use. Their tents were suitable for home shelters, not of the size we would need. In discussing with Rachel Goslins what to do, she referred me to someone she’d gotten to know, retired General Nolen Bivens. Nolen offered just the right combination of knowledge, for he was an experienced military guy involved in the arts. I explained what we needed and Nolen almost literally drew a roadmap for how to get it. We would seek the assistance of the Joint Task Force (JTF) of the U.S. Army Southern Command which was leading the military response in Haiti to see if they could provide tents, generators, flooring, air conditioners, fencing, and equipment for our work. Then, on land they occupied, or granted through the Haitian government, or even rented, we could operate a cultural recovery base. Scores of e-mails flew in the days before our trip to Haiti, moving up and through the chain of command and to different—and for me a bewildering—panoply of offices in the Defense Department and the Army until we made contact with the staff of Lt. General Keen, the Commander of the Joint Task Force, and arranged a meeting.

IN HAITI
Cori, Diana, and I, accompanied by Greg Borstede of the Department of State, arrived in Haiti on March 6 for key meetings with U.S. and Haitian officials and leaders. The State Department, through the Embassy, and in the person of Information Officer Shaila Manyam, was immensely helpful in providing a van and driver and arranging meetings in the Embassy, and with U.S. AID. We were grateful, given that staff in the Embassy had been working 24/7 for weeks, sleeping on floors, and were exhausted.

Substantively, it was clear that no cultural response was in place or even under consideration. There was even a question about whether a cultural recovery project was needed and whether it qualified as “humanitarian assistance.” As a cultural anthropologist I was a bit stunned—at least philosophically—for culture is what makes us human; but I well understood the regulatory and bureaucratic nature of such definitional issues. U.S. AID was involved in a massive assistance effort. I thought cultural aid might be a small, even tiny part of its recovery plans since the arts and handicrafts sector is so large in Haiti, and hundreds of thousands of people depend upon their creative produce for a living. Reviving that seemed to me to be a good, easy, clean, low investment way of re-kindling Haiti’s economy. We explored the possibility of U.S. AID supporting the recovery efforts at cultural sites through its “work for cash” program. U.S. AID was paying Haitians five dollars per day to shovel rubble so it could be taken away. We wondered if Haitians could be paid the same to shovel “cultural rubble” at the collapsed Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, so that it could be saved and reconstituted. It was not to be.
A meeting with General Keen at Camp Dragon, the JTF headquarters on land adjacent to the U.S. Embassy, proved to be more positive. Camp Dragon was an encampment of tents, generators, portable bathrooms, fencing, and equipment—just what we’d need for our cultural recovery base. The General was empathetic and accommodating. “Richard, we’d really like to help you,” he said. We talked about the military leaving some of its supplies and equipment in place in Haiti for the Smithsonian to use after the U.S. military re-deployed out of the country. All we’d have to do is arrange for the State Department to give the orders, since they were the lead agency in the Haiti response. And we’d just have to make sure that such an arrangement fell within the various laws and regulations that governed the use of the assets. In some cases, since the military contracts for rather than owns items, the issue would be to transfer contracts from the Defense Department to the Smithsonian. It seemed like a bureaucratic nightmare—but if doable, we’d get it done.

Meeting Haitian colleagues was of course the key to the trip. Arranging for Haitian artists to participate in the upcoming summer Smithsonian Folklife Festival was easy to do. We met with Georges Nader who had participated in 2004, and had ready recommendations. We met with Giselle Fleurant, who’d set up the crafts sales program at the Festival before, and she was again ready to help. We committed $25,000 on the spot to the buying of Haitian crafts to sell at the Festival Marketplace. This would immediately get craftspeople to work producing those goods. Georges told us about artists who wanted to paint, but couldn’t given the lack of brushes, canvases, and paints in the country. We immediately devised the idea of artists care packages and before we left, Georges had a list of precisely the brands and colors, and the types of brushes and canvases most needed by painters in Haiti. We’d go back to Washington, get the word out with the specifications, and people would send the care packages to Georges to distribute to artists.

We had the benefit of recent assessment reports of damages to cultural sites and collections compiled by UNESCO’s Fernando Brugman, ICOMOS President Gustavo Aroaz, and others. With Daniel Elie and Monique Rocourt, we visited sites like the National Cathedral, caved-in and rubble abounding—yet with its magnificent stained glass surviving. We climbed the rubble at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, with its surviving mural walls, wounded, yet, standing somewhat proudly and defiantly amidst the ruins. There was clearly rescue and recovery work to be done. Similarly with Nader’s collection of paintings—thousands upon thousands of which were stacked up with varying rents and tears, and the more damaged of which laid literally in shreds and pieces. With Smithsonian and AIC conservators, we clearly could be of help reclaiming these endangered treasures.

I looked at the paintings and saw them in rubble. I thought at first we wouldn’t be able to recover any of them. But then we started digging and we thought—it is possible to save them, we just needed some help.—Georges Nader, Nader Museum
We met with Minister Lassègue’s cultural advisor Magali Comeaux Denis. We discussed what we had in mind and how it might be done. She advised us to develop a proposal or memorandum of understanding that would fully involve the Haitian Government and meet its approval.

Meetings with Patrick Delatour, Olsen Jean Julien, and Patrick Vilaire, went well. Patrick Delatour was working on the big government plan for recovery and reconstruction, but as was his passion, vitally concerned about the survival of Haiti’s heritage collections and historical buildings. Patrick Vilaire was designing adaptations of sea containers, so they could be better used for storing collections of art and books. He was putting the sea containers on land near the airport, at a site run by Haiti Habitat and owned by the Mangonès family. Olsen was working with FOKAL—a Haitian non-governmental, Soros Foundation-affiliated cultural and educational organization—to save Haiti’s wooden, “gingerbread” houses. Both, Olsen and Patrick Vilaire, would help work on a cultural recovery project if we could muster the wherewithal to put it together. We met with Michèle Pierre-Louis, and Lorraine Mangonès, respectively the President and Executive Director of FOKAL. I knew both from 2004, and Michèle had gone on to serve as Prime Minister under President Préval. She was now again a private citizen. Both were dedicated cultural advocates and leaders. They encouraged a Smithsonian-led project that would necessitate the involvement of the Haitian government but that also addressed the pressing needs of numerous private museums, libraries, archives, and galleries. Lorraine indicated that we could use the land at the Haiti Habitat site for a cultural recovery base. I knew we would also need a fiscal agent in Haiti—a local organization, preferably a non-profit, that could contract for goods and services, keep a bank account, and provide fiscal oversight. FOKAL would be ideal for such a role, and they agreed. Before leaving Haiti we were able to stop at the Haiti Habitat site and scope out its potential use as a base. It was relatively flat land, had no electricity or other infrastructure, but had a good, potentially secure location—not far from the airport, but also off the beaten track. We’d need to secure the area, but if we received tents and flooring, generators, and other equipment from General Keen, it could work.
MOBILIZING THE MILITARY

NOLEN BIVENS

My role in helping the Smithsonian implement a cultural relief and recovery effort in Haiti began when I was introduced to Richard Kurin via e-mail by Rachel Goslins of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities in mid-February.

Richard sought my advice on what resources might be provided to such an effort by the U.S. military forces performing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Haiti—and how he could get their key logistical support.

The military’s role during this type of crisis is always “in support of” the priorities set by the U.S. State Department, and U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance. Their initial focus was search and rescue, and disaster relief. Given that the process for gaining military support can be lengthy, I knew building partnerships for the cultural recovery project would require rapid, concurrent, and multi-layered actions.

I immediately contacted the Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. Southern Command in Miami, Hubert Newman, to gain an appreciation of the operation in order to best advise the Smithsonian. To that end, I suggested the following key actions to Richard:

• Introduce the project concept and requests for support to the U.S. Department of Defense through U.S. State Department channels, and specifically the Office of the Secretary of State, prior to his initial assessment visit;
• Jump-start the inter-agency coordination process by including the U.S. Embassy in Haiti on all communiqués regarding the project;
• Simultaneously, contact the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Visitors Bureau in Port-au-Prince to arrange a meeting with the U.S. Commander, Joint Task Force Haiti, Lieutenant General Ken Keen to discuss logistical support assistance during his initial trip;
• Inform the U.S. Southern Command’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance representative of his effort to establish a cultural recovery project.

During his assessment trip to Haiti the first week of March, Richard met with several U.S. Government officials, including General Keen, David Lindwall (Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy), Mervyn Farroe (Supervisory Program Officer, U.S. Agency for International Development) and others to figure out what resources could possibly be applied to the project. This led to subsequent discussions in Washington with the U.S. State Department and requests to USSOUTHCOM to provide logistical assistance.

This site visit by the Smithsonian led to the identification of a site for a cultural recovery base, and for the provision of military logistics equipment to the Smithsonian, as U.S. troops withdrew from Haiti.

Unexpectedly though, the U.S. deployment was extended. We had to switch gears. Fortunately the contacts made proved adaptable. The Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVEC) was prepared to help out and identify an alternative location and help certify its safety.

Obtaining U.S. military assistance in a foreign country involves a formal multi-step request process starting with a host nation request and ending with an Executive Secretariat Memorandum to the U.S. Department of Defense. Achieving this is no easy feat. It depends upon quickly building successful partnerships and hinges on rapid actions executed simultaneously across the interagency domain. Partnership opportunities for projects exist via the U.S. security cooperation operations abroad that routinely interact with partner nations, other U.S government agencies and organizations in a “whole of government” fashion. Cultural operations are not typically included, but in this case, Haitian and U.S. Government support for the recovery effort enabled its success.

Brigadier General Nolen Bivens, U.S. Army (Retired), served as the Chief of Staff for U.S. Southern Command from 2006 to 2008. USSOUTHCOM is responsible for all U.S. military activities on the landmasses of Central and South America, the island nations of the Caribbean, and the surrounding waters south of Mexico. He is also a member of the Board of Directors for Americans for the Arts.
My first trip to Haiti was a revelation. Having served in the military for more than twenty years I have seen my share of poverty and destruction, but the combination was overwhelming. I was glad to be with Richard Kurin and Diana N’Diaye of the Smithsonian, both of whom had been to Haiti many times before, and Greg Borgstede from the U.S. Department of State. Richard and I had developed the basic plan of establishing an emergency cultural recovery center in Port-au-Prince and I had suggested we ask the U.S. military for help. Now we just had to convince everyone else the plan was feasible.

Upon arriving in Port-au-Prince we were met by U.S. Embassy staffer Shaila Manyam—her knowledge of the Haitian cultural community, and language skills proved invaluable. In just a few short days we visited a number of damaged cultural sites, including the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, the Nader Gallery and Museum, the National Cathedral, and several others. The murals at Holy Trinity Cathedral are my most vivid memory of that first visit. The faces of Jesus and the apostles staring out at me from Philomé Obin’s *Last Supper* seemed to be pleading for rescue.

A whirlwind of meetings ensued, starting at the U.S. Embassy, then on to Camp Dragon to meet with Lieutenant General P.K. Keen, Commander of Joint Task Force (JTF) Haiti. This was a particularly strange meeting for me—I had always been the one in uniform meeting with NGOs asking for help—now the tables were turned. We discussed borrowing equipment such as tents and generators that JTF Haiti might be able to leave behind and we left with a tentative agreement to work the deal through the U.S. Embassy and the U. S. State Department.

The most critical meetings of the trip took place with our Haitian colleagues, both in government and the cultural heritage community. Without their buy-in, our project could not go forward. Richard had many contacts in Haiti from producing the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and seemed to already know everyone. The Haitian response to our offer of help was very positive, but these would be just the first of many such meetings before we had a practical, viable plan, the resources to support it, and the agreement of Haitian and American partners needed to bring it to fruition.
At 5 p.m. on January 12, I was to inaugurate FOKAL's multimedia exhibit on Katherine Dunham's life and work in Haiti. That moment never came and, as of that night, FOKAL's offices remained closed for weeks. About six hundred refugees—among them a dozen of our employees—camped in the parking lot. We moved operations to the building where I rent an apartment, not far from the Foundation, and where the owner kindly let us use a room on the ground floor. All meetings were held under a tree in the yard where we were less panicked by aftershocks. We spent days and nights reaching out to friends, family, partner institutions, trying to bury the dead, count the living, and run rescue operations of all kinds. People from the arts and culture sector came to meet with us under the tree. Artists, intellectuals, cultural managers, all reeling from the sheer magnitude of it all, were trying to pull resources together.

One night, Olsen Jean Julien called Michèle Pierre-Louis and me to a meeting at the Olofsson Hotel with Richard Kurin, from the Smithsonian, and Corine Wegener, from the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield. To me, that night was the beginning of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. We trusted one another and we all saw the utter necessity of an immediate initiative that could rally public and private institutions, provide training, and help us develop protocols to organize future operations of conservation: an initiative that would effectively build a bridge out of the chaos.

Lorraine Mangonès is the Executive Director of FOKAL, the Foundation for Knowledge and Freedom (Fondation Connaissance et Liberté), an Open Society Foundation.

Establishing a collaborative partnership between Haitian and international institutions, public and private, was a major but necessary challenge for any project seeking to rescue Haitian cultural heritage in the face of the disaster. All the parties understood the priceless value of what had to be saved in these dramatic circumstances, and the risk of irreparable loss. They thus resolved to join together and undertake actions to save the things that mark our identity and reflect our culture.

The Smithsonian, a specialized, experienced, and well-intentioned institution, sought to save thousands of objects of our cultural and historical heritage devastated by the earthquake. To do so, as a “foreign” organization, it had to work with, and obtain the formal approval of Haitian government authorities. An initial authorization of the Ministry of Tourism, followed by a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Culture, secured the commitment of the public sector. This was absolutely crucial and allowed for subsequent partnerships which could then be formed to give shape to the effort. FOKAL agreed to act as fiscal agent. Private institutions such as the Nader Museum, the Centre d’Art, the Episcopal Cathedral, and the Sugar Cane Museum, subscribed to the project so as to benefit from the expertise of foreign specialists versed in methods and techniques of conservation and restoration, and to take advantage of the training opportunities offered to dozens of Haitians. Public institutions such as the National Pantheon Museum, the National Archives, National Library, and the Institute for the Protection of National Heritage, also agreed to participate, as did a number of international cultural organizations.

As the project developed it would have to rely on all the partners to participate and contribute to the whole effort and sustain the larger collective interest.

Michèle D. Pierre-Louis is the President of FOKAL, and served as Haiti’s Prime Minister.
At its best, heritage recovery is a collaborative effort among people and institutions sharing common values. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project is built upon this basic truth.

Involved at the very beginning of the project, I understood that a collaborative effort from four types of partners was crucial for this project to succeed: the Haitian Government, Haitian, U.S., and international institutions that could provide support to help in solving practical problems, the Haitian cultural agencies and private organizations which own collections, and the Haitian media. As Project Manager, by the means of a series of differentiated agreements and through constant, active communication, I bridged those four types of partners, so they could keep working together to help reach the project’s stated goals.

The Haitian Government, through the Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the Ministry of Tourism, played leadership roles in the definition of the project’s objectives and mechanisms. They each signed framework agreements for the project with the Smithsonian Institution. I also worked closely with both Ministers and their staffs, as well as the Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL) to define the procedures and create the instruments needed to solve complex administrative issues.

In Haiti collections belong to a large variety of private and public cultural institutions. After the earthquake there was no single approach all of these organizations took. Many pursued their own, different initiatives to save their collections. We wanted the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project to take into account the diversity of these approaches, and respond accordingly. This was absolutely necessary because we had no coercive power, no ability to force or command people to do what we wanted done or thought best to do. Therefore, we had to learn from each organization’s perspective, needs, experience, and post-earthquake initiatives to safeguard their collections. From the beginning of March to the end of May 2010, we visited and discussed the possible ways we could help many cultural institutions with collections endangered by the earthquake. This learning attitude was the key to forging the trust and to building the partnerships we needed on the ground in Haiti.

Among the organizations consulted were Haitian radio and television stations. With them we worked to address the problem of the recovery of cultural materials in audio-visual formats. This demonstrated that we valued their work as a cultural contribution to Haitian society. I would later hire two communication consultants to work with the Haitian media, and in turn, the media spread the word about the project. This built the momentum and educated the cultural sector and the general public about the importance of conserving cultural materials as part of Haiti’s reconstruction process.

Finally, as we devised training programs, I knew we would best succeed if we trained people who were already working with various cultural organizations. They would have some skills and also a knowledge of and commitment to the institution. Those institutions would see the training as an investment in their survival and improvement.

Overall, this strategy encouraged various partners to make great commitments. This would lead to not only saving Haitian cultural materials but also in enhancing a community of trust and cooperation—a key element of Haiti’s future economic and social development.

Olsen Jean Julien is the Manager of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. A Columbia University-trained historic architect, he served as the Coordinator for the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program on Haiti, and later served as Haiti’s Minister of Culture and Communication.
In destroying several cities, the 7.0 magnitude earthquake severely affected Haitian cultural heritage. The works kept at the Centre d’Art, the artisanal workshops of Jacmel, archives, libraries, the National Cathedral, the Church of the Saint King of France, and the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral all suffered incredible damage.

Saving this heritage was a huge task. The Government of Haiti had to react immediately and respond quickly to the emergencies of the hour. Haitians in the cultural sector saved what they could.

Gestures of sympathy came from around the world, from many people and institutions. Among the demonstrations of solidarity, the Smithsonian stood out for its offer of financial assistance to save movable cultural property endangered by the earthquake. The Ministry of Culture and Communication and the Smithsonian began serious discussions, and by April, I had a team working on the project, coordinating with the Smithsonian, and consolidating and guiding the Government’s interests and involvement. In early May, I travelled to Washington to meet with the Secretary of the Smithsonian, and U.S. cultural leaders including those from the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Arrangements were made and by May 24, I signed an agreement with the Smithsonian creating the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. This would lead to many steps and concrete actions to repair the cultural damage.

The Center’s purpose was to catalog, stabilize, secure, and restore works of art, artifacts, architectural elements, archives, books, films, videos, sound recordings, and other media damaged or endangered by the earthquake. The agreement provided for the Smithsonian Institution to manage the Center’s daily operations while also creating a steering committee composed of Directors-General of the five autonomous cultural agencies in the Minister’s portfolio—the heads of ISPAN, the National Library, the National Archives, the Bureau of Ethnology, and MUPANAH, the National Museum.

The plan was to work together for some eighteen months to achieve our objectives for the benefit of both public and private institutions, and their collections. It was a partnership destined to bear fruit.

Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue is Minister of Culture and Communication, Republic of Haiti. She formerly served as Minister of Women’s Affairs.
Within twenty-four hours after the Haitian earthquake, calls started flooding into my office with questions about “how we could help.” Our members were anxious to lend a hand. Ours is a compassionate and impatient industry composed of people who want action and want it now. So we had a board meeting and immediately approved the idea of making a donation for Haitian relief. Several other members quickly indicated a desire to add donations. One show, *Mamma Mia*, felt so strongly about the issue that they gave a portion of ticket sales to our fund.

The real issue was where to make the donation. I was charged with examining the many charitable causes being identified and I asked for recommendations from the Executive Committee. An Executive Committee member, Margo Lion, is Co-Chair of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and called with the idea of partnering with the Smithsonian. I loved the idea as it tied our donation to a cultural institution whose goal was to help save the culture of Haiti.

As Broadway is so much a part of New York, we are able to see and experience what culture means to a city. After September 11, it was clear how important Broadway was to the spirit of New York City when Mayor Rudy Giuliani worked with Broadway leaders to get Broadway back up and running. A vibrant robust culture signals that a city or country is fully alive and recovering. When I started canvassing our officers about the donation to the Smithsonian, we built consensus quickly as all felt that Haitian art was as important to the culture of Haiti as Broadway theatre is to New York City.

Working with the Smithsonian was as personal and easy as working with an institution can be. The communication they had with us was critical and later culminated with the trip to Haiti by our Chair, Vice-Chair, Margo, and me. It inspired us and we were able to bring back the message that our funds were truly going to a project that would take action and be relevant to arts, and culture.

Charlotte St. Martin is Executive Director of The Broadway League. The Broadway League is a 501(c)6 national trade association representing commercial theatre across the United States. Members represent the theatre owners, producers, and presenters of Broadway in 140 cities and 250 venues across the country.

There are many things the government does well in times of disaster; moving quickly on funding is not one of them, even when the desire and intent is there.—Rachel Goslins, Executive Director, President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities
BACK IN WASHINGTON

I returned to Washington confident that arrangements were falling into place. The project was needed, key Haitians would help arrange for, manage, and operate the project. We had a place for a base. Now I needed to get the State Department to give orders to the Defense Department to help us. And, we were going to need some money.

As it turns out, we got lucky. The day I returned from Haiti, First Lady Michelle Obama was coming to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History to donate her inaugural gown that would be mounted in the perennially popular First Ladies gallery. I briefed Wayne Clough on the Haiti trip, the results and our needs. He would have a few moments with Mrs. Obama and took the opportunity to brief her on our cultural recovery efforts and what we needed. She agreed to help.

This was especially opportune because President and Mrs. Préval were in Washington, visiting with President and Mrs. Obama and of course discussing the situation in Haiti. The next day, Elisabeth Préval came to my office at the Smithsonian Castle, and I was able to brief her on the project and also let her know what we needed from the Haitian side to make it work. As a promoter of Haitian culture with a background in business management, she understood how important and uplifting the project to save Haiti’s heritage could be. As a bonus, the National Museum of African Art had just acquired a larger-than-life sized sculpture of Toussaint Louverture created by the Senegalese artist Ousmane Sow. It was still in storage, being prepared for exhibition. Johnnetta Cole took Elisabeth Préval to see this inspirational work, which doubly lifted her spirits.

We now had both First Ladies on board.

In Washington, the State Department issued orders to General Keen to help the Smithsonian. In Haiti, the project began to gain official traction. Patrick Delatour came to Washington. On behalf of the Haitian Government and in his capacity as Minister of Tourism and Chair of the Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, he signed a memorandum of understanding creating the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. The Smithsonian would be responsible for financing the project and cooperate closely with Haitian authorities in identifying and treating heritage collections and sites, public and private, and doing so with the proper permissions in place. The Smithsonian agreed that training and capacity building was a vital component of the project. The project would run until November 1, 2011, which covered the emergency period of Patrick’s Commission. Following this, we began negotiating a parallel agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Communication detailing in more specific terms how the project would actually operate in Haiti, including a steering committee composed of the heads of the Haitian government cultural agencies that would help define, and prioritize projects of national significance.

Now I needed money.

Here again, the President’s Committee came through. Rachel Goslins suggested the Smithsonian in partnership with the Committee ask the other federal cultural agency heads to make discretionary grants to the project. Rocco Landesman, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts, Jim Leach, Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and Marsha Semmel, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, quickly agreed to make grants of $30,000 each. The funds would go to the American Institute for Conservation, which worked closely with IMLS on collections rescue and training. AIC would use the funds to support the travel and per diem costs of trained, volunteer conservators to deploy to Haiti to work at the cultural recovery base. It would also cover some costs of conservation supplies and equipment they could carry down in their luggage.

This was a start. Rachel identified a private group with close ties to Margo Lion—The Broadway League—as a possible large initial funder of the project.

I knew that whatever might happen with government funding, it would take at least months to put in place. The Department of State was developing a budget for a supplemental appropriations bill to submit to Congress. That bill would cover the funds needed and already expended by the U.S. military in the humanitarian relief operation. It would cover funds needed by the State Department, largely through U.S. AID, to provide support promised to Haiti for food, shelter, rubble clearing, government operations, and select infrastructural recovery projects. The proposed appropriation would be in the billions, and I was working with officials to try to secure a few million dollars for cultural relief and recovery. Nonetheless, even if successful, it would take time—and we needed to get started quickly as the rainy season in Haiti was fast approaching.

A private donor was needed, and I couldn’t have been prouder as a native New Yorker that it was Broadway that stepped forward to contribute $276,000 they had raised for Haitian relief following the earthquake. As people who went through the horrors of September 11, they deeply understood the role of culture in the social psychological recovery of a city, and thus reached out to help folks in Haiti cope with their tragedy.

Now all the elements were in place. On May 5, we scheduled a meeting in Washington to bring everyone together to announce the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. This would include Ministers Lassègue and Delatour from the official Haitian side—as well as Françoise Thybulle, the Director-General of Haiti’s
National Library, Wayne Clough, Margo Lion, Rachel Goslin, Jim Leach, Rocco Landesman, Marsha Semmel, and me from the official U.S. side. Also attending was Eryl Wentworth from the AIC, and leaders of The Broadway League and affiliated Shubert Organization, Paul Libin, Nina Lannan, Charlotte St. Martin, and Bob Wankel.

As we were meeting in Washington, Cori Wegener, Hugh Shockey, the Smithsonian’s head of engineering Mike Bellamy, and AIC conservators Vicki Lee and Susan Blakney were in Haiti, meeting with Olsen Jean Julien, who’d agreed to come on as the Project Manager, and examining and choosing a site in Port-au-Prince where we’d set up our operations.

Haitian and American cultural leaders along with leaders of The Broadway League gather to create the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. They included Bob Wankel, Paul Libin, Margo Lion, Nina Lannan, Rocco Landesman, Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, G. Wayne Clough, Patrick Delatour, Françoise Thybulle, Frantz Toussaint, Marsha Semmel, Jim Leach, Richard Kurin, and Rachel Goslin. Photo courtesy of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.
HELPING TO CONSERVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

MARSHA SEMMEL

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is an independent federal agency with a mandate to build the capacity of museums and libraries to serve their communities. IMLS has a long history of providing support for the care and preservation of all types of museum collections that represent our artistic, historic, and scientific heritage.

In 2003, the agency supported a landmark project, the Heritage Health Index, which was the first comprehensive survey of the state of our nation’s objects, documents, and digital materials. A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America’s Collections, was published in 2005, and its findings led to an IMLS-led initiative, Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action, which supported a series of regional, national, and international forums; a curated “bookshelf” (a twenty-three-text set of conservation must-reads and on-line resources) distributed to more than 3,000 museums and libraries around the United States and throughout the world; and a variety of grant programs, including planning and implementation grants to states for collaborative efforts among museums, libraries, and archives, to assess and address pressing conservation and preservation needs.

The agency has always supported the training of conservation professionals, and in the wake of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, IMLS provided funds to the American Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) to create the Conservation Emergency Response Team (CERT), a corps of specially trained conservators equipped to handle conservation challenges arising in the wake of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Hence, when the devastating earthquake hit Haiti, IMLS was eager to join the Smithsonian Institution, the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and the National Endowments of the Arts and the Humanities to be part of the U.S. efforts to rescue, recover, safeguard, and help restore Haiti’s cultural patrimony. We were proud that members of CERT joined conservators from the Smithsonian, and the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield in this vital work.

Marsha Semmel served as Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services. She is currently its Director for Strategic Partnerships.
As a conservator with disaster recovery experience, I expected my first trip to Haiti would be to salvage and triage collection items in the earthquake’s rubble. Instead, Richard Kurin had something a bit more complex in mind. He asked me to accompany a team of Smithsonian engineers on a trip to evaluate a building identified as a potential location for the Cultural Recovery Center, and also join with conservators from the AIC to assess the needs of cultural collections effected by the disaster.

Over a week of long days packed with visits to public and private cultural institutions, meeting with the stakeholders and learning about the needs of their collections, I was struck by how much cultural material the Haitians had already salvaged, ready for the next steps of recovery. Synthesizing my observations and the opinions of engineers, collections custodians, and conservation colleagues both in Haiti and in the United States, I recommended moving ahead with establishing a Cultural Recovery Center. It was clear to me that the Smithsonian could have a meaningful impact on Haiti’s cultural recovery.
As we were putting together the partnerships, the formal government agreements, and finding the funds to make the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project a reality, there was much work that had to be accomplished on the ground—locating and building out an operational cultural recovery base, arranging for the technical conservation expertise, hiring a staff, and making the needed logistical arrangements to make it all work.
PEOPLE, PLACE, AND MONEY
COME TOGETHER

We thought we had a military assistance solution to the recovery base, but that evaporated with the extended deployment of American troops. We had to find an alternative. Without military aid, operating out of tents with generators would have turned out to be too expensive and impractical. Good leads came our way, and in the end we were able to secure the former United Nations Development Program building and compound in the Bourdon area of Port-au-Prince for our use as a Cultural Recovery Center. Finding a modern building of the right size, in a good location, with strong security, and the proper climate control conditions was a big victory for the project. Of course we were concerned about the building’s structural integrity—it was only a few hundred yards from two major buildings—the upscale Montana Hotel, and the Hotel Christopher, serving as a home to U.N. staff—both of which had collapsed, killing hundreds. U.S. Navy and Smithsonian engineers conducted their tests and assessments, and found the building sound. It had been designed by a Haitian architect who had studied methods of concrete use in Germany.

Smithsonian staff strongly advised that we needed an ongoing, continual supervisory presence in Haiti to define, oversee, and implement professional standards in the project’s substantive conservation work. We needed a chief conservator who would live and work in Haiti, and do so under trying, fluid circumstances. The person would have to be fluent in French to communicate with the Haitian media, and do the thousands of other things necessary to make the project work.

That person was Stephanie Hornbeck. Stephanie had retired from her Smithsonian position as Conservator with the National Museum of African Art at the beginning of January—a week before the earthquake. She’d relocated to Miami. After the earthquake, Stephanie e-mailed me—she’d heard that we were organizing a cultural conservation project as a response. She’d worked for the Smithsonian Festival in 2004, and had done a fantastic job attending to every detail of the complex production—obtaining passports and visas for more than 150 Haitian participants, arranging transportation and transport for exhibition materials and commercial goods, ordering tents and sound systems, developing presentations, dealing with meals and hotel rooms, coordinating technical, publication, and presentational needs, and overseeing scores of staff and volunteers daily. Fluent in English and of course French and Kreyòl, she well knew American and Haitian sensibilities and concerns.

Solid and firm in demeanor, with a joyful disposition, and a wonderful sense of irony, there was no more perfect person to run the Center. He had to hire staff, rent vehicles, arrange improvements on the building, communicate with the Haitian media, and do the thousands of other things necessary to make the project work.

Cori Wegener too kept up her involvement, helping to establish trust among Haitian cultural institutions during the course of various visits in the lead-up to the Center’s opening. She proved invaluable in negotiating with the military, helping to establish the Center, coordinating with ICCROM, Blue Shield, and other international organizations, advising on operations, and informing many others of our progress.

Cori, Olsen, Stephanie, and I e-mailed each other hundreds, maybe thousands of times during the course of the project. Clear, professional, committed, and focused, we sought to get the Center opened by June 1, less than five months after the earthquake. Not a speedy response, but, given the situation, a respectable one.

The key leadership of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center at its inception in June 2010 includes Training Coordinator Fritz Berg Jeannot, Registrar Carmelita Doby, Chief Conservator Stephanie Hornbeck, Office Manager Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor, and Manager Olsen Jean Julien. Photo courtesy of Stephanie Hornbeck.
Although it may sound obvious, it is very important in forming partnerships to focus on what each partner can do best. In Haiti, it was very clear that the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) could mobilize volunteers, and also had access to a great deal of expertise in equipping and supplying conservation laboratories. This became our focus in the partnership. At the same time, we had to let go of trying to control many other factors—calendars, choice of housing, which collections would be worked on, etc.

The Smithsonian Institution paved the way for funding and working with various branches of the Haitian government. The U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield built relationships with international organizations as well as the U.S. military. As we learned to trust each organization’s expertise, everything began to get easier.

By the end of March, FAIC had submitted an emergency funding request to the National Endowment for the Humanities, followed up by requests to the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. On May 3, two AIC-CERT volunteer conservators, Susan S. Blakney and Vicki Lee, accompanied Corine Wegener to Port-au-Prince to assess the situation and scout possible work sites. The real work had begun.

AIC Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT) volunteers Susan Blakney, Nicholas Dorman, David Goist, Hitoshi Kimura, Vicki Lee, Karen Pavelka, and Beverly Perkins, helped to assess, set up, and equip the conservation laboratories at the new Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. Later FAIC supported trips by Rosa Lowinger and Viviana Dominguez, to evaluate the murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

This early work was as much about fundraising and friend raising as it was about recovery of materials. It was very important to demonstrate to the Haitian government and those responsible for collections that serious and well-informed work could be done, and would be done with respect for the material, the artists, and the owners. It was also important to demonstrate to funders that the concept of the Cultural Recovery Center was sound. It would undoubtedly have been more cost-effective to ship materials to fully-equipped conservation laboratories and storage facilities in the U.S., but it was clearly important that Haiti’s cultural heritage remain accessible to the Haitian people, particularly during such a time of crisis and loss.

Working in partnership had its costs—in control over the work as well as in public visibility. However, the partnerships allowed us all to get “boots on the ground” much more efficiently and effectively than if we had worked alone.
SEEKING A CULTURAL RECOVERY BASE

CORINE WEGENER

In late March 2010, I returned to Haiti with Mike Bellamy, the Smithsonian Institution’s Director of Engineering and Construction. Our mission was to make the final site selection for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.

We looked at the Haiti Habitat site Richard Kurin and I had seen on our first trip as well as Camp Dragon, the JTF Command Center adjacent to the U.S. Embassy where we’d met General Keen. But we really had set our sights on the U.S. military logistical base at Toussaint Louverture International Airport. It gave us size, ease of access, and plenty of security.

Given discussions between the Smithsonian, the President’s Committee, and the State Department, orders had been issued. The military was in agreement and the site was ready to go, complete with tents, generators, showers, and other facilities, all within a well-fenced area. It was perfect!

Unfortunately, the next day we learned that the U.S. military mission in Haiti had been extended. General Keen would need to keep his sites and equipment for several additional months. Day two of our mission and we were back to the drawing board!
In May, I was back in Haiti to formally sign our agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Communication. Marie-Laurennce Lassègue and I had not known each other before the development of the project, but had now developed a healthy mutual respect and appreciation, and she was able to cut through a lot of bureaucracy that threatened to hold us back. I met with President and Mrs. Préval at their home to update them on the project. And with Olsen and Patrick Delatour, was able to examine the building being readied to become the Cultural Recovery Center.

At the Smithsonian we put formal agreements in place with both AIC and ICCROM and arranged initial funding using The Broadway League donation. AIC conservators were deployed to Haiti to help do site and collections assessments, and build trust among cultural institutions. ICCROM specialists Aparna Tandon and Baba Keita joined them to scope out training requirements and strategies, so we could be ready once we were established.

With FOKAL, we’d developed an agreement for them to be our fiscal agent in Haiti. We now had a pipeline for the transfer of funds and for the Center’s needed procurement of goods and services.

The President’s Committee continued to be a crucial partner. With its help and advocacy, two million dollars were included in the State Department’s request for a supplemental appropriation from Congress for overall Haitian relief. Not having the funds yet in hand to apply to the project’s costs, the Smithsonian advanced the funds with the approval and support of Secretary Clough and our mission-enabling Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, Alison McNally.

We planned a trip to Haiti in early July to be led by the Secretary and to include members of the President’s Committee, The Broadway League, and others, so they too could visit the cultural sites and collections, see the Cultural Recovery Project in operation, meet with Haitian cultural colleagues, and appreciate their efforts had made possible.

We were hoping to be able to show progress at the Center. Olsen, working with our landlord Samir Handal, had readied the facility. Stephanie, Cori, Hugh, Vicki, and others had set up the conservation studios. Olsen had a Haitian support staff in place. Working with FOKAL’s Lorraine Manganès, and Fiscal Officer Vanessa Gostomy, funds were in place to pay for salaries and operations. Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor, the Office Manager, had rented vehicles, procured hotel rooms for visiting conservators, and made other arrangements. We produced a brochure in English, French, and Kreyòl describing the work the Center would do, and distributed it broadly to cultural institutions in Haiti.

Now, all we needed were items to treat and conserve.

WORK BEGINS AT THE CULTURAL RECOVERY CENTER

The first objects came in from Georges Nader—five paintings, two by Haitian master artist Héctor Hyppolite. The Smithsonian’s Gail Joice from the National Museum of the American Indian working with Center Registrar Carmelita Douby, registered the items and obtained permission to treat them. Working over the weekend and up to the time he flew out of Port-au-Prince, AIC Conservator Hitoshi Kimura restored the painting Un Beau Rêve by Celestine Faustin. These items were closely followed with objects from the Sugar Cane Museum—a damaged Taino artifact restored by Hugh Shockey and an eighteenth century document relating to the battle plans of Haitian revolutionary leader Alexandre Pétion treated by Vicki Lee.

In July, Margo Lion, Vice-Chair Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ricky Arriola, Pamela Joyner, Olivia Morgan, Ken Solomon, Marsha Semmel, Rachel Goslins, and staffer Traci Slater-Rigaud of the President’s Committee, Chair Paul Libin, Past-Chair Nina Langan, and Executive Director Charlotte St. Martin of The Broadway League, as well as Bill Hillman of the Affirmation Arts Fund, along with Secretay Clough and me, traveled to Haiti visiting the sites of the National Cathedral, Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, the Centre d’Art, and the Nader Museum, they were struck by the devastation. Though amidst the overwhelming rubble and refugee camps, all were buoyed by the sounds of music coming from exuberant students at the remains of the Holy Trinity Cathedral as the children practiced for a concert. Culture clearly was alive and vibrant in the young.

The group was hosted by President and Mrs. Préval at their temporary home. All of our partners, stakeholders, staff, and conservators attended, along with U.S. Ambassador Ken Mertens and others. Again, it was way way off Broadway, but the delegation was happy to watch a performance by a Haitian youth group. The next day, the group toured the Center to examine treatments in progress and discuss them with Stephanie Hornbeck, David Goist, Beverly Perkins, and Karen Pavelka. We had an instructive meeting with Haitian cultural leaders and supporters including Patrick Delatour, Michèlle Pierre-Louis, Lorraine Manganès, David Cesar, and many others. It was a fine opportunity to review the Cultural Recovery Project’s assumptions, strategies and goals.

We were now firmly up and running.
SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE, SAFE, AND SECURE BUILDING

MIKE BELLAMY

I first met with Richard Kurin in early March to discuss the facilities requirements needed to establish a Cultural Heritage Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince. I felt well equipped for the task given my prior professional experience as a civil engineer with the Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) in the Caribbean Region, and was acutely aware of the significant logistical challenges we were certain to face in the wake of the earthquake. Shortly after our initial discussion, and at Richard’s request, I attended a seminar at the University of Miami which focused on the scientific and engineering aspects of Haiti’s reconstruction. At that event, I had the good fortune to meet Professor Reginald DesRoches, a Haitian-American and Associate Chair of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology, who was actively working in Haiti. The insights he shared with me at the seminar, and at a subsequent meeting in Washington, D.C., provided a valuable technical overview of the prevailing structural conditions in Port-au-Prince.

In Port-au-Prince, when initial plans to use the U.S. Southern Command’s Joint Task Force Haiti base at the airport fell through, Cori Wegener and I sought other options. Our military liaison, LTC Sovie, sent us to Robert Taylor, a NAVFAC Realty Specialist. He in turn recommended that we visit the former United Nations Development Program (UNDP) compound in the Bourdon area of Port-au-Prince. The three buildings in this compound had been built to a higher standard as compared to other facilities in Haiti and had withstood the earthquake with relatively minor damage. The site met our needs and we selected the site and one of the buildings for the Cultural Heritage Recovery Center, pending a comprehensive technical inspection and structural analysis.

For this purpose, I assembled and led a cross-functional technical team for the inspection comprised of the following individuals from the Smithsonian’s Offices of Planning and Project Management, and Engineering, Design and Construction, and Occupational Safety Health and Environmental Management: Ed Rynne (Associate Director for Real Estate), Evi Oehler (Architect), Ramy Bindra (Mechanical Engineer), Hung Nguyen (Electrical Engineer), and Mark Wright (Fire Protection Engineer). The team traveled to Haiti during the first week of May. My Administrative Assistant, Veronica Shaw, provided critical support during the entire initiative.

After an intensive week long review of the former UNDP compound by the team, in coordination with NAVFAC’s Taylor and structural engineer Bobby G. Grissett, we were able to ensure that the Cultural Heritage Recovery Center would be housed in a safe, secure, and fully functional facility, and be ready for occupancy.

Mike Bellamy is Director of the Smithsonian’s Office of Engineering, Design and Construction.
Although better known for its constellation of renowned museums and research centers, the Smithsonian Institution leases dozens of other properties, principally in the United States, but also in selected locations internationally. Leasing a building in post-earthquake Haiti, which was both structurally safe and functionally useful, had its particular and unique challenges, given the widespread devastation we found in Port-au-Prince.

Prior to traveling to Port-au-Prince, I held detailed discussions with senior officials within the Department of State's Overseas Building Operations Group and the Department of Homeland Security, as well as a Naval Facilities Command Realty Specialist posted to Haiti, to develop a lease document appropriate for this international initiative.

Once we determined that the building and compound met our technical needs and specifications, we had to negotiate a lease agreement with the owner of the property, Samir Handal, a builder and businessman active in Haiti for over twenty years. Also, we had to discuss and arrange for needed security enhancements, such as barbed wire and security bars on windows, given that the building would house Haiti's national cultural treasures. Having Smithsonian and AIC conservators present during the technical review gave me a better idea of other modifications needed for the labs and studios. Interior climate control was a critically important issue, as the public power available was both intermittent and unpredictable, and therefore inherently unreliable. Since the building was served by aged generators, we arranged for Samir to provide new ones—which only weeks later he was able to ship in from Canada.

The final negotiation of the lease agreement occurred during a series of lengthy discussions with Samir over a three day period, and included provisions for providing furniture, utilities, and compound security. We negotiated a fixed monthly payment for rent and the use of two generators, and fixed rates for furniture and security. These costs totaled about $23,000 a month. We agreed to pay for fuel by amount used, and estimated this would amount to about $14,000 a month.

Since Richard Kurin had a very limited amount of funding in place at the outset of the project, I structured the terms of the lease agreement accordingly to give us the needed flexibility, and had it in place so that we could open our doors at the beginning of June.

Ed Rynne is the Smithsonian Institution’s Associate Director for Real Estate.
ESTABLISHING THE PROJECT’S CENTRE DE SAUVETAGE DE BIENS CULTURELS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

OLSEN JEAN JULIEN

At the beginning, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project faced a very basic dilemma. Should we have a central place or should we improve the physical conditions of existing buildings at different cultural institutions? We opted for a central place for at least two reasons. First, many of the buildings were very badly damaged by the earthquake and second, we urgently needed a project operational center to focus on the artworks and create the minimal conditions for coordination of recovery activities, conservation treatment, training, and storage.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Center (HCRC)—Centre de Sauvetage de Biens Culturels as it is known to Haitians, took definite shape when the former United Nations Development Program (UNDP) headquarters building was identified in Bourdon. Structural engineers who visited this building after the earthquake agreed that it was one of the best facilities available in Port-au-Prince.

On May 4, I started working with a team of architects, structural and mechanical engineers, conservators, curators, security consultants, and managers to perform a deep inspection of every aspect of the space. We found a structurally sound building of 700 square meters and about a 1,000 square meter walled and gated courtyard.

During four working days envisioning the best possible use of the available facility, we figured out a way to accommodate storage spaces, offices, classrooms for training, and three basic conservation treatment studios for paintings, objects, and works on paper. On their report, the team also recommended many basic improvements for the electrical, hydraulic, fire safety, security, and air conditioning systems.

The owner of the facility, Samir Handal, agreed to implement the recommended improvements and the lease agreement was signed.

As early as the first week of June, we needed to hire the Cultural Recovery Center staff in order to organize the work with all the project’s partners and to perform, as a team, a series of important tasks. I started to hire a basic team of people including an administrative assistant, an office manager, a registrar, a training coordinator, two drivers, and three housekeepers. The Smithsonian also contracted with Stephanie Hornbeck to be the Chief Conservator to oversee the conservation activities and organize the participation of conservators coming from the Smithsonian, and the American Institute for Conservation.

We turned our attention to the cultural rescue and recovery of materials from cultural sites and collections. To do this we had to involve Haitian, American, and international experts and secure the goods and services necessary for the viability of the project. In managing the HCRC we needed to keep complete and accurate fiscal records of our purchases of materials and services. But operating after the earthquake was difficult in Port-au-Prince. We had trouble finding vehicles to rent, let alone to buy. We developed good relations with the few hotels that were open to house people, and eventually spent six months to find a house for the visiting international conservators. We needed good shelving—but nothing was for sale—so we had it specially built.

Nonetheless, with the initial team in place we were able to organize, and on June 1, I was able to say that the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center was open for business.

The help offered by the Smithsonian could not have come at a better time. In March, a group from the Institution travelled to Haiti and visited the site where the remaining of the Museum stood. This visit was followed by an offer to restore some of our masterpieces including two paintings from Hector Hyppolite, one of Haiti’s most renowned artists, dating from the 1940s. The role played by the Smithsonian in restoring key paintings was indispensable as these specifically required expertise and materials that, unfortunately, were lacking in Haiti.

—Georges Nader, Jr.

Georges Nader and Olsen Jean Julien look over scores of damaged paintings. Photo by Corine Wegener
After hearing the plight of Haiti, as a paintings conservator, I was on pins and needles for months, longing to be deployed due to my training as an AIC CERT responder. By May 4, I found myself en route to Port-au-Prince with a team of engineers and two other specialist conservators, Hugh Shockey and Vicki Lee, to determine the extent of damaged cultural collections, and access a building deemed suitable for the Cultural Recovery Center.

The magnitude of devastation I witnessed in the five days I spent in Haiti was overwhelming by comparison to my experience on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Galveston, Texas after our nation’s massive disasters. Our initial meeting with Haitian officials drove home the need to tell the world their patrimony was not lost, and their future livelihood which hung in the balance also depended on saving their cherished collections of art and artifacts. They were a nation of artists whose work not only recorded their struggle for independence but were a major factor in employment and tourism driving the nation’s economic engine.

With Olsen Jean Julien and Corine Wegener as our guides we spent our days visiting a dozen important collections. Criss-crossing the city in two vehicles, weaving our way through massive piles of rubble and debris, we witnessed people camping out and conducting business for survival on every available nook and cranny. You could see numerous tent cities, thousands of make-shift shelters, workers scavenging debris, roadside vendors offering hot and cold food, as well as necessities, and art hanging on walls for sale. Crowds forever waiting in line were around every corner. Their love of art was evident in murals and colorful bus transports—“tap-taps”—of every size and shape traversing the streets as the business of survival was in full gear. Schools were reopening and mothers beamed with pride, escorting colorfully dressed children in unbelievable spotlessly clean and pressed uniforms.

The staff of every collection we visited had made heroic efforts to save their collections. With few available supplies, they rapidly rescued and stored what they could to await future treatments. Our advice was eagerly sought and needed because there was no history of preservation in the country. In thirty-five years of practice, I saw more damaged art than ever before. In one collection of over 12,000 paintings—that of the Nader Museum, stacks of seventy-five to hundreds of paintings removed from their broken stretchers were piled high like pancakes. Although concrete dust covered every surface, and while paint was flaking due to impact damage, and canvases torn and solid supports in fragments, I knew they could be brought back to exhibition condition.

I fell in love with Haitians’ colorful creations laced with a mélange of social history, Vodou traditions, and Christianity. Upon returning home we three wrote lengthy reports summarizing our findings and recommendations for each collection’s pressing needs. The suggested recovery center building met our dreams and we made recommendations for its layout, suggested equipment, and materials. My experience of Haiti is forever burned into my memory. Haitian art is a national treasure, and we must continue to help them save it.

Susan Blakney is an AIC, IIC Fellow and Chief Conservator of West Lake Conservators in Skaneateles, NY.
PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Susan Blakney, a paintings conservator from New York, scrambled up a mound of rubble left by the collapse of the Episcopal Holy Trinity Cathedral here, searching for small shards of the cathedral’s murals.

The cathedral is a cherished part of this country’s cultural heritage and most of its murals were destroyed in the earthquake that struck here in January. Two from the north transept, though, one depicting the Last Supper and the other the baptism of Christ, remain largely intact.

“It looks like there are some chunks underneath here,” Ms. Blakney, 62, yelled to colleagues working with her last Thursday in an effort to save thousands of works of art damaged in the quake.

The rescue is being organized by the Smithsonian Institution, which is to open a center here in June where American conservators will work side-by-side with Haitian staff members to repair torn paintings, shattered sculptures and other works pulled from the rubble of museums and churches.

Haitian artists and cultural professionals have been conducting informal salvage operations for the past four months. But the Americans are bringing conservation expertise — there are few if any professionally trained art conservators in Haiti — and special equipment, much of it paid for by private money.

The initiative, in its swiftness, its close collaboration with a foreign government and its combination of private and government financing, represents a new model of American cultural diplomacy, one that organizers believe stands in stark contrast to the apathy Americans were left by the collapse of the Episcopal Holy Trinity Cathedral.

The cathedral is a cherished part of this country’s cultural heritage and most of its murals were destroyed in the earthquake that struck here in January. Two from the north transept, though, one depicting the Last Supper and the other the baptism of Christ, remain largely intact.

"Mistakes have been made in the past, in times of great tragedy or upheaval, by not protecting and prioritizing a country’s cultural heritage," said Rachel Goslins, the executive director of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, which has been involved in finding money for the project. "I think this is a huge opportunity for us to say, 'We get it.'"

The initial financing is coming from three federal agencies and the Broadway League, the trade group for theater owners and producers. Smithsonian officials say the project will cost $2 million to $3 million over the next year and a half, after which the center is expected to be turned over to the Haitian government.

Ms. Blakney traveled here last week with two other conservators, a museum curator, and a group of engineers and planning experts from the Smithsonian. The conservators’ task was to assess precisely what kinds of damage the art had sustained, not just from the earthquake but from subsequent exposure to rain and sun and from improper storage both before and after the quake. Based on that information, they will decide what specialized equipment that they, or whoever the Smithsonian ends up sending to work at the center, will need.

Restoring the most compromised art will not be a job for beginners. If the Episcopal Church decides to save the surviving murals from Holy Trinity, which were painted in the early 1950s by some of Haiti’s most famous artists, they will probably need to be removed from the damaged building — a feat of engineering as much as conservation that would involve gluing a piece of fabric to the face of each mural and attaching the mural to a secondary support structure of plywood or steel before chiseling it away from the wall.

In her search through the rubble, Ms. Blakney found some small pieces of painted concrete that have now been brought to the Smithsonian for an analysis that will help to determine the right adhesive to use.

The American conservators will spend part of their time training Haitians in conservation, in preparation for turning the laboratory over to them.

The rescue operation came together largely because of the efforts of Corine Wegener, a curator at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and a retired Army major who served in Iraq shortly after the looting of the Iraqi National Museum, and Richard Kurin, the under secretary for history, art and culture at the Smithsonian Institution. Three weeks after the earthquake, Ms. Wegener convened a meeting of art professionals and State Department officials in Washington about how to provide cultural assistance, and invited Mr. Kurin, who had already tied to Haiti from organizing programs on Haitian art and culture for the Smithsonian’s Folklife Festival in 2004.

Ms. Wegener, who also made the trip last week, said she had been horrified by what had happened at the Iraqi National Museum, where she worked as a liaison between staff members and American officials during her deployment. “It was so disturbing for me as a museum professional to see the staff so completely in shock,” she said. “How would I feel if I came to work one day and found 15,000 objects had been looted?” She was determined not to see history repeat itself in Haiti, she said, and believed that the sooner conservators arrived on the ground, the more artworks could be saved.

Mr. Kurin conveyed the need for help to Ms. Goslins of
the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, a group that includes the heads of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as well as well-connected art patrons like the Broadway producer Margo Lion, who is a co-chairman of the committee. The three agencies ended up committing $30,000 each, while the Broadway League, of which Ms. Lion is a member, contributed $276,000.

As for the rest of the money that’s needed, Ms. Goslin expressed confidence that it would materialize once the center was operating.

“We’ve been having conversations with both the federal and the private sector about further support,” Ms. Goslin said, “and I’m optimistic that once we get through the initial urgent phase of getting this up and running, we’ll be able to see the project through.”

The conservators and Ms. Wegener spent four days here, visiting museums, churches and libraries, accompanied by Olsen Jean Julien, a former minister of culture and communication, who is acting as an intermediary between the Smithsonian and the Haitian government.

They visited the ruins of the Musée d’Art Nader, a private museum that before the earthquake housed 12,000 paintings and sculptures by 20th-century Haitian masters like Hector Hyppolite and Préfête Duffaut, thousands of which were either destroyed or badly damaged when the museum collapsed. They also saw what was left of the Centre d’Art, a workshop where many of those artists trained in the 1940s and 1950s, which also collapsed. In the weeks after the earthquake, volunteers pulled thousands of paintings from the wreckage, which were stashed inside two storage containers parked in the sun in front of the ruined building.

Some of the Haitian officials and cultural professionals with whom the group met were hearing about the conservation center for the first time, and responded with relief and many questions, like when it would be open and how much money was being set aside.

The American aid is “fundamental for us,” said Patrick Vilaire, a sculptor, who took the lead in saving the collections of several damaged libraries after the earthquake.

A few, however, expressed frustration that aid had not come sooner and a worry that foreign experts were better at conducting visits and assessments than providing real, practical help.

At a meeting with Daniel Elie, the head of the government agency in charge of preserving Haiti’s national heritage, the discussion in front of the plywood shack from which he and his staff have operated since January turned momentarily tense when his colleague and translator, Monique Rocourt, said she was fed up with hosting visiting advisers who came and did nothing.

“If I bring another team of experts to Jacmel,” she said, referring to a city in southern Haiti that was seriously damaged in the quake, “we will look in front of the population like we’re just bringing foreigners to look at disasters. It’s cynical, but that’s what people will think.”

Ms. Wegener is sensitive to such concerns, she said on another occasion. She noted that this was her third trip to Haiti since the earthquake. “We’re showing a constant presence,” she said, “and now we’re bringing people who are specialists.”

At the same time, Ms. Wegener and her colleagues appeared anxious not to seem like cultural imperialists, frequently repeating that they wanted to know first what the Haitians wanted to do.

Occasionally, their efforts clearly seemed like overkill to some of the people they encountered. When Ms. Wegener suggested to two members of a foundation that supports Vodou art that they write a proposal outlining what the Americans could do to help, one of the two practically rolled her eyes.

“Everyone is coming here and asking us for a proposal,” the woman, Rachel Beauvoir-Dominique, said. “You write us a proposal.”

Ms. Wegener, anxious to explain, said that they did not want to create the impression “that we’re telling you what you want.”

“Don’t worry about that,” Ms. Beauvoir-Dominique’s husband, Didier Dominique, interrupted, adding with a smile, “We know what we want.”
FROM BUILDING TO RECOVERY CENTER

CORINE WEGENER

Leasing the former UNDP building for the Cultural Recovery Center was a big step and meant that our plans could move forward. The three-story building was relatively undamaged by the earthquake. With modern electrical systems, plumbing, and central air-conditioning, all within a secure compound on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, it was perfect.

Working with Olsen Jean Julien, I, and Mike Bellamy, along with his team and a small group of AIC and Smithsonian conservators, took on the task of planning the transformation of our empty building into the Cultural Recovery Center (CRC), complete with offices, laboratories, and classroom space.

The rest of May, Richard Kurin was busy raising funds and hiring staff while I worked with the American Institute for Conservation on setting up a volunteer conservator rotation system. We needed French speakers if possible, and lots of paintings conservators. We also needed a registrar. Endless details such as liability, health insurance, and security had to be hammered out.

In late May, the first group of conservators from AIC and the Smithsonian met me at conservator Stephanie Hornbeck’s apartment in Miami, the staging area for all of our conservation supplies. After packing three large duffle bags each, plus new laptop computers, we headed for the airport. That arrival in Port-au-Prince with conservators and mountains of baggage in tow remains one of my best memories. What had seemed impossible during that February meeting in Washington, D.C., was finally a reality—the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center opened for business on June 1!

SUPPLYING THE CENTER

ERIC POURCHOT

Early conservation work at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center by American Institute for Conservation (AIC) volunteers was a frustrating and sometimes near-comical endeavor.

Paintings conservator David Goist fashioned a makeshift hammer out of a piece of pipe. Book and paper conservator Karen Pavelka used an upside-down credenza as a book press. Because flammable liquids cannot be carried on airlines, beauty salons in Port-au-Prince were scoured for supplies of acetone—a solvent used in conservation work that is also used to remove nail polish. Work was initially slow and hampered by lack of equipment and supplies. Storage containers secured thousands of works of art from loss and further mechanical damage, but also created hot and humid conditions that would inevitably lead to mold. The clock was ticking.

With each group of volunteers, however, additional supplies and equipment were brought in—checked or carried as luggage. One conservator brought a sixty-inch long roll of lining cloth in a duffel bag. Another carried a HEPA vacuum cleaner. Hundreds of respirator masks padded a box of glass jars. Richard Kurin tucked a microscope into his carry-on bag. Conservators also carried a lot of what some might call “suspicious white powders”—adhesives, abrasives, micro-balloons used to fill missing areas, waxes, and cleansers—but product descriptions were enclosed and everything arrived safely in Haiti.
CONSERVATION SUPPLIES

A SMALL SAMPLE FROM THE CENTER’S INITIAL LIST OF 213 ITEMS

FIRST STAGE NEEDS

| Equipment—Safety          | Extract—All Model S–987–2A /Castors/HEPA & Charcoal Filters |
| Equipment—Environment    | Dehumidifiers                                              |
| Equipment—Examination     | Optivisors—Magnification 2.5 x 8 WD                       |
| Equipment—Cleaning        | Shop Vacuum—wet/dry                                        |
| Equipment—Labs            | Fatigue Mats                                               |
| Equipment—Storage         | 30 fluted gray 4’ x 8’ sheets                              |
| Equipment—Office          | File cabinets—2 drawer                                     |
| Tools                     | Hack Saw                                                   |
| Tools—Environment         | Digital DAT Logger—Luminance/UV/Temp/Humidity              |
| Tools—Cleaning            | PH meters                                                   |
| Tools—Lining              | 4” Speedball Brayer                                        |
| Tools—Tear Repair         | Tiny Sharp Scissors                                        |
| Safety—Equipment          | Fire Extinguishers for every room                          |
| Safety—Protection         | N95 Masks 20 per pack/41453                                |
| Safety—Respirator         | 3m Half Face Respirators (Sm, Med, Large)                  |
| Labware—Cleaning          | Solvent Bottles 250ML, 100ML, 40ML                        |
| Materials—Safety          | Activated Carbon, High Activity (CTC60)                   |
| Materials—Adhesives       | Fish Gelatin                                               |
| Materials—Cleaning        | TEC005001 Colophast PH indicators                           |
| Materials—Facing          | TPB005002 Wet strength tissue 40”x150’                    |
| Materials—Lining          | Mylar Film 0.5mil, 63” x 40” yds.                           |
| Materials—Storage         | TPB010101 60 x 300’ Roll Glassine                          |
| Solvent—Cleaning          | Isopropyl Alcohol 5 gal                                    |
| Aqueous—Cleaning          | TCD120003 Ammonium Citrate Dibasic 1 lb                    |
| Adhesives—Lining          | Beva 371 Film—2.5mil 27” x 25’                              |
| Adhesives—Consolidation   | TAB016003 Methyl Cellulose LB                              |

[Right] Conservators packed supplies for the Cultural Recovery Center in their luggage. Photo by L. H. Shockey, Jr./Smithsonian

[Far right] A supply cabinet for a conservation studio at the Center. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian
The short time between the first exploratory trip and my second trip to begin operations at the Cultural Recovery Center was frantic. Lists of needed supplies and equipment were created by conservators who participated in the first visit. A portion of my days were spent trying to find a French-speaking registrar to help establish a cataloging system for the works expected from cultural collections. It was also necessary to find a French-speaking chief conservator who could define and organize the technical work and oversee the labs and personnel in Haiti on an ongoing, daily basis.

By good fortune, I found a colleague, Gail Joice, at the National Museum of the American Indian. Gail speaks French and had experience establishing registration systems for Native American community museums—a great fit for our needs in Haiti. She was more than willing to go to Haiti and help initiate the registration system.

The chief conservator role was absolutely crucial—and in planning meetings we realized that we needed someone with the technical expertise who would live and work in Haiti, providing continuity for the Center’s conservation program. Conservation colleague Carol Grissom from the Museum Conservation Institute referred Stephanie Hornbeck, a recently retired conservator from the National Museum of African Art, who expressed interest in the project. After speaking with Stephanie about the potential scope of the project and extent of damage we had observed, I encouraged her to contact Richard Kurin about wanting to help. Her experience at the Smithsonian and the fact that she is fluent in French and is knowledgeable with regard to Haitian art made her an ideal candidate for chief conservator.

The rest of May was filled with long days compiling lists of and sourcing supplies, making logistical plans for returning to Haiti, answering queries from colleagues and the public, all in addition to carrying out my duties as a conservator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

As that manic month closed, the Smithsonian and AIC were furiously buying supplies and equipment and shipping purchases to Stephanie’s home in Miami where Cori Wegener, AIC conservators Vicki Lee and Hitoshi Kimura, and I would meet up to re-pack it for the flight to Port-au-Prince. Cori had pointed out that bringing it in as part of our luggage was much more dependable than trying to ship it in separately given the backlog and snafus in the international supply line. The first challenge to this plan came at the airport with airline agents telling us we could only take two checked bags—we all had three, Cori successfully convinced them to make an exemption for us.

On arrival in Port-au-Prince we were met by Olsen Jean Julien, the Center Manager, who expedited us through immigration and customs, and had us off to the Center with the supplies in short order.

The first days found us anxious to begin working on cultural objects. At the same time, colleagues from ICCROM arrived to start exploring with Olsen, the conservation team, and various stakeholders the most effective way to do training.

Our time was spent readying the Center to receive objects, organizing supplies, creating survey forms, and identifying locally available supplies. After her arrival, Gail Joice quickly established a registration system and the Center was ready to receive objects.

Days later we took in the first objects—Haitian paintings followed by revolutionary war era documents and Taino sculptures. I shared my elation through a posting on Facebook. Assembling a small broken Taino figurine gave me great satisfaction because for me treating the object was not just about mending it and making it whole but also about showing the custodians of the collections we had visited that we were in Haiti not with empty promises but to do good work and to help them recover their heritage.

The Sugar Cane Museum asked the Cultural Recovery Center to restore a Taino sculpture damaged during the earthquake. Photos courtesy of L. H. Shockey, Jr./Smithsonian
Vu il certifié quant service que le Citoyen
Action a rendu Son
Ordres, pendant le con
Vergulé il est toutjour
Comporté avec l'éleb
le G. de Bragadell Piga
I was asked to go to Haiti by the American Institute of Conservation (AIC) because I am a member of the AIC Collections Emergency Response Team (CERT) and had previously been deployed to assist in emergencies.

I first went to Haiti with the large team to evaluate a suitable location for the Recovery Center. We spent the week driving from museums to libraries and meeting the many stakeholders within the Haitian arts community. It was a week filled with beautiful art work, horrible destruction, and incredible people. We found a building that would provide space for conservation and storage, and we began to think of what would be needed not only to stabilize and treat damaged pieces but also promote training in conservation so the project could continue beyond the immediate future.

The second trip was just a few weeks later with Cori Wegener and fellow conservators Hugh Shockey and Hitoshi Kimura. Between me, Hugh, and Hitoshi, we covered the conservation of paper/books, objects, and paintings. We carried in the supplies we thought would be most useful and hardest to obtain in Haiti. Once we arrived we set up our respective labs and made several trips out into the community to find and log where supplies for the labs might be found locally. We also met with instructors from ICCROM who were developing a teaching plan to train local museum, library, and archives staff about emergency recovery, stabilization, and storage of their materials.

When we received the first pieces into the Cultural Recovery Center—five paintings, five objects, and one document, it was so exciting; it seemed like the project was really going to work! The document I treated came from the Sugar Cane museum. It concerned the orders of General Pétion, one of Haiti’s revolutionary leaders of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Because we had only one paper piece, albeit an important one, I was given the opportunity (and instruction) to vacuum two of the paintings, thus becoming an unofficial paintings conservator as well.

After Hugh, Hitoshi, and Cori left I stayed on a third week and the Center received four books to treat. Paintings conservator, Nick Dorman, arrived and together we discussed possible treatments for two Hector Hyppolite paintings on cardboard we’d received from the Nader Museum collection. As a book conservator you see a lot of broken cardboard but none of it is painted. The collaboration with other professionals in my field but not in my specialty was one of the unexpected pleasures of this deployment.

I left Haiti with much sadness, unsure if I’d be able to return again. I kept in touch with staff at the CRC and made sure that people with AIC knew that I would return if asked—which one year later I did, with much joy!

Vicki L. Lee is Head of Conservation, Maryland State Archives.

I was left with no illusions about both the magnitude of the loss of visual patrimony in Port-au-Prince and the essential, vital significance of that art to Haiti.—Nick Dorman, Chief Conservator, Seattle Art Museum
DEVELOPING THE CENTER’S PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

STEPHANIE HORNBECK

When I joined the project in June 2010 to serve as Chief Conservator, I felt both excitement and trepidation. I believed in Richard Kurin’s vision for the project and graduate study of Haitian art had instilled a strong appreciation for the visual culture here. Yet, the scope of damage was so daunting, it would take months to begin to comprehend the situation. Participating in a multi-national effort added a layer of cultural complexity that presented challenges, involving differences in work approaches and professional interactions. The unknown variables were numerous; these were magnified by the enormity of the catastrophe, and absence of any existing local preservation infrastructure.

While Haiti is distinguished by an internationally-recognized, long history of creativity in the visual arts, a systematic professional commitment to historic preservation and conservation of its cultural patrimony does not exist. Thus, the ability of its art professionals to adequately respond to the severe damage from the earthquake was inherently limited. The critical need to recover the nation’s cultural patrimony also presented an opportunity to formally introduce Haitian art professionals to current preservation principles and practices.

An important early decision in the project’s framework determined that conservation work would happen in Haiti. A corollary decision involves incorporating Haitian professionals into conservation activities at every possible opportunity. The dual objectives of establishing a local facility and training local professionals were developed with a sustainable future in mind, given the eighteen-month project trajectory agreed to by the Smithsonian and the Haitian government at the outset of the project.

I thought deeply about formulating a global conservation strategy that was appropriate to a situation which had no historical conservation precedent. My first task on the job was to review the assessments conducted by Corine Wegener and conservators Susan Blakney, Vicki Lee, and Hugh Shockey, in the spring of 2010. The framework of the project’s conservation objectives would have to be comprehensive, and include:

- The establishment of multiple, specialized conservation studios;
- Staffing the studios with professional conservators;
- Stocking the studios with equipment and conservation-grade materials supplies;
- Assessing damaged collections;
- Improving collection care methods and facilities at partnering institutions;
- Providing oversight for large, multi-phase projects;
- Stabilizing large volumes of works with structural and surface (dirt and mold) damage;
- Providing training in collection management and first aid intervention;
- In special cases, treating individual works of art and public monuments in public and private collections, deemed of high cultural value.

The establishment of multiple functioning conservation studios required specialized expertise, equipment, and projects. The participation of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) closely involved Eryl Wentworth, Executive Director, and Eric Pourchot, Institutional Advancement Director. Given their expertise, professional networks, and commitment, AIC was able to provide a continuous stream of volunteer professional conservators to assist with assessment, stabilization, treatment, and training.

Conservators worked to retro-fit the offices of our facility to serve as conservation studio and storage spaces. Access to stable archival and conservation grade materials is very limited, and one hundred percent of such supplies must be
imported. The project purchased microscopes, easels, digital cameras, computers, printers, vacuums, fabrics, papers, adhesives, artist supplies, fine hand tools and heavy tools, and personal protective equipment. These would be hand-carried by conservators and other colleagues in more than sixty-five trips. Pourchot worked closely with me to order supplies throughout the project.

A professional staff of dedicated Haitian colleagues was formed to interface with Haitian institutions and to support conservation efforts at the Cultural Recovery Center. At the outset, I joined Olsen Jean Julien, Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor, Fritz Berg Jeannot, Carmelita Douby, and Missely Michel. As our project was a pioneering effort that we were building along the way, while constrained by a limited timeframe, we did not have the benefit of cultural immersion training to assist in effecting collaboration. The acculturation aspects were significant for both Haitians adapting to foreign professionals and routines of conservation practice, and for me and other American and foreign conservators understanding and adapting to Haitian norms of interaction and communication. Yet, the importance of the recovery effort and the knowledge that it required both local and foreign expertise unified us. Together, we faced an enormous volume of work and had to find creative ways to launch the project collaboratively.

Stephanie Hornbeck is the Chief Conservator of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project and formerly served as Conservator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art. She is Principal of Caryatid Conservation Services, Inc., based in Miami.
Pressed by the urgency of rescue operations, the Cultural Recovery Center could not wait for the completion of bureaucratic administrative procedures to start its work.

Olsen Jean Julien looked for an Office Manager to run the administrative operations of the Center. I was selected and quickly went to work, mindful of the enormous magnitude of the tasks ahead.

We began our activities even before the first disbursement of funds—we couldn’t wait. There were so many challenges to face in launching the cultural rescue operations. I focused on two immediate objectives—recruit a qualified and competent staff and establish required administrative procedures. Beyond that I coordinated logistics, purchased supplies for the office and our conservation laboratories, arranged vehicles for travel and transport, contracted for various services, arranged for hotels and housing, as well as pick-ups to and from the airport of our volunteer conservators. I have been responsible for securing the transfers of incoming funds and for the execution of expenditures. I manage the financial records of the Center, keeping track of all purchases, and tracking our monthly budgets. I compose our financial reports to FOKAL and to the Smithsonian.

Administrative efficiency has been our goal—it is indispensable to support our cultural recovery efforts and to meet the expectations of our stakeholders. Achieving this is not without problems, especially in a nation recovering from a disaster. We’ve had to deal with suppliers with little respect to delivery times, hotel rooms mistakenly cancelled, and numerous other issues. I have had to constantly listen, explain, discuss, and adjust measures relating to the realization of my responsibilities.

Olsen has provided strong direction and has been assisted by a professional and dynamic team. We have seen how much good we can do in a short time when there is determination and commitment. I have learned a lot from working in the Center’s multicultural environment and am very proud to be part of this team.

Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor is the Office Manager of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.
THE CENTER'S REGISTRATION PROCESS

MAGDALENA CARMELITA DOUBY GUILLAUME

Working with Smithsonian registrar Gail Joice, we at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center (CRC) adapted a comprehensive museum registration procedure to document incoming collections according to their characteristics, and the identity of the cultural institutions that owned them.

To initiate the intake and treatment process, the CRC required collection owners to sign permission forms giving the Center formal authorization to work on their collections. The permission forms constitute a formal legal agreement between the Center—as a project of the Smithsonian—and the Haitian cultural institution. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project designed the forms in such a way as to provide options for 1) the inspection and assessment of collections on a cultural site, 2) work with a cultural collection, and 3) storage of a cultural collection after treatment. That way, Haitian organizations could sign onto activities that fit their particular circumstances.

The Nader Museum and Gallery was the first organization to sign, followed by many others. The forms specified ownership or stewardship, covered issues of legal liability with regard to responsible conservation treatment, and guaranteed that items would be returned to organizations on demand. In some cases, as with some very complex situations like the Centre d'Art, it took several months of discussions to finally secure permission. Both public and private institutions signed the forms.

Once I, as the Registrar, receive the signed permission forms, the CRC informs the institution when it will be ready to start working on site or with a collection.

In the case of a collection, each of the objects received from an institution is inventoried. A reception form is filled out, in double original, for each object. One original is given to the institution and the other is stored and filed at the CRC. A unique inventory number is assigned to each object. For example, below is the inventory number for a painting from the Centre d'Art.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object Type: Painting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRCH/CA-2010-001-4205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The inventory record provides basic information—object name and description, owner, dimensions, object type, and media. Every object is digitally photographed—front and back. Close-up photographs are made of damaged parts of the object. These images form part of the inventory record.

Every item is then technically examined and assessed from a conservation perspective, the results of which are presented in a condition report form. The assessment ascertains the structural condition of the object. This is the basis for the conservation or stabilization treatment. Condition assessments and reports are designed to be flexible given the broad range of objects taken into the Center.

Conservators review the results of the condition assessments, and then objects are sent to the appropriate laboratory for treatment. The Registrar is the official keeper of the Cultural Recovery Center database, and so I have to track the location of each and every object. Each laboratory has a manual copy of the reports for each object received for conservation treatment. The originals are kept with the Registrar who regularly updates the documentation.

Each object treated has an accompanying treatment report, including the images during and after treatment; this report is added to complete the documentation.

After the completion of the treatment, arrangements for the return of the object are made with the owner's institution. In some cases, as with very large collections where the storage capacity of the owner is very limited, the CRC stores the objects securely on site in its building or sea containers in the compound—depending upon the need for climate control.

Magdalena Carmelita Douby Guillaume is an architect specializing in cultural patrimony and memories and serves as the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center Registrar.
I arrived in Port-au-Prince in early June, tasked with helping set up the object registration system for damaged works of art that would be coming into the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. I have been a registrar for over twenty-five years before coming to the National Museum of the American Indian as Collections Manager in 2003. For the Haiti project I was also asked to consult on the requirements for security and shelving systems for storage of the works that would be coming for treatment at the Center.

I was most fortunate to be able to work with the Center’s very competent Registrar, Carmelita Douby, who was hired by the Center’s Manager, Olsen Jean Julien. Carmelita was an architect with museum experience. We spoke French and English together and formed an immediate bond as we faced the daunting task presented by setting up a collection registration and management system so soon after the devastating earthquake.

Our job was definitely a "start from square one" experience! We began with an empty suite of three office rooms within the former UNDP compound. These spaces had no furniture at first, no security bars on the windows and doors and an HVAC system that was in the preliminary testing/start-up phase, not always reliable for controlling temperature and relative humidity.

Carmelita installed the software on our Smithsonian-provided collections inventory computer, while the Internet went periodically in and out of service due to continuing post-disaster infrastructure problems. We consulted together on the best way to set up registration numbering and file systems for the objects that would be coming in from the important museums and private collections that had been severely damaged. Since we needed to respond quickly, our first system was a simple numbering protocol on Excel spreadsheets. We knew that selecting a museum-quality data management system could come later. We emphasized the importance of making photographic records for all incoming objects.

We had to be as creative and practical as possible on the choice of available materials for our work.

Carmelita drove us through rubble-filled streets to an art supply store in Petion Ville to look for things like object tags, appropriate marking tools, and plastic supplies. The only plastic they had available at the store was colored cellophane, so we had to look further afield. A stop at an office supply store provided us with the appropriate records file cabinets we would need. However, we knew that the shelving for storing damaged paintings would need to be built quickly with available materials, in this case, simple wooden shelving. We measured out the parameters of the storage room and tried to estimate how many of the thousands of paintings needing attention could be stored there as they waited for conservation attention.

We worked with Olsen to ensure that the building renovation contractor would put iron security bars on all windows and doors as a high priority before any art entered the building. We also researched what security firms were available in Port-au-Prince to provide preliminary alarm systems to support the night watchmen on site.

Before I left Haiti we were able to visit two of the larger collections of objects that had been damaged, the Nader Museum collection of paintings, and the Lehmann collection of Vodou art. I was honored to be able to register, transport, and store the very first five paintings that came into the Center for treatment by our AIC volunteer conservator Hitoshi Kimura. I am also proud that so much has been accomplished since then!

Gail Joice is the Collections Manager at the National Museum of the American Indian.
MAKING SHREDS WHOLE

DAVID GOIST

On July 6, 2010, my AIC-CERT fellow conservators Bev Perkins and Karen Pavelka, and I were invited to join the visiting delegation from the Smithsonian, the U.S. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and The Broadway League at a reception at the temporary home of Haitian President Rene Preval and First Lady Elisabeth Preval to thank us for our cultural recovery initiative. The event highlighted the contrasts experienced during our deployment.

During the day I had been working on paintings salvaged from the Nader Museum in the fine building used as the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. While the Center was clean and air conditioned, it was still being equipped for conservation treatments. I had to scavenge through the rubble around the Center trying to find a piece of pipe to use as a tack hammer to re-stretch a painting.

After work, I had been able to return to the hotel to shower and put on dress clothes. On the way to the President’s reception we drove up a hill through some of the largest camps of displaced people that I had observed during my stay. None of the people in these camps had the luxury of a shower or a comfortable bed. At one point we stopped at the site of the Nader Museum. It was literally in ruins, and I was amazed that any paintings had survived. From the rubble, I picked up a thoroughly shredded painting. As I held it I thought of all the lives lost during the earthquake. I also thought of my mother who had passed away two days before my departure for Haiti. I knew she would understand why I was there.

David Goist is a Conservator of Paintings in Raleigh, North Carolina.

COMING FULL CIRCLE IN HAITI

HITOSHI KIMURA

Participating in the Haiti cultural recovery mission brought my life full circle.

It was a similar disaster, the major earthquake in my homeland of Kobe, Japan, in January 1995, which prompted my decision to become a conservator. As a volunteer for the American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT), I deployed to Haiti in June, carrying in supplies with the first group of conservators to work at the Center.

In Haiti we spent a lot of time getting the Center in order, meeting people and visiting collections. I visited the Nader Gallery with Olsen Jean Julien where we picked up five important, but badly damaged Haitian paintings. Gail Joice processed the permissions forms and we took the paintings back to the Center. These would be the first items treated by the project.

The next day was a Sunday, and the Center was supposed to be closed. I was scheduled to fly back to the U.S. at mid-day Monday and was determined to use my skills and training to save at least one of the paintings. So Olsen opened the Center and I went to work.

I wrote a condition report for three paintings, one by Celestín Faustin and two others by Carlo Jean Jacques. The other two paintings were done by one of Haiti’s most important artists, Hector Hyppolite, and I decided that given my limited time, I had better leave it to the next conservator for a fresh start.

I then focused on the Faustin painting and went to work. I had brought a solar battery powered radio with me and was able to listen to the inspiring and beautiful sound of a Haitian church choir while working on the painting for the rest of the day and on Monday morning. I had just an hour before heading to the airport to complete the “in-painting”—which I did!

Hitoshi Kimura is Chief Conservator of Art Conservation of Central Florida in Tampa, Florida.

[Upper left] AIC Conservator David Goist examines Hector Hyppolite’s Calle. He and Nick Dorman worked on its restoration. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian

[Left] Hitoshi Kimura “in-paints” the artwork to repair damage caused by the earthquake. Photo by Corine Wegener
LESHAWN BURRELL-JONES

One of my responsibilities as Richard Kurin’s special assistant at the Smithsonian was to make arrangements for various contractors—individual and organizations—to “get into the Smithsonian system” so they could get contracts, get paid, and get to Haiti. I’ve had to liaise with Haitian and U.S. government officials to make sure things happened as they are supposed to. My job is simply to do what needs to get done. In the Smithsonian, our short-hand term for doing this is “other duties as assigned.”

As we began the project I had to go to the Haitian Embassy in Washington, D.C., in search of the then Haitian Ambassador and the Haitian Minister of Tourism to get their signatures on a memorandum of understanding (MOU), only to arrive there and find out that they were having lunch at a nearby restaurant. The Ambassador’s driver drove me to the restaurant and that’s where the “formal” signing of the MOU took place!

On another occasion, I hosted the Minister of Culture and Communication for lunch because Richard was unexpectedly called into an urgent Smithsonian meeting. I thought, “I have to host the Minister—are you kidding me? What will I say?” I was a bit nervous, but it all worked out. Minister Lassègue could not have been more pleasant.

Numerous times I’ve had to make arrangements for entire delegations to get to and from Haiti. When I began working on logistics, Internet connections were non-existent, and when I was able to get through on the telephone, the Haitians of course spoke French. This was a huge language barrier for me! I called upon other Smithsonian staff including Diana N’Diaye in the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, who speaks fluent French and worked in Haiti, to help me out.

From the beginning I did what needed to be done. I’ve written contracts for conservators from around the world to go to Haiti and lend their expertise to the project. With the assistance of other Smithsonian colleagues, I’ve managed the delivery of critical conservation supplies. One was particularly adventuresome. Conservators at the CRC needed a suction table, and of course, there is none in Haiti. We put out a call to museums and cultural institutions. The Library of Congress had one they were going to surplus. Arranging the transfer from the Library to the Smithsonian was in itself complicated. We had to store it in a Smithsonian warehouse. Our exhibits people crated it along with other supplies. It was then trucked to Florida and loaded on a freight ship to Haiti. We then contended with Haitian customs authorities and ministries for four months to get it from the port to the Cultural Recovery Center.

To be a part of this project has been rewarding. It has humbled me. With the many obstacles that we faced in the beginning (and throughout), we could have easily thrown our hands up and said, “We tried.” It has given me a sense of what is possible, and, if every person, organization, and/or country does its part, relationships can be forged, respect can be garnered, and unthinkably good things can happen.

LeShawn Burrell-Jones is a Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture at the Smithsonian Institution.
I had the chance to join an early deployment to Haiti as an AIC-CERT member in June. Of course, vaulting into such unknown conditions was bewildering, exciting, and worrying. Though things had already been well scoped-out by our colleagues and we made all the necessary preparations, I was only just about comfortable telling my boss and my family that I was confident that this would be a safe trip. The fact that most of the rest of my fellow passengers on the plane to Haiti were teenagers on their way to build churches was pretty reassuring; although the doubts made a quick comeback with the hellish spectacle of the first “displaced persons” camp directly outside the airport. These doubts weren’t lightened much by the comical exclamations of “Hey, Obama!” from the kids on the other side of the fence (I do not bear much resemblance to the President).

Spending a week at the Cultural Recovery Center documenting, and working on the art, despite the forethought and planning and the behemoth tool-case that I dragged with me, presented many a challenge. There were no solvents except a scrumptious smelling “ethanol” and some nail polish remover, and the damage to the paintings bore full, clear testimony to those few violent moments in January. I worked on two Hector Hyppolite paintings—\textit{Calle} and \textit{Pot de Fleurs}—that had been rent into a dozen parts and still bore fragments of stone and rubble as well as the filthy dust that covered every surface.

But I was working on paintings, away from the phone and other distractions, cocooned from the city damage in the Recovery Center and enjoying the hospitality of Olsen Jean Julien and his team, and the company of supportive colleagues Vicki Lee and Stephanie Hornbeck. The reality of the circumstances reasserted itself each night as we returned to the hotel through Port-au-Prince’s shattered streets in darkness to furious readings of the Book of Revelations in French on Office Administrator Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor’s car radio.

The experience evoked a terrific range of feelings and thoughts that are difficult to condense into a few lines but, if I had questions at the start of the week: What sort of emergency response was this? Was I using the right adhesives? Whether it was right to take up a hotel room for art restoration? I was left with no illusions about both the magnitude of the loss of visual patrimony in Port-au-Prince and the essential, vital significance of that art to Haiti. And for that realization and the small contribution of a week’s worth of work, I was glad.

Nicholas Dorman is the Chief Conservator at the Seattle Art Museum.
Usually, when I get the green light from an editor to write an article, especially one that requires foreign travel, I move as quickly as possible. But when Smithsonian magazine okayed my proposal to assess the impact of the Haitian earthquake on the nation’s art community I defied my journalistic instincts... and waited.

I wasn’t sweating the reporting part of this trip. Having traveled to Haiti several times as a journalist and art collector, beginning in the 1970s, I knew many of the key players. I delayed my departure because in the immediate aftermath of this tragedy I did not want to impose on people who were suffering.

My patience was rewarded when I arrived in the Caribbean island nation several weeks later after my friends and acquaintances in the art community had resolved just enough of their basic problems to lend me a generous hand.

Philippe Dodard, one of Haiti’s leading contemporary artists, found me a scarce hotel room and made some valuable introductions. Gallery owner Axelle Liautaud arranged meetings with one of Haiti’s best known naïve artists, eighty-seven-year-old Préfète Duffaut, who was living in a crude tent, as well as Episcopal Bishop Jean-Zaché Duracin, who had lost dozens of his churches, including Holy Trinity Cathedral with its famed Haitian-style Biblical murals. Another art dealer, Toni Monnin, introduced me to Frantz Zéphirin, a gregarious forty-one-year-old painter and Vodou priest who was mourning the deaths of several family members yet busy creating earthquake-themed paintings.

No one was more generous with his time and insights than Georges Nader, Jr., a gallery owner whose father was one of the earliest promoters of Haitian art. The elder Nader and his wife were napping in the master bedroom of their house when the earthquake struck. They escaped, just barely, but their house, which doubled as a Haitian art gallery and museum, was a massive pile of rubble. “I’ll take you there so you can see for yourself,” Georges, Jr. promised, and he did.

After nine days in Haiti I was prepared to write about the breathtaking toll the earthquake had taken on the arts community: at least three artists, two gallery owners, and an arts foundation director had died. Thousands of paintings and sculptures—valued in the tens of millions of dollars—were destroyed or badly damaged in museums, galleries, churches, collectors’ homes, government ministries, and the National Palace. The Haitian Art Museum at College St. Pierre was in rough shape, and the storied Centre d’Art—a charming wooden house where I had bought many paintings, Vodou flags, and iron sculptures over the years—had crumbled.

Yet, for all this misery and destruction, there was optimism. Like Zéphirin, Duffaut was creating “earthquake art,” and he beamed while showing me a painting he named The Star of Haiti. “You see, I want all of my paintings to send a message,” Duffaut said, standing outside his tent. “My message is simple. Haiti will be back.”

On the flight home, I gazed out upon Haiti’s rugged, deforested landscape and thought about a local proverb that summed things up. Deye mon, gen mon, the Kreyòl saying goes. “Beyond the mountains, more mountains.”

For Haiti’s art community, the climb is already underway, I thought. No doubt there will be challenges as the journey to recovery continues. But beyond the next mountain, opportunities surely will be waiting.

Bill Brubaker, a former Staff Writer for the Washington Post, is a free-lance journalist who collects Haitian paintings, Latin American folk art, and Cuban movie posters.

I gazed out upon Haiti’s rugged, deforested landscape and thought about a local proverb that summed things up. “Deye mon, gen mon,” the Kreyòl saying goes. “Beyond the mountains, more mountains.” For Haiti’s art community, the climb is already underway, I thought. No doubt there will be challenges as the journey to recovery continues. But beyond the next mountain, opportunities surely will be waiting. –Bill Brubaker
Ten seconds before the earthquake in Haiti, the administration of Holy Trinity Music School under the leadership of the Rev. David Cesar was meeting on the third floor in their recently renovated offices. The practice of Les Petits Chanteurs had just finished with most of the students out of the building. Various teachers were conducting their lessons with individual students. The Trade School located in the same facility was just beginning their late afternoon classes. The Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, which included the world-renowned Haitian-style Biblical murals, the Concert Hall of the National Philharmonic Orchestra, the Music School with 1,000 students, the Trade School with 1,200 students and the Elementary School with 1,500 students, was alive and well with the sound of music heard throughout the campus.

The earthquake hit and the chaos began.

Most of the administrators were able to get to the ground level—the director of discipline was killed—the trumpet instructor, the voice instructor, and several people were dug out and rescued. The Concert Hall located on the floor above part of the Trade School came crashing down trapping and killing over two hundred and fifty of their students beneath—the leading alto of Les Petits Chanteurs on his way to his birthday party was killed as were five others at different locations.

Pere David and the leaders, in spite of their grief and shock, gathered and began the process of locating the survivors and digging out to preserve as many of the instruments and supplies as possible. They then decided to immediately offer their music to the people to restore hope. Mini-concerts covered by CNN and NBC were organized and held throughout the tent cities of Port-au-Prince. A national service to honor the dead and give hope was given with the orchestra participating. Using wood and tarps, spaces were created to restart classes, rehearsals, and individual instruction. The sound of music was heard again throughout the totally destroyed campus and beyond.

Pere David called me and said they wished to go forward with the annual fall United States Tour. I suggested perhaps postponing, but he was insistent. They wanted to say thank you to the people of the United States and to continue to show a positive image of Haiti by offering the restoration of hope through their music. We then arranged the Tour to begin in Atlanta and end in Maine with over fifty performances in twenty-seven days in twenty-four cities.

Knowing of the work the Smithsonian was doing with the Cathedral murals, I called Richard Kurin of the Smithsonian and said that we would be in Washington and "What about a concert at one of the museums?" Without hesitation he said they would love to host a concert. The staff of the Smithsonian went to work and Les Petits Chanteurs and the Chamber Ensemble travelling in four vans appeared at the National Museum of American History and gave a glorious concert uplifting the spirit of all in Flag Hall in front of the Star-Spangled Banner.

The story of Holy Trinity Music School over the past fifty years is incredible. No matter the adversity—whether earthquake, hurricane, military coup, or political upheaval—they never lose hope. They offer their music to preserve, and strengthen the soul of their people.

Today they still practice and play in temporary make-shift facilities. The sound of music continues to be heard throughout the campus of Holy Trinity Cathedral and beyond.

The Reverend Stephen Davenport, visiting and working with Holy Trinity Music School since 1970, helps to arrange the annual Concerts Tours in the United States and Canada.
We have come a long way! I spent many late nights as the AIC-CERT Katrina volunteer coordinator scrambling to be of assistance to the conservators who had joined the American Association of State and Local History camper homes as they tried to make their way around a devastated Louisiana and Mississippi. Coordinating between my private lab in California, the AIC office, and conservators who were literally in the field with maps of roads that no longer existed, was a challenge to say the least.

Participating in the response effort launched by the Smithsonian Institution in Haiti was a privilege. Responding as an AIC-CERT member can be a daunting solo act. The response to disasters such as Katrina required us to go into full "take-charge" mode. In situations where the AIC-CERT member responds alone, the main focus of the project is making order out of chaos. Responders quickly learn that striving for perfection will only serve to stymie the project. Creative problem solving, project ownership, and improvisation, are usually the responder’s strongest assets.

Setting foot on Haitian soil, I knew that this response effort was going to be radically different from the response to Katrina. The energetic chaos of the airport in Port-au-Prince was my first taste of the richness of Haitian culture. Being proud of my independence as a world traveler, it took me a beat to give in and pay to let the porter claim my luggage. As I moved out of the airport, the noise and struggle began to recede and fade away. In my mind, the parting of the stormy waters was brought on by the friendly face belonging to the gentleman standing in front of the car, holding the sign that said “Perkins.”

In Haiti responders had the luxury of joining a team that was already in place. Project Manager Olsen Jean Julien, International Project Coordinator Cori Wegener, and Chief Conservator Stephanie Hornbeck, had already completed the initial planning and implementation of a complex project that was to last for well over a year. Fellow responders Karen Pavelka, David Goist, and I formed just one of the many teams that would serve the project. Direction from project leaders allowed us the luxury of using our conservation training instead of our emergency response training. It was reassuring to be able to follow the direction of the Chief Conservator, knowing that she had the big picture of collections in need and resources available to address these needs. Stephanie provided guidance on treatment protocol that would insure uniformity to the project as the labs and treatments passed from one team to the next.

Participating in this project taught us the value of being able to step out of solo responder mode and work as a team. We formed lasting bonds with team members, the country of Haiti and its people, AIC staff, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Beverly Perkins is the Chief Conservator at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming.
Encouraging Haitian creativity and providing outlets for it can not only energize a cultural renaissance but also have enormously significant economic consequences.—Geri Benoit, Haiti’s Ambassador to Italy

Days after the earthquake, street art galleries reclaimed their space to sell reproductions of fine Haitian paintings. Photo by Gail Joice/Smithsonian
While much of the Smithsonian effort went into the establishment of the Cultural Recovery Center and the rescue and treatment of Haiti’s cultural collections, we’d always been concerned with Haiti’s living cultural practices—from the traditional to the newly created, and encouraging their vitality.
During our first visit, Georges Nader’s comments about the lack of materials for artists to paint with led us to develop the idea of cultural care packages. On our return, I told a number of people about it and Diana N’Diaye sent out e-mails to people who might be interested. Colleagues at the National Museum of African Art, led by Conservator Steve Mellor, took up the idea and organized a collection and sent a package to Georges. It was the first to arrive. I told Vicki Sant, the Chair of the Board of the National Gallery of Art about the effort, and she spread the word to others who sent packages.

Professional artists were not the only ones to paint scenes of the earthquake or represent life in Haiti. Elisabeth Préval and artist Philippe Dodard had arranged for children in two Port-au-Prince neighborhoods to return to school after the earthquake—not in their collapsed building, but in school buses he had been able to get for the purpose. Children were encouraged to express their experiences through drawing, providing a way of processing their feelings. When Michelle Obama and Jill Biden visited Haiti, they went to the school buses and painted with Elisabeth Préval and the children.

Mrs. Préval’s staff called one afternoon. She was in Washington with some of the children’s art work and asked whether the Smithsonian might display a selection of the paintings. Johnnetta Cole and I hurried over to meet her, viewed some of the works and on the spot agreed to mount the exhibition—and we needed to do it by June, timed with the opening of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival which would also feature several Haitian artists and performers. In record time, Chief Curator Chris Kreamer and the staff of the National Museum of African Art produced and opened the exhibition The Healing Power of Art: Works of Art by Haitian Children after the Earthquake in the Smithsonian’s S. Dillon Ripley Center. It was a hit, and occasioned thousands of visitors to not only view the children’s art, but compose their own as a response to the children of Haiti. It was cultural understanding and exchange in action.

At the same time, the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage was arranging the shipping of hundreds of crafts from Port-au-Prince and Jacmel to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Vodou flag maker Mireille Delisme and painter Levy Exil would demonstrate their art daily. A special concert featuring the popular Haitian musical group Boukman Eksperyans (named after a seminal figure of the Haitian revolution) and introduced by Haitian Ambassador to the U.S. Raymond Joseph, was a rousing and joyous success. Crafts generated more than $50,000 in sales and helped get needed cash into the pockets of numerous artists.

Geri Benoit joined us for part of the Festival in order to arrange some of the Festival materials to be sent to Rome. She was busy as ever promoting Haitian art, fashion, and cuisine in Europe, and seeking opportunities for Haitian artists and cultural figures.

During the summer we had results to show from the Recovery Center, and Toby Dodds, the webmaster for the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, put together a website for the project. Olsen had staff in Haiti translate the pages into French and Kreyòl and we were online at www.haiti.si.edu.

In September, Smithsonian magazine published a cover story on Haitian art after the earthquake. Bill Brubaker, a collector and aficionado, renewed his friendships with Georges Nader and Prêtèfe Duffaut, and described the challenges facing purveyors of perhaps Haiti’s best known export—its art. The Smithsonian had commissioned Frantz Zéphirin to do an original painting for the cover, and then held an auction for the work, with the proceeds donated to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

Stories in other media on Haiti’s art and culture continued, on television, YouTube, in the press, and on radio. The Smithsonian Channel was at work on a documentary following the project.

In the fall, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History hosted the boys’ choir and orchestral ensemble of the Holy Trinity Music School. The group was on its annual U.S. tour, providing a means for Haitian youth to see America, and also to raise funds for their music program. They performed a concert of Haitian and American compositions in Flag Hall,
ARTISTS’ CARE PACKAGES

GEORGES NADER, JR.

The January 2010 earthquake destroyed houses, stores, offices, and other types of structures. The artistic community was not spared as many of Haiti’s painters and sculptors lost their studios, homes, and all their art supplies. The art supply stores were also demolished. There was no infrastructure to obtain and resell art supplies. As the artists were particularly inspired and feeling creative in the aftermath of the earthquake, they were desperately looking for the necessary tools to express themselves, but to no avail. Some of them reached out to the Nader Gallery in the hope of finding brushes and canvasses. Unfortunately, the Gallery had none to give them.

It is very common for Haitian artists to be inspired by and to portray the current situation in their country. For example, political turmoil in Haiti appears on the paintings that were created during the fall of Duvalier in 1986 and other subsequent coups d’etat. The same phenomenon was happening in the months following the earthquake: the artists were eager to represent various scenes of what they had witnessed, and what was left.

In March 2010, when a group from the Smithsonian visited Haiti and became aware of this problem, Richard Kurin decided to put in place an art supplies drive. A few months later, Nader Gallery had received a donation of various boxes of art supplies including brushes, paint, and canvasses, from the National Museum of African Art to be distributed to Haitian artists. All of these supplies were donated to over 100 painters who were thus able to portray the earthquake and its aftermath.

Artist Carlos Jean Baptiste depicts the desperate attempt by Haitians to flee the earthquake in Port-au-Prince in damaged boats. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian

HAITIAN ARTISTS’ CARE PACKAGES—SUPPLY LIST

ACRYLIC PAINTS
(Desired Brands—Windsor & Newton (Galeria), or Grumbacher Finest, or Liquitex Acrylic)

Colors Needed:
- Black Mars
- Yellow Ochre
- Ultramarine Blue
- Titanium White
- Dioxazine Purple
- Burnt Umber
- Thalo Green
- Thalo Blue
- Thio Violet
- Cadmium Orange Deep
- Cadmium Red Deep
- Cobalt Green
- Hooker Green
- Burnt Sienna
- Cadmium Yellow Light
- Cadmium Yellow Deep
- Cadmium Orange
- Sap Green
- Hansa Yellow Medium
- Hansa Yellow Deep
- Ultramarine Blue

OTHER ART SUPPLIES

Painting Canvasses in the following sizes:
- 8 x 10
- 12 x 16
- 16 x 20
- 20 x 24

Linen (a little bit thick and without preparation)

Stretchers (of different sizes given the canvasses)

Paint Brushes (various, Pearsl Mark if possible)

Modeling Paste (Golden Mark, if possible)

Spatula (various models)

Staple Gun with Staples

Wood Glue

RESTORING HOPE
in front of the Star-Spangled Banner exhibition—and they received a warm and appreciative reception from museum visitors. It was a performance they were to reprise a year later at the Smithsonian, and combine with a visit to the National Museum of African Art to see the sculpture of Toussaint Louverture, now on public display.

Appreciation of Haiti’s cultural vitality, as symbolized by its youth, emerged again in October, when First Lady Michelle Obama hosted the National Youth Awards ceremony at the White House. The President’s Committee had decided to give a special international award to a Haitian youth musical group from Jacmel. Committee Vice-Chair Mary Schmidt Campbell, who introduced the group, invited the Haitian Ambassador to join Mrs. Obama and continued:

This year’s earthquake in Haiti completely devastated many of the country’s most important cultural landmarks and institutions. Thanks to the expertise of our colleagues at the Smithsonian Institution and with support from the President’s Committee, the Haitian Cultural Recovery Project was able to work in support of the government of Haiti to salvage and secure important cultural artifacts buried in the rubble and badly damaged.

During the summer, members of the PCAH joined a delegation to Port-au-Prince, led by our colleagues at the Smithsonian. What was clear to all of us on that trip was that even amidst that devastation the vitality of Haiti’s cultural heritage was very much alive.

On the streets of Port-au-Prince, we saw evidence of the work of the artisans and musicians who continue traditions that have become vital to world culture. We witnessed the resilience of a youth orchestra that rehearsed beautifully while overlooking the debris and rubble that surrounded them.

First Lady Préval hosted a group of young dancers who despite having to live in tented camps that served as temporary homes after the earthquake left them homeless, treated us to a spirited performance. They, the young people, with all of their resilience and energy, with all of their talents and gifts, represent the promise and future of Haiti.

The Haitian Cultural Recovery Project participated in two other exhibitions. Saving Grace: A Celebration of Haitian Art opened at the Affirmation Arts gallery in New York. The show, arranged by Bill Hillman, Gallery Director Marla Goldwasser, and Georges Nader, was curated by Gerald Alexis. It featured Hector Hyppolite’s Pot de Fleurs restored by Nick Dorman and Celestin Faustin’s Un Beau Rêve restored by Hitoshi Kimura, as well as dozens of others representing a full range and panoply of Haitian creativity.

Building Back Better opened at the William J. Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. It featured the former president’s involvement with Haiti, aspects of Haitian culture, and history. A major section concerned the earthquake, the humanitarian response, reconstruction plans, and the challenges ahead. A case featured fragments of the Holy Trinity murals and the recovery project.

We wanted to give Haitian art, the Haitian people, a voice.—Marla Goldwasser

Haiti has long known the blues. When the earthquake struck, our response was to attempt to show every color of the rainbow that is Haitian art. Saving Grace, our not-for-profit survey exhibition of painting, curated by Gerald Alexis, opened less than nine months after the disaster, presenting a “before and after” example of the Cultural Recovery Project’s work. The show was a celebration, especially for New York’s Haitian community. We remain committed to the Smithsonian’s effort to rescue Haiti’s threatened art, and even more so to the empowerment of the Haitian people to safeguard and honor their past, while creating, with love and respect, their future.—W. T. Hillman, Affirmation Arts
WITH CULTURAL CARE IN MIND

STEVE MELLOR

We are all aware of, and possibly participated on an individual level in, the worldwide outpouring of contributions to humanitarian relief efforts in Haiti after the earthquake. Such unrestricted giving, I believe, is a fundamental component of human compassion and comes straight from the heart. We give as generously as we are able with the belief that every drop coalesces and swells into a wave of hope. The fact that we may become temporarily dismayed by stories of inequity or poor distribution does not suppress the giving spirit and we forge ahead with kindness and grace.

The staff at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art had an opportunity to give in a unique way in response to a call from Richard Kurin for 'Cultural Care Packages.' The packages were to contain art materials, from a specific list, including painting canvas, stretchers, brushes, modeling paste, and paint itemized by color, to be distributed to Haitian artists to help sustain the extraordinary art tradition that exists in Haiti, during this tragedy.

Museums depend on contributions from our board members, benefactors, and membership and thus it was a simple step for the Museum's staff members to seize this opportunity for art-focused giving. With list in pocket and cash in hand my conservation intern and I set out to shop at Utrecht's Art Supply on 12th Street N.W. in Washington, D.C. Curiously, several characteristics of an art conservator came into play during our shopping spree. The detailed list of desired materials, particularly paint colors, guided the precision with which we made our selections. No doubt the artists had a clear vision of their palette and any deviation was simply not an option. Secondly, to those of us for whom tools are an intimate extension of our thoughts, decisions, and skills, the selection of tools became a personal affair. Palette knives were gently flexed, bristles were brushed across the wrist, and stretcher bars were sighted for straight and plumb.

The Cultural Care Package from the National Museum of African Art was a joy to assemble and provided for us a collegial connection to our as yet, unmet friends in Haiti. We hope that this small token fuels our collective creative spirit and continues to unite us through art.

Steve Mellor is the Chief Conservator and Associate Director for Collections and Facilities at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[Left] Saving Grace, an exhibition at the Affirmation Arts gallery in New York, showcased Haitian painters and the work of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.

[Right] National Museum of African Art staff voluntarily donated funds to purchase materials to send to Haitian artists. Photo courtesy of Steve Mellor/Smithsonian

The Cultural Care Package from the National Museum of African Art was a joy to assemble and provided for us a collegial connection to our as yet, unmet friends in Haiti. We hope that this small token fuels our collective creative spirit and continues to unite us through art.

—Steve Mellor
In Haiti, one child out of twelve dies before the age of five. The causes are well known: respiratory infections, fever, diarrhea, dehydration, malnutrition. The fate of many of them is decided just after birth: little chance to attend school, to receive appropriate medical care, to obtain a birth certificate. Most of them will become marginalized citizens for life.

After such a tremendous disaster as the one brought by the January 12 earthquake, children are the most affected groups of our society. I immediately fought for them to be the first to receive a special attention. That’s why I created, together with Haitian artist Philippe Dodard, the program “Plas Timoun”: a place dedicated to children where they could receive appropriate attention and also socialize. Lacking school rooms or other facilities after the earthquake, we started with thirty buses equipped as informal classrooms in which Haitian artists led workshops for reading, painting, sculpting, dancing, theatre, and subjects. More than 3,000 children living in Port-au-Prince’s tarp and tent camps attended the program. In this way, Plas Timoun offered an imaginative place for children to have the opportunity to dream and to create.

Among the activities at Plas Timoun, children were encouraged to draw what they had experienced in the earthquake and its aftermath—to let their feelings out, but also express their hopes for a future life. I have personally experienced the healing power of art, the therapeutic power of art, and Michelle Obama and Jill Biden joined us when they visited Haiti.

The paintings produced by the children were exhibited at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art and seen by more than 5,000 children among the tens of thousands of visitors. In the museum, the particular drama of the Haitian children was gracefully brought up to the world stage. The paintings raised awareness about differences in people’s backgrounds, circumstances, and conditions, but more so generated a feeling of solidarity and compassion with Haiti and its citizens.

The children’s art also allowed visitors to learn more about Haiti, a country that inspired and surprised the world, when in 1804 it became the first Black republic, when vibrant personalities such as our hero, Toussaint Louverture emerged as a worldwide symbol of freedom. During the several times I came to Washington after the earthquake and visited the Smithsonian, I felt particularly touched, special, and privileged to see and admire an impressive seven-foot tall statue of Toussaint Louverture sculpted by Senegalese artist Ousmane Sow and depicted liberating a woman slave. To see this work on display, as an “Icon” of the National Museum of African Art was uplifting, and reassured me that the world would continue to remember the Haitian people.

Haitians are a people of creators. They create from nothing. Creation transcends poverty and ideology. Artists invent a new world where hope takes birth from the most terrible catastrophe. For me, art should be an important piece of the strategy to rebuild Haiti, because it mobilizes the internal energy that sleeps in every one of us; because it puts us in touch with the universal part of ourselves we share with a common humanity, where the values of solidarity, brotherhood, love, dignity, and respect for life become the driver of our behavior.
Imagine that you are a child who experienced the horrors of the earthquake that struck Haiti. In response to that devastating event and its aftermath, what would you draw or paint?

This is the question that compelled the National Museum of African Art to organize—in just six short weeks—an exhibition entitled *The Healing Power of Art: Works of Art by Haitian Children after the Earthquake*. The story was told by some ninety works on paper created by the children of “Plas Timoun,” “the Children’s Place,” established by Haiti’s then-First Lady Elisabeth D. Préval and realized by world-renowned artist Philippe Dodard. Operating from converted buses at two sites in Port-au-Prince, Plas Timoun offered art therapy as a primary service to help heal the children of Haiti.

At first, the children drew dark images of what they had seen and felt that included black and red with very little else. Soon, however, more vibrant colors were introduced. The power of art to heal became apparent as the experiences of the first grim weeks were released and began to give way to expressions of a more hopeful and brighter tomorrow.

The frightening, heartbreaking, and charming drawings by the children of Plas Timoun touched each and every staff member of the National Museum of African Art. Despite other obligations and deadlines long on the books, Museum staff opened their hearts and extended their days to create a beautiful, respectful, and welcoming exhibition geared to children and adults alike. In record time, exhibition texts were drafted and transformed into an attractively designed full-color brochure that arrived at the Museum the day before the opening. Our archivist scrambled to secure rights for photographs, video footage, and published quotations that would put a human face to the tragedy and would capture the enormity of the devastation. Our graphics designer recommended brightly colored frames for the children’s drawings and selected for the exhibition walls a range of pastel hues suggestive of Haitian architecture. Our chief conservator led the effort, turning his conservation lab into a command center where drawings were organized, treated, framed, and made ready for display.

Over 5,000 children from around the world who saw the exhibition drew pictures and wrote notes filled with hope. We have sent these love notes to the children of Haiti. Our fervent hope is that people everywhere will keep Haiti in their hearts and will do what they can to help alleviate the suffering and hardship wrought by the Haitian earthquake of 2010.

Johnnetta Betsch Cole is the Director of the National Museum of African Art. An anthropologist, she has served as the President of Spelman College and Bennett College for Women. Christine Mullen Kreamer is Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the National Museum of African Art. Cheryl Poinsette Brown is a human resources specialist and the founder and Principal of Five Smooth Stones HR Strategies and Mediation Services.
COMMUNITY OUTREACH: SCORES OF VOICES RESPOND

DEBORAH STOKES

The Healing Power of Art: Works of Art by Haitian Children after the Earthquake was a unique exhibition at the National Museum of African Art, and a space within the gallery was set up to encourage visiting teachers, students, and families, to reflect upon and respond to the Haitian children’s paintings of extraordinary chaos, trauma, and loss.

Every exhibition visitor was invited to draw a picture of friendship or a brighter tomorrow and write a message of hope for rebuilding the schools in Haiti. The Museum assured their delivery to the children participating in the arts activities at “Plas Timoun” in Port-au-Prince. Exhibition visitors—and virtual visitors—came from every state in the U.S. and some twenty-eight other nations, and composed more than five thousand sincere and compassionate messages and drawings for the children of Haiti.

Teachers used the activity as a catalyst for classroom discussion on themes encompassing psychological, cultural, economic, and humanitarian concerns. A photo gallery of a selection of the drawings and messages was created on the Museum’s Facebook page, motivating further discussion from the on-line community. Due to the success of the community interaction and outreach, the exhibit was extended for five months beyond its original closing date.

In addition, a real-time video-conference was convened in November 2010 at the U.S. Department of Education as the opening event for International Education Week, taking the exhibition beyond the museum walls through new media. A cross-cultural exchange between a group of the young artists in Port-au-Prince and an award-winning French Club at J.O. Wilson Public Elementary School in Washington, D.C., connected the children across international borders. Special pre-conference drawings and messages in French and English were created by the children to share.

The thousands of messages of hope and friendship created by Smithsonian visitors were hand delivered to Haiti in April 2011. Future Plas Timoun programs are planned in Haiti to continue the psychological support needed to carry on the work of treating on-going symptoms of post traumatic stress and anxiety. The exhibition and its outreach programming cast into relief the important part museums can play in creating a platform for deep social engagement and the interconnected space between art, healing, and community.

Deborah Stokes is Curator for Education at the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

[Above] Visitors to the exhibition, including thousands of children, composed written messages and art work to send to the children of Plas Timoun. Photos courtesy of the National Museum of African Art

[Right] First Lady of Haiti Elisabeth Préval (center) presents one of many paintings made by Haitian children at Plas Timoun to Johnnetta Cole and Richard Kurin. Photo by Jessica McConnell Burt/The George Washington University

110 RESTORING HOPE
The airplane that landed in Port-au-Prince brought Richard Kurin, Cori Wegener, and me down into a very different city than the one I had visited several times before as staff curator of the 2004 Smithsonian Folklife Festival program, Haiti: Creativity and Freedom From the Mountains to the Sea. It was wrenching to see this blow to the people whose creativity and resilience were remarkable despite the enormous challenges the country had faced since its founding in 1804. Was the devastated landscape of this brave but beleaguered city going to be the coup de grâce that finally conquered this nation of freedom and independence-loving people? What to say to our friends and colleagues? We knew many artists perished in the earthquake; many others were terribly injured. What would happen to the livelihoods of more than 40,000 artists that fed and housed thousands more through their beautiful creations infused with the stories, images, and songs of Haitian life? How best could we, at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, help living artists use their heritage to recover and rebuild?

Meeting with Patrick Delatour, Patrick Vilaire, Olsen Jean Julien, Georges Nader, and crafts co-op organizer Gisele Fleurant, we quickly devised a plan for the Smithsonian to purchase thousands of dollars of Haitian crafts to sell at the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival to take place in June. This would put money in artists' hands and encourage cultural production and recovery. Haitian craftspeople, artists, and musicians would be invited to perform and demonstrate their skill at the Festival and draw continued attention to Haitian culture during this crucial time.

In the weeks that followed, Gisele, Georges, and Moru Baruk from Jacmel, mobilized artists, materials, and packing for shipment. Challenges abounded: artists had lost studios, brushes, canvas, even paint with which to work. Precious supplies of beads and sequins were no longer available. Transferring advance funds to artists and getting bills of lading took double the usual time. Crafts from Jacmel almost missed the transport because there were not enough salvageable boxes in which to pack the items.

Vodou flag maker Mireille Delismé and painter Levoy Exil each came for one-week artist residencies at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival to demonstrate their work. The Festival Marketplace filled with the work of metal sculptors, papier-mâché carnival mask makers, along with painted wood, sequined bags, and other iconic Haitian crafts. The response of Festival visitors to the marketplace was enthusiastic, generating tens of thousands of dollars in sales. Many of the crafts sold out within the first week. Kreyòl speakers from local Haitian American communities mobilized, helping to translate for the visiting artists, and to help in the marketplace and at the concert featuring Boukman Eksperyans and troubadour Tine Salvant. Haitian Ambassador Raymond Joseph introduced the groups who performed to packed audiences on the National Mall in front of the Smithsonian Castle. In media interviews Boukman founders, Mimerose and Lolo Beaubrun, spoke about the important roles for artists in the recovery.

Participation in the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project with Haitian friends and colleagues has been a deeply meaningful and even personally transformative experience. As a researcher, artist, and African descendant, it has been the fulfillment of a life-long interest to facilitate the presentation of Haitian culture to a wider public. I was already impressed by the artistic and intellectual virtuosity, dynamism, and cultural confidence of Haitian artists, scholars, organizers, cultural activists, storytellers. After the earthquake I was awed and humbled by their inner reserves and the capacity to overcome adversity.

I was particularly incensed by the false media portrayal of Haitians as helpless victims and took pride in the way that the Smithsonian has worked with, not around, not in spite of, our Haitian colleagues in a process of reciprocal learning and mutual capacity building.

Diana Baird N’Diaye is a Cultural Specialist with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and served as a Co-Curator for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Haiti program in 2004.

[Above] Visitors to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival Marketplace enjoyed a range of Haitian arts and crafts. Photo by Walter Larrimore/Smithsonian

[Next page] Boukman Eksperyans performs at the 2010 Smithsonian Folklife Festival in a special concert highlighting Haiti. Photo by Jeff Tinsley/Smithsonian
ENCOURAGING A HAITIAN CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

GERI BENOIT

By the summer of 2010, I was in Washington at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, serving as an impromptu interpreter for the colorful Saint Soleil painter Levoy Exil, and a CNN feature story on Haitian culture.

If we were going to see a renaissance of Haitian culture we needed to promote it around the world. I worked with the Smithsonian to bring Haitian arts and crafts from the Festival Marketplace to Rome to be offered, with other items by Anna Fendi and Stephanel, at the Haitian Embassy Christmas Bazaar.

The Embassy, with support from Italy’s Minister of Culture and AVSI, helped promote some of Haiti’s best artists like Edouard Duval-Carrie, Sergine Andre, and Jean-Herard Celeur, a Sculptor of the Grand Rue of Atis-Resistans Collective to the Venice 54th Biennale of Contemporary Art—the first Haitian Pavilion at the Biennale. This was a rousing success with sales and media attention calling the Haiti exhibition one of the “five must-sees.”

Still a year later, the Embassy launched FashionABLE: Haiti in partnership with the Inter-American Bank of Development, McKinsey and HaitiCFI to promote viable cultural industries in Haiti. The project seeks to join Haiti’s world-recognized design skills and artisanal production capabilities with the Italian fashion industry and American high-end markets. Diaspora fashion designers like Haitian-Italian Stella Jean can provide a bridge between Haitian producers and worldwide consumers. Encouraging Haitian creativity and providing outlets for it can not only energize a cultural renaissance but also have enormously significant economic consequences.
Operating the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center has been incredibly fulfilling, but also challenging.

The project’s mission and the arrangements needed to get it up and running quickly and efficiently in Haiti through the Cultural Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince shaped its management structure.

The Smithsonian took the lead in managing the overall project. This meant concluding formal memos of understanding with the Government of Haiti, both through the Ministry of Tourism and Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction and the Ministry of Culture and Communication. This established the legal basis for the operation of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince and for mutual oversight and collaboration. Implementation of these provisions and the responsibility for on-the-ground coordination rest with Olsen Jean Julien as the Center’s Manager.
A formal agreement and contract defined FOKAL as the Smithsonian’s fiscal agent in Haiti. FOKAL would receive funds monthly from the Smithsonian to disburse to the Center for budgeted expenses. Agreements and formal contracts between the Smithsonian and ICCROM, and with AIC, allowed for payments by the Smithsonian for specified designated services. The Smithsonian executed formal contracts with Olsen, Cori Wegener, Stephanie Hornbeck (via Caryatid Conservation Services, Inc.), Rosa Lowinger, and Virginia Dominguez and others, like building landlord Samir Handal, for the provision of goods and services to accomplish the Center’s work. The Smithsonian also had such a contract in place with the Haitian Ministry of Culture and Communication to accomplish specifically designated projects with its various cultural agencies. Depending upon the particular type of service and arrangement, either I, Olsen, Cori, or Stephanie, would typically be the one to manage the relationship and coordinate the service provision. I would deal mainly with the official entities, funding, and contracting; Cori with cooperating organizations, Stephanie with conservators, and Olsen with running the Center.

Obtaining funds was always a challenge, and the early support of The Broadway League plain and simple made the project possible. Support from the federal cultural agencies was important in providing the conservators. The majority of funds were to come from U.S. AID. Funding for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was included in the U.S. Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2010, P.L. 111-212, (HR 4899) Chapter 10, the Act for Haiti, a $91.7 million allocation for earthquake relief which was passed by the U.S. Congress on July 27, 2010, and signed by President Obama two days later. It took months and months after that however, for the Smithsonian to actually receive its $2 million funding, and so it had to expend its own money as “risk” or “advance” funds—essentially loaning itself the money for the project with the expectation that it would eventually receive the allotment from U.S. AID.

The delay was due to the fact that Congress required the Secretary of State to submit a detailed spending plan for the appropriation. This was done in the fall, with the concurrence of the Administrator of U.S. AID. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was described in the spending plan:

As part of this effort to strengthen Haiti’s public institutions, supplemental funds will also be provided to the Smithsonian to support the needed preservation of Haiti’s cultural heritage—important as both a social and economic asset in Haiti’s future development. USAID will provide $2 million toward support of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. That project, organized and managed by the Smithsonian Institution (under formal agreement with the GOH Ministry of Culture and Communication and Haiti’s Presidential Commission for Reconstruction, in partnership with the U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities) rescues, recovers, safeguards and helps restore Haitian artwork, artifacts, documents, media, and architectural features damaged and endangered by the earthquake and its aftermath. The project operates a Cultural Recovery Center in a certified safe and secure building which houses conservation labs and facilities where cultural materials are catalogued, treated and stored. The project also targets Haiti’s public and private museums and culturally significant sites, and trains dozens of Haitians in heritage conservation and management.

That spending plan was reviewed by Congress. A number of bureaucratic hurdles had to be cleared by U.S. AID and the Smithsonian concerning the existence of a proper appropriation account for the funds and the standing of the Smithsonian and the project to meet the conditions regarding expenditures for foreign aid. This took months and the involvement of the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget in order to resolve. The Smithsonian and U.S. AID concluded an Inter-Agency Transfer agreement on December 27, 2010, and the Smithsonian actually received the funds months later—about thirteen months after the earthquake and nine months after beginning its work.

Overall, the project (essentially the operation of the Center in Haiti, and not including the various exhibitions and activities in the U.S.) from inception to November 1, 2011, was budgeted at $3,265,000. Of this amount, about $360,000 consists of in-kind services provided by the volunteer conservators deployed through the American Institute for Conservation (who took no fees, though their travel, room, board, and miscellaneous expenses had to be covered) and the service of Smithsonian conservators, experts, and others whose salary was paid for by the Smithsonian. Operating the Center in Port-au-Prince, paying its staff and service providers, renting, operating, and securing the Center’s building, renting vehicles, constructing labs and storage, and conducting training consumed the overwhelming part of the budget.

The return on this investment has been quite large, and points to what became a very efficient operation. Considering just the treatment of 30,000 items of material culture as an output, it cost on average roughly $100 per item to conserve. There was of course a great deal of variability in the actual costs on individual items by type—preserving the three Holy Trinity murals cost about $250,000, whereas cleaning some of the library books may have cost a few dollars a piece.
HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT STRUCTURE

PRIVATE FUNDERs
The Broadway League
Affirmation Arts
Other donors

PUBLIC FUNDERs
Smithsonian Institution
U.S. AID

PUBLIC FUNDERs
National Endowment for the Arts
National Endowment for the Humanities
Institute of Museum & Library Services

COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS—INTERNATIONAL
ICCROM Training
UNESCO Coordination
International Committee of the Blue Shield Coordination

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Management
Procurement
Volunteer Conservators & Experts
Venues, programs, products

COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS—U.S.
President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities Partnership
U.S. Department of State Coordination
American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
Volunteer Conservators
U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield Advice/Coordination
William J. Clinton Presidential Center Exhibition

COOPERATING INSTITUTIONS—HAITIAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL
FOKAL Fondation Connaissance et Liberté Fiscal Agent
Collection Conservation & Training with:
Centre d’Art
Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
Nader Gallery & Museum
Corvington Library
Trouillot Library
Marianne Lehmann Collection
Sugar Cane Park & Museum
Rainbow Art Gallery
Atelier Jean Rene Jerome
Fondation Culture Creation
Galerie Flamboyant
Galerie Gingerbread
Museum of Haitian Art

HAITIAN CULTURAL RECOVERY CENTER
(Centre de Sauvetage de Biens Culturels)
Management
Facility
Operations
Conservation Labs/Activities
Training
Staffing
Support Services
Communication, Liaison

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS—HAITIAN GOVERNMENT
Ministry of Culture & Communication Coordination
Ministry of Tourism/Presidential Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction
Collection Conservation & Training with:
National Archives
National Bureau of Ethnology
National Heritage Preservation (ISPAN)
National Library
National Museum (MUPANAH)
# Haiti Cultural Recovery Center Budget

## Sources of Funds—Income

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funds</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S. AID/Smithsonian advance funds</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smithsonian funds</td>
<td>$240,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Broadway League donation</td>
<td>$276,000</td>
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<td>IMLS, NEA, NEH grants to FAIC</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
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<td>Affirmation Arts donation</td>
<td>$77,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other cash donations</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-kind Smithsonian services and staff deployments</td>
<td>$353,000</td>
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<td>In-kind contributions of FAIC for volunteer conservators</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,265,000</strong></td>
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## Uses of Funds—Expenses

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Building rental, utilities, security, and services for the Center in Port-au-Prince</td>
<td>$690,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center operating funds for Haitian staff, consultants, trainees, service providers, vehicles, housing, materials, and supplies</td>
<td>$1,230,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payments to U.S. and international conservators for specialized services, travel</td>
<td>$590,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind salaries and benefits for Smithsonian and AIC volunteer conservators</td>
<td>$480,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment, supplies, and materials sent to Haiti</td>
<td>$115,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing, travel, events, and other costs</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smithsonian overhead recovery</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Cultural Organizations:**

Collections Surveyed, Assessed, or Treated and/or Personnel Trained by the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project

**Public Institutions**
- Archives Nationales d’Haïti (ANH)
- Bibliothèque Nationale (BN)
- Bureau National d’Ethnologie (BNE)
- Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN)
- Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
- Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication
- Musée numismatique-Banque de la République d’Haïti (BRH)
- Musée du Panthéon National (MUPANAH)
- Palais Nationale

**Private Institutions**
- Association Haïtienne des Cinéastes-Centre
- Pétion Bolivar
- Cathédrale Episcopale de Sainte Trinité
- Cathédrale Nationale
- Centre d’Art
- Centre de Sauvetage de Biens Culturels
- Corvington Library
- Ecole Atelier de Jacmel
- Fondation Culture Création
- Fondation Françoise Canez Auguste
- Fondation pour la Préservation, la Valorisation et la Production d'Oeuvres Culturelles Haïtiennes (FPVPOCH)
- Galerie Flamboyant
- Galerie Gingerbread
- Musée d’Art Haïtien
- Musée Nader
- OMRH-CSBC
- Parc Historique de la Canne à Sucre
- Productions Fanal
- Radio Télé Ginen
- Radio Télé Lumière
- Radio Télé Métropole
- Radio Télé Soleil
- Radio Télévision Nationale d’Haïti
- Rainbow Art Gallery
- Trouillot Library
Olsen and I developed the project budget at inception with input from Stephanie, Cori, AIC’s Eric Pourchot, and others, and then with Lorraine Mangonès and Vanessa Goscinny at FOKAL, and Roberta Waldorf and Cindy Zarate, at the Smithsonian, tracked and modified it monthly as needed. To do so, we needed to set up a system for documenting and reviewing expenditures. Alison McNally, the Smithsonian’s Under Secretary for Finance and Administration, travelled to Haiti to meet with Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor and his staff at the Center to ensure proper, auditable procedures which were then reviewed by the Smithsonian’s Office of the Comptroller. Each and every Center transaction has been accompanied by a receipt. Every dollar—whether in Haitian gourdes, Haitian dollars, or American currency, has been accounted for in monthly reports to the Smithsonian. The Center, FOKAL, and the Smithsonian have kept meticulous financial records and have followed established regular reporting and accountability measures to assure the proper use of funds.

Putting in place the structure and funding to operate the Center is a means to an end. The fulfillment of the project’s mission comes through the substantive work of the Center, saving items from the rubble, taking in collections, treating and inventorying them, working on special projects such as the Holy Trinity murals, and conducting training courses and workshops. Operationally, this work has necessitated close interactions with Haiti’s key public and private cultural institutions.
The conservators, Haitian, American, and international are the stars—but they could not do their jobs without the many others who work at and support the Center. These are mainly those Haitians and Americans who carry out innumerable tasks to enable the Center to accomplish its mission. They keep the Center clean and secure, drive conservators to sites and collections, build and transport things, answer the telephones, make the copies, buy the supplies, arrange shipments, keep accounts, process contracts, and provide the services that are absolutely necessary for the project to function.

As the Center has developed, so too have its routines and procedures. It has provided a needed source of stability for many lives. None the less, the Center's staff, consultants, contractors, conservators, and trainees have faced and overcome considerable personal difficulties to well-serve the project's mission. Many Haitians and their families continue to live in substandard conditions, displaced from homes, struggling with basic services, and with relatives out of work or in poor health. For some of the long term American and international staff, service to the Center has meant being away from family, friends, and home, and in an environment where one is always mindful of safety and security concerns.

All who work at the Center have been affected by the arrival of tropical storms and hurricanes. The cholera epidemic made all aware of a dangerous health situation, and prompted preventive measures. The long Haitian presidential election process engendered periods of instability which at times forced the Center to prudently close. Add to these circumstances a general lack of public security, gangs, and violence in the refugee camps and other ills connected to alcoholism and drug abuse, and one can understand the unsettling backdrop of life in Port-au-Prince. Indeed, the wife of one of the Center's staffers was kidnapped. It had nothing to do with her husband's position or the Center's work, and she was safely returned—but it rattled all of us. In another case, an employee of the landlord of our rented “conservator's house”—where many of our Smithsonian and AIC conservators have stayed—became intoxicated and made inappropriate advances to one of the occupants. The police were called, and the offender was summarily dismissed.

Yet with all the difficulties, the vast majority of the people who have worked at, deployed to, and been involved in the Center have found it to be a comfortable, professional, safe, and secure facility. They have found it a place of friendship and strong camaraderie, joining together people of diverse interests and backgrounds. And the work it does is universally regarded as vitally significant for inspiring Haiti's future. Without any instruction or direction, several of the conservation assistants—Junior Norélus, Joseph Racine, Wanglish Michel, and Franck Fontaine, artists in their own right—created a wonderful mural in the compound's courtyard, a symbolic representation of the Center's spirit.
There were many challenges we had to face in managing the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. First and foremost was the uncertainty about events and the people. Setting up and managing the country’s first Cultural Recovery Center, only five months after a devastating earthquake, was like developing a plan to walk through an unknown city wrapped into the deepest fog. No matter how sensitive or discriminating your judgment could be, no matter how skilled or intelligent, you had to be ready to face many surprises.

For many of us working at the Center, this experience was also emotionally challenging. Working with a constantly changing team of people from different backgrounds and cultures, in a post-earthquake environment, and after witnessing the loss of some 300,000 human lives, makes for a very difficult undertaking.

I knew and accepted this. And, in this context, I had to plan, organize, coordinate, lead, and control the Center’s activities, aided by the supervision and guidance of the Smithsonian Institution, and the Government of Haiti. Fortunately, the Smithsonian-Haitian Government partnership was rock solid at the highest levels. My relationship with the lead Ministers, Marie-Laurence Lassègue and Patrick Delatour, was strong and had a long history. Richard Kurin and I exchanged e-mails many times daily—some 4,000 over the course of the project. FOKAL, as our fiscal agent, shared in the goals of the project and had developed dependable procedures with both, the Smithsonian and the Cultural Recovery Center, for the movement and accounting of funds.

We continued to work well with other partners. U. S. Committee of the Blue Shield and the American Institute for Conservation, were totally engaged and dependable. Richard negotiated a series of additional agreements with UNESCO, ICCROM, and the International Committee of
the Blue Shield to help with various aspects of the project and ensure coordination with other efforts. I worked closely with the Haitian public cultural agencies and private organizations to keep all informed and to coordinate what we called “Special Recovery Projects” to address the needs of each collection taking into account particular institutional contexts. During the course of our work we defined nine Special Recovery Projects with the collaboration of the Centre d’Art, ISPAN, MUPANAH, Episcopal Church, National Archives, National Library, Corvington Collection, Trouillot Collection, and the Foundation for Production and Valorization of Cultural Heritage which owns the Lehmann Collection. I served as the liaison with project coordinators from each of these institutions, learned a lot about Haitian history, art, and culture, and about keeping our projects clear and focused. The first two big special projects—treating over 7,400 art works and documents in the Centre d’Art collection, and saving the murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral were major, became widely known in Haiti and beyond, and inspired confidence with other organizations. We also took in smaller numbers of collection items from many other galleries, museums, and archives, which we processed in our three functioning conservation studios for objects, paintings, and works on paper. We thought training Haitians in collection management and conservation was a vitally important activity from the beginning, and started planning training activities from the day we opened in June 2010. We enlisted ICCROM as a partner and they, working with the CRC staff and the Smithsonian, developed a three-week long session in August 2010, for twenty-six participants from fourteen cultural institutions. In turn, these trainees then took the lead in defining special projects for their institutions—the best of which we chose to pursue.

Events, both surprising and predictable, continued to unfold throughout the evolution of the project. With the hurricane season from June to November 2010, the cholera outbreak in October 2010, and the presidential elections from November 2010 to March 2011, the environment was completely volatile. But the planning process, recognizing no single approach would do, continued to allow us to re-adapt our strategies.

With these contingencies and a variety of partners and collaborators, coordination became key—and one of my most essential responsibilities. Inside the CRC, I facilitated the coordination between the special recovery projects, training activities, conservation treatment, and the logistic aspects of CRC management. Every Monday at 9 a.m., I held a CRC staff meeting. In those weekly sessions, I met with the registrar, training coordinator, chief conservator, office manager, and administrative assistant, to discuss the activities for the week, define the priorities, and coordinate the use of our limited resources in a collaborative working environment.

Sometimes, I extended these meetings to visiting conservators, laboratory assistants, and special project coordinators, to get them more involved and engaged. I would use the meetings to explain our progress, identify new problems, find solutions to them, and make sure our activities were comprehensively and coherently understood.

For me, the CRC staff meetings were like a barometer. With them, I could get a feel for what was going on inside the CRC and in the broader, often challenging external environment. I could understand the urgent issues, smell potential conflicts among the activities, and anticipate solutions when possible. With the team effort at the CRC, and with the support of our many partners, and very talented and knowledgeable people, we were able to develop an unusual clarity to walk through the fog and progress with the project’s goals and objectives.
THE CENTER’S CONSERVATION PROGRAM

STEPHANIE HORNBECK

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was shaped by several variables, which while constraining, nonetheless, contributed to its programmatic success.

First, the extensive damage to cultural heritage generally and collections specifically, created a great need for specialized professional expertise to undertake a response and to introduce a professional conservation methodology to a nation without it. Second, an agreed to eighteen-month term for the project fixed the time period. Third, the staffing model depended upon numerous participants serving for successive short periods. Last, a tight budget imposed constraints on staffing and necessitated the careful weighing and prioritization of project needs.

To conform to these parameters, while supporting project initiatives, we needed a simple, practical, and adaptable conservation structure for the project. It had to allow for multiple levels of expertise from beginning assistant to experienced conservator, as well as the interchangeability of individuals. A volunteer model with rapid turn-over meant that treatments were often started by one conservator and finished by another. Procedures and documentation had to be decipherable by multiple people. Equipment like cameras and microscopes had to be “user-friendly.” Reproducible practical methods had to be employed. Continuity depended upon communication from person to person.

PROJECT OVERSIGHT

As the project was funded by American public and private sources and involved a large investment of American expertise, continuous oversight and communication were critical. Indeed, such an extensive project, with multiple partnerships, and an international dimension requires a clear command structure, where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Richard Kurin and Cori Wegener developed a mission with clear goals that involved key stakeholders. Richard regularly communicated directives. Haitian Project Manager Olsen Jean Julien provided the critical interface to Haitian ministers and culture professionals. I organized conservation expertise to support preservation priorities established by Haitian cultural institutions.

Because the funding for foreign conservators came from the Smithsonian Institution or via the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC), administering an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant, project conservators were accountable to those organizations, even while working in Haiti. It was important to adhere to directives coming from the Smithsonian and to uphold standards of practice and the code of ethics of the AIC. Operationally, these mandates translated into providing professional conservation support for initiatives receiving Smithsonian funding. Yet, though accountable to American professional organizations, work was happening in Haiti; we had to respect the way of conducting business there by acculturating and striving for middle ground.

STAFFING

Our project has the good fortune to have a staff of professional Haitian colleagues who provided guidance and support for our conservation efforts. The role of determining what patrimony should be saved by the Smithsonian project rests with individual Haitian institutions; all decisions regarding prioritization by cultural value rest with Haitian professionals. Project Manager Olsen Jean Julien drew upon his numerous culture sector contacts from his recent tenure as Minister of Culture and Communication. Over time he established a network of professional colleagues at art institutions; these included directors, collection managers, and curators. Registrar Carmelita Douby interfaced with conservators by serving as project liaison for efforts at MUPANAH and the Lehmann Vodou collection, as well as tracking damaged works at the Center. Fritz Berg Jeannot assisted some fifteen conservators and allied experts in the successful realization of training activities. Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor oversaw logistics to transport and lodge conservators and purchased locally available supplies as needed.

Scaffolding offers some protection to the damaged Last Supper mural at the Holy Trinity Cathedral. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian
The conservation staffing model involved a chief conservator, who provided a continuous presence in Haiti to oversee conservation activities, and staff conservators, who were contractors or volunteers. Over a six-month period, contract painting conservator Viviana Dominguez, and contract architectural materials conservator Rosa Lowinger, oversaw the Holy Trinity Cathedral murals conservation project. For periods ranging from six to twelve weeks, three contract conservators Anais Gailhaud (objects), Kristin Gisladottir (paintings), and Bernard Colla (paper), participated in operations in the studios, focusing mainly on treatment. Upon finishing the murals project in June 2011, Dominguez was hired to oversee the activities of the painting conservation studio.

Volunteer professional conservators from the Smithsonian Institution and AIC provided a large contribution to the work force. The support of AIC Executive Director Eryl Wentworth, and ongoing efforts of Eric Pourchot, AIC Institutional Advancement Director, were essential. With the aid of a $90,000 IMLS grant and the coordination of the AIC-CERT Coordinator, first Aimee Primeaux and then Beth Antoine, small teams of two or three conservators at a time deployed for two-week periods. While the mandated short deployments result in high turnover and necessitate time-consuming continuous orientation of new volunteers, they had the positive aspects of regular infusions of fresh energy and enthusiasm. By the end of the project, forty-two volunteer conservators from fifteen states in the United States and Quebec, Canada, contributed 415 days for an in-kind value of over $207,000. Of the forty-eight deployments (including repeat volunteers), the Smithsonian provided sixteen and AIC provided thirty-two.

Lastly, we needed a corps of assistants to support our efforts on the ground. Through professional contacts and postings made at Haitian fine art, and chemistry programs, we hired and then trained twelve conservation assistants. Their fresh ideas and openness made for lively discussions about conservation concepts and inspired optimism, as I thought about the future face of preservation in Haiti.

FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, AND EQUIPMENT

A major conservation objective has been to establish conservation studios that have materials and equipment that will remain in Haiti, ideally at an accessible Center. The current Cultural Recovery Center operates in a former United Nations Development Program office building. We have retro-fitted offices to serve as studio and storage spaces. Access to stable archival and conservation grade materials is very limited, and 100% of such supplies must be imported. I relied greatly on AIC’s Eric Pourchot to manage supply orders. To date, approximately $100,000 has been spent to purchase microscopes, easels, digital cameras, computers, printers, vacuums, fabrics, papers, adhesives, artist supplies, fine hand tools and heavy tools, and personal protective equipment. These have been hand-carried by conservators and other colleagues in more than sixty-five trips.

CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

An ongoing effort was directed at bridging the gap of experience between foreign conservators and Haitian colleagues. With twin goals of maximizing a transfer of knowledge and creating opportunities to share ideas, conservators worked directly with Haitian colleagues, project managers, and Cultural Recovery Center studio assistants. Conservators were assigned to conduct assessments, to participate in the start of work, to provide basic training, to undertake treatment, and to provide support at stages throughout the project.
Conservation objectives depend upon context; after a disaster, stabilizing the greatest volume of works possible is the priority. Our conservation activities fell under four main scenarios:

- Large-scale assessment;
- Guiding or supporting large stabilization projects at the Center or on-site at institutions;
- Providing training;
- Performing advanced treatments.

The response workflow has sequential stages.

Condition assessments are performed before any treatment is undertaken. The assessment is a necessary stage which gauges the degree of damage sustained, the overall scope of work needed, and possible conservation strategies to apply. Assessments provide the data necessary for future short- and long-term interventions. Assessments have been undertaken at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Center d’Art, Bibliothèque Nationale, Archives Nationales, Corvington Library, and the Lehmann Vodou collection.

After the assessment-phase, interventions are implemented, based on identified priorities. Improving housing and storage conditions are the first steps. They are critical because many works can remain stable under good conditions until any treatment can be undertaken in the future. Next, basic stabilization measures were undertaken. These involved surface-cleaning objects. Project teams consisting of a project manager, conservator(s), and assistants undertook the work. Stabilization measures and storage improvements have been undertaken for: the Centre d’Art, MUPANAH, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Archives Nationales d’Haïti, and the Lehmann Vodou collection.

Repair treatments are the last phase to be executed. Much of the earthquake damage to individual works of art is structural, manifested as tears and punctures in paintings and works on paper, and breakage of three-dimensional objects. Surface damage frequently appears as mold and/or significant accretions of dirt. For more extensive treatments, when only a small percentage of treatments relative to total number of damaged works can be undertaken, priorities must be determined. The goal is to treat the most valuable examples of cultural patrimony first.

At the Center, a selection of works deemed of the highest cultural priority received further treatment involving repair and/or aesthetic re-integration. Over 100 works of art have received this higher level of treatment. With advanced structural issues, this level of treatment is extremely time-consuming; several individual works have required four to eight weeks of treatment. Believing in their abilities, I assigned the most complicated painting treatment to two gifted professional artists and teachers, Haitians Jean Ménard Derenoncourt and Franck Louissaint. Under the guidance of painting conservators Gísladóttir and Dominguez, they successfully treated a painting by Mario Benjamin in the Presidential Palace collection which was torn in two and had fifty-eight tears.

Our conservators have achieved some remarkable and dramatic results. These demonstrate that when undertaken by professionals using accepted methods of practice and stable materials, treatments can successfully recover art works believed to have been damaged beyond repair. Such stable treatments preserve cultural patrimony for future generations and prove that advanced conservation work is certainly possible in Haiti.

While much has been achieved, post-disaster cultural recovery requires an investment of years of dedication. Perhaps a quarter century of work remains. A dearth of professional expertise, the continuation of out-dated practices, the absence of locally-available archival and conservation-grade materials, the humid climate, an absence of adequate storage conditions, and a dire need of funding indicate an uncertain future for preservation in Haiti.

Now, Haitian professionals in the culture sector need to determine if it will be possible to build and sustain a corps of local preservation experts and a facility to care for Haitian cultural patrimony. I hope our early foundation-building preservation efforts will take root and flourish in a country that so values its world-renowned art.
MY EKSPERYANS:  
THE HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT

ROBERTA A. WALSDORF

Because I am from New Orleans, Louisiana, and watched my hometown be devastated by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, I personally know that when disasters occur, there are people who want to help families rebuild and communities get back on their feet. But when Haiti was ravaged by the earthquake, I had no idea that my role as “mission enabler” at the Smithsonian Institution would contribute to saving another country’s cultural heritage.

As the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project evolved and funding became available, memoranda of agreement were signed, travel arrangements were made, and contracts were let. On the surface, this sounds like just a bunch of paperwork, but accomplishing all of this required tremendous amounts of coordination, cooperation, collaboration, and perseverance. Specifically, the project required extensive hands-on orchestration because there were so many participants not only from within the Smithsonian but also from around the world. Even the day-to-day processes and activities were more complex than usual because documents had to be translated from English to French and vice versa, international wires had to be processed, and currencies had to be converted. Sometimes we needed translators just so that people could have conversations to clear up misunderstandings and clarify needs.

My role as financial analyst required me to do everything from negotiating contracts, to purchasing laptops and microscopes in Washington that were hand-carried to Haiti, to balancing the accounts to ensure the project was within budget. One of my biggest challenges was explaining procedures and the Haitian context to some of my colleagues who could not understand what it was like to work in a country that lacked a strong administrative infrastructure. I gained a true understanding of the phrase “working without a net!”

The saying is true: perseverance always pays off. In the end, our effort to establish the Cultural Recovery Center became a reality, and Haiti’s cultural heritage is being saved.

Roberta A. Walsdorf is a Financial Analyst in the Smithsonian Institution’s Office of the Under Secretary for Finance & Administration.
CREATIVE CONTRACTING TO DO GOOD WORK IN HAITI

CAROL MONAHAN

My division of the Smithsonian’s contracting office is responsible for reviewing and approving purchase orders—a major way the Institution procures goods and services.

Because of the nature of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project and the special attention it required, I determined that all Haiti purchase order requirements would be channeled through me.

Working on the Haiti project has been a contracting challenge. Many Friday afternoons, normally after 5 p.m., I could expect a call from Roberta Walsdorf of Richard Kurin’s office, sometimes with Geoffrey Cavanaugh on the line as well, desperately asking for a favor to process a purchase order and to approve their contracting action so a contractor could begin work or have money wired to him. I never knew what the problem of the day would be. We had terminations of contracts, re-awarding of contracts, realigning funds, working with a contractor who had no bank account, and creating specific clauses alerting contractors of the risks of doing business in Haiti. We devised ways of getting money to personnel when there were problems and obstacles in making transfers. We made allowances for paying contractors in advance so they could hire guides, vehicles, translators, or whatever else they needed and pay in cash—not usual contracting operating procedures.

We showed that the bureaucracy could adapt to an emergency situation, be flexible and assure accountability, while at the same time achieving a very worthy mission. Working on contracts for the Haiti project was creative contracting at its finest.

Carol Monahan is the Associate Director for Simplified Acquisitions, Office of Contracting & Personal Property Management and has worked at the Smithsonian for six years.

My contributions to the Institution’s Haiti Project were behind-the-scenes. For over a year, I have had the privilege of working on the contracting end of four key relationships on the Haiti Project; the lease for the Cultural Recovery Center, the contract to transfer funds to FOKAL to fund the Center, a contract with the Ministry of Culture for special projects, and the conservation contract to save the murals at Holy Trinity Cathedral. All four agreements had to be completed expeditiously, and with limited immediate available funding. They were all complex given the emergency situation in Haiti. Although my work didn’t require me to make a personal trip to Haiti to witness the devastation and conservation efforts first-hand, I was honored to be able to contribute, in some way, to the Institution’s efforts to recover, conserve, and preserve Haiti’s cultural heritage.—Cindy Zarate, Supervisory Attorney, Office of Contracting, Smithsonian Institution
CHAPTER EIGHT

RECOVERING THE CENTRE D'ART COLLECTION

The Centre d'Art has been at the center of the art movement in Haiti. When we saw the paintings sitting in two shipping containers, sitting under the sun for six months, it was a heartbreaking situation.—Olsen Jean Julien

The Centre d'Art has long been a key institution in Haiti’s creative life. It was founded at a moment in Haiti’s history in the 1940s that saw a flowering of Haitian pride and confidence in its artistic and creative impulses. The Centre d’Art then encouraged and promoted that movement. Creativity typically builds upon itself, growing and expanding insights and horizons.

The earthquake did the opposite in terms of the Centre’s building, studios, galleries, workshops, and collections. When I first visited, the site was in utter ruin. Most of the building had collapsed—the rest a shell. The artwork was jammed into two containers parked on the street, suffering the ills of high humidity, insect infestation, mold, and other damage.
Thanks to the efforts of Haitian leaders in arts and culture, and key members of the Centre’s board, after many months, Olsen Jean Julien, Cori Wegener, and Stephanie Hornbeck, working with Axelle Liautaud and Lorraine Mangonès, were able to secure permission to move the containers to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center, remove the works, inventory them, and begin their treatment. It was a landmark occasion, for by doing so the artistic legacy of more than sixty years would be saved. Thanks also to the efforts of ICCROM’s Aparna Tandon, and UNESCO’s Elke Selter, engineering troops from Japan who were part of the U.N. military force, MINUSTAH, were mobilized to bring to the Centre d’Art site heavy equipment. They worked closely with the conservators to dig through the rubble and remove another 150 items or so that had sat in the rubble for some seven months. Their removal provided an excellent training opportunity for more than two dozen Haitian trainees who worked on the site rescue project.

The long process of treating the collection was accomplished by an excellent team of Centre d’Art staff and artists led by Marie-Lucie Vendryes, who had served as a former Director of MUPANAH, the National Museum. They did a superb job, tracking, treating, and housing a collection that otherwise would have receded to mere memory. Now, because of their efforts, it is available for future generations to enjoy, to educate, and to inspire.
PRESERVING THE CENTRE D'ART COLLECTION

STEPHANIE HORNBECK

The work undertaken to recover, stabilize, and treat the Centre d'Art collection of nearly 5,000 paintings, sculpture, and works on paper represents the largest conservation effort undertaken by the Cultural Recovery Center. All of the Center’s permanent staff, fifteen conservators, two teams of six people each, and all twenty-six of the ICCROM training course participants would share in preserving this collection. Its dramatic earthquake story was emblematic of our cultural recovery efforts as a whole.

After the collapse of the Centre d'Art’s gingerbread building in the earthquake, staff and artists recovered what art and sculpture they could from the rubble and stored it in two large metal containers on the street and protected by armed guards until late August 2010. By visiting the Centre site several times from June onward and conducting assessments of conditions in the containers, I noted the growth of mold and measured the humidity with a data-logger at one point. The humidity reached eighty-eight percent putting the collection at grave risk. The Centre d'Art's board understood that storage of the collection in non-acclimatized hot metal containers was not ideal. As trust was gained in our project’s efforts, steps were taken to move the collection to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center for stabilization.

A basic methodology to process the collection involved these goals:

- Recover as many works as possible;
- Stabilize them via dry-cleaning and treatment for mold;
- Catalogue them;
- Create written and photographic records that can eventually be incorporated into the Centre d’Art’s collection records;
- Store the works in a stable environment.

The methodology was tested in two case studies during the three-week ICCROM course on first aid intervention and collections management held in August 2010. One study involved on-site recovery of works still remaining in the rubble and one involved the works of art in the containers.

For the site work, Elke Selter, Cultural Officer at UNESCO in Haiti, arranged for a MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) corps of engineers—Japanese U.N. troops—to use a bulldozer and front-loader to search for works of art buried in the rubble. This marked the first time in Haiti that U.N. troops had joined with professional conservators in a systematic way to use heavy equipment to help recover cultural material. Over a two-day period, the conservators, Haitian participants in the ICCROM course, and the troops rescued approximately 150 works of art from the rubble. A number of these were badly damaged by active termite infestation and had to be discarded, yet a surprising number were saved.

The container case study was undertaken in the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center’s courtyard in Bourdon and at indoor work stations in the climate controlled building. At the end of the course, the processing protocol and three document templates were presented to project manager Marie-Lucie Vendryes to guide her work with a team of seven assistants. Over the next six months they would focus on processing the roughly 4,500 paintings and works on paper in the collection. I would later oversee the processing of the iron sculpture collection, working with object conservator Anais Gailhbaud and four assistants, Marc Gerard Estimé, Eddnyio Jeune, Erntz Jeudy, and God-Freed Enoy.

[Left] Center personnel Marise Desrosiers, and Annette Augustin among others (in yellow headgear) excavate rubble at the Center d'Art site. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck
The Centre d’Art’s collection of iron sculpture exhibits breadth in the number of artists represented and depth within the oeuvre of individual artists. The collection includes significant works of art fabricated by the founding father of Haitian ironwork sculpture, Georges Liautaud, as well as later masters Murat Briere, Serge Jolimeau, the Louisjuste brothers, and Damien Paul, among others. Post-earthquake, the collection numbers 337 pieces and includes both fer découpé (cut iron sheet metal) and wrought iron sculptures. Liautaud’s work marked the beginning of a new era of sculpture in Haiti, one which re-purposed iron metal of industrial origin to illustrate Vodou and Christian iconography, as well as secular figural and floral motifs. In the nearly seventy years since their first fabrication, fer découpé sculpture has come to embody a quintessentially Haitian art form.

A selection of the most damaged art works among the most culturally important received further conservation treatment. Art historian Mireille Jérôme and collector Axelle Liautaud, members of the Centre d’Art board, prioritized the works by cultural importance. The primary goal of conservation treatment for the iron objects involved stabilization by removing surface dirt and reducing aggressive corrosion. Following a protocol developed by metals conservator Paul Jett, Head of Conservation, Freer and Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution, object conservators Gailhbaud, Renee Jolly, Teresa Myers, and Martha Singer treated twenty-five sculptures, while also guiding assistants in the work. Paper conservator Bernard Colla treated nineteen works on paper for tears and mold. Painting conservators Kristín Gisladóttir, Viviana Dominguez, Éloïse Paquette, Mark Aronson, Jean Ménard Derenoncourt, and Franck Louissaint, would mend dramatic structural tears to painted canvases and deal with the breakage of masonite panels.

The successful recovery and preservation of the Centre d’Art collection more than any other project best represents the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project core mission. It would span nearly the entire eighteen-month timeframe and involve the greatest number of hands.
FROM SAFETY TO PRESERVATION

AXELLE LIAUTAUD

We knew the health of the Centre d’Art collection was in jeopardy sitting in the two containers in front of our collapsed building and baking for months in sun’s heat—and we had to do something to save it. Given the crisis in governance and leadership following the deaths of key people, Lorraine Mangonès and I took responsibility in the absence of a fully operational board of finally, seven months after the earthquake, arranging treatment by the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

Our agreement with the Smithsonian specified that the staff of the Cultural Recovery Center would: transport the containers to the Cultural Recovery Center site; open them in the presence of board members and a lawyer; take every step necessary to inventory clean and secure the art; return it to the possession of the Centre d’Art on demand.

Through this extremely difficult situation, during which the collection was in constant danger of disappearing, exposed to the elements and the thieves, we had been promised help by various foreign private and public institutions. None of it ever materialized except for the Cultural Recovery Center.

The great cultural and historical treasure of the Centre d’Art could have been lost. The Centre d’Art is still facing a long and hard road but without the intervention of the Smithsonian and its partners, all that might be left today would be a plaque bearing the words “in memoriam.”
The Centre d'Art collapsed in the earthquake and its rich collection of works of art ended up in the rubble. It took the almost heroic intervention of two employees, Marise Desrosiers and Henry Celestin, who rescued materials and it is to their credit that the collection is today preserved. Paintings, sculpture and archival documents were saved, placed in two containers parked outside the ruined building. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project, developed in conjunction with the Smithsonian and the Haitian Ministry of Culture and Communication, sought to save this cultural material. The containers were transported to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center where the art work and documents were removed from the containers, cleaned and treated.

The collection and the Centre d’Art itself represented a key and vital force in Haitian culture.

The Centre d’Art had been founded in 1944 at a time of intellectual foment when questions about Haitian identity had come to the fore. An indigenous literary movement had turned to the rural world to celebrate its beauty, the pleasure of working in the fields, and gratitude to a tropical nature that feeds her children. Haitian art started to follow the same route. At the time, an American, Dewitt Peters, came to teach English at the Haitian-American Institute of Port-au-Prince. Sensitive to the debates about national identity, and himself a painter, he joined George Ramponneau, Pétion Savain, Lucien Price, Luce Turnier, Antonio Joseph, and others in an artistic enterprise. Peters leased a building and invited visual artists from around the country to join them. Artists engaged in a rich artistic dialogue about lines, shapes, colors, light, and perspectives, fostering exchanges with Cuban, American, Puerto Rican and Italian artists, and creating works that impressed such cultural figures as André Malraux who came to Haiti in 1946. Peters provided art supplies and access to new markets for Haitian artists like Hector Hyppolite and Philomé Obin, who were considered “naïve” and were unknown to broader audiences. This was a period of democratization of art in Haiti, and its produce was increasingly marketed and promoted. The Centre d'Art flourished.
Debates ensued about the question of what constituted Haitian folk art, naivety and so on, and some Haitian artists did not want to be associated with the Centre. Nonetheless, the Centre’s reputation as the vibrant force in Haitian art grew. Collectors sought works of its artists. Over time, the Centre d’Art established a collection, a permanent one of great heritage value, and a temporary one of works for sale. These provided an ongoing source of income. As the Centre has always worked in a spirit of encounter and exchange, some artists had their studios in the building and many would let their works be displayed and sold there. As a result, thousands of works of art accumulated at the Centre d’Art.

The earthquake buried about ten to twenty percent of the paintings that had been in the building. The vast majority were saved by Marise and Henry. Excavations at the site aided by MINUSTAH troops and heavy equipment saved another 150 or so. The corpus saved was subject to our conservation project. Our job was to identify, document, clean, and store these art works in good conditions. We had to plan the work, set a timeline, create a team, define the tasks, and as needed distribute them fairly—as some of the artists asked for their paintings to be returned.

The project was executed according to the following procedures:

- The works were taken out of the containers, and then, using a brush, were dusted to remove the residue from the rubble.
- Works were then vacuumed. Painted surfaces were then cleaned with a sponge to remove fine dust. For works on paper, a soft bristle brush and grated white gum were used.
- Each object was assigned an inventory number. Three files were opened on each—an inventory record, a condition report, and photographic documentation. Works were sent to the photography room, photographed with their assigned number and then sent to storage.
- Data on the inventory record was verified and a storage location noted.
- Climate conditions for storage were checked to ensure conservation standards are met.
- The inventory records were organized and sorted and data entered into a record book.
- The inventory records were computerized and photographs integrated for each object to provide a digital record.

Every day the team treated thirty to fifty works, according to this procedure. By March 15, 2011, we had treated some 4,600 works. The most damaged works were placed in quarantine for special treatment, typically for mold. All were securely stored at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. They represent an important chapter in the history of Haitian art, and await full restoration for future generations.

Marie-Lucie Vendryes has a Masters Degree in Museum Studies. A former Director of MUPANAH, she served as Coordinator of the Centre d’Art conservation project.

The Centre d’Art is where I sold my first piece of art in the 1940s. —Préfète Duffaut

[Upper left] Marc Gerard Estimé examines iron sculpture in the Cultural Recovery Center objects lab. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck
[Lower left] Marie-Lucie Vendryes and Marise Desrosiers catalogue and store Centre d’Art paintings in the Cultural Recovery building. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck
[Above] Iron sculptures from the Centre d’Art are stored, labeled, and inventoried at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian
I spent two weeks in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in November of 2010, working as a volunteer from the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) at the Cultural Recovery Center with Marie-Chantal Poisson from Quebec, Canada. We treated a number of paintings to the point of stabilization. There were so many badly damaged works in need of immediate care that the time-consuming cosmetic work was left to be done at a later date.

Much of our time there was focused around the collection from the Centre d’Art. Thousands of paintings had already been recovered by the Haitian staff under the direction of Marie-Lucie Vendryes. The paintings had condition assessments, were photographed, had all received an initial cleaning, and were safely stored on racks in the Center. The careful and organized manner in which the staff worked to recover these paintings was a striking contrast to the surrounding chaos outside of the Center’s gates.

Marie-Chantal and I were responsible for treating hundreds of mold-damaged paintings. These paintings were quarantined from non-moldy works and sprayed individually to inhibit further mold growth. The paintings remained isolated until the mold was clearly arrested.

In writing my reports to the institutions that sent me to Haiti I felt a sad irony when recommending better housing for paintings and works of art when over a million people in Port-au-Prince were still living in tents ten months after the earthquake. As an individual, it is difficult to see the contribution one is making. While I was in Haiti my incremental progress felt futile in the midst of such destruction. It is indeed heartening to know of the remarkable progress a little over a year after the recovery began and to see the cumulative effects of so many volunteer hours, each adding a small piece to the bigger picture.

Anne O’Connor is a Painting Conservator and Proprietor of O’Connor Art Conservation, LLC, based in western Massachusetts.
CHAPTER NINE

SAVING THE MURALS AT HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL

From the first day of our first visit to Haiti I knew that we had to figure out some way of saving the surviving murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

The murals were a beautiful, complex representation of Haitian identity, a treasure of Port-au-Prince, and a familiar part of a congregation’s and a community’s religious life.

I am right now at the Holy Trinity site with Viviana, two assistants, and seven CRC staff members (Mentor, Yanick, Ulrick, Erickson, Jonas, Silvestre, and Petit Frere our security agent on site). We are doing the cleaning and making the preparations to start the project.

It’s a great experience for every one of us. We are thinking about our loved ones and thanking everyone who shares our dreams to save as much as we can from our cultural heritage.

This is for me one of the best ways to remember the event of January 12, 2010.—Olsen Jean Julien, on the one-year anniversary of the earthquake

The conservation team lead by Viviana Dominguez and Rosa Lowinger work on scaffolding built by Patrick Vilaire and his team in order to save the Last Supper and Baptism murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY TRINITY MURALS

PATRICK DELATOUR

In 1815 Henri Christophe, ruler of the newly independent nation of Haiti, wrote to William Wilberforce, a Christian Evangelical and Britain’s strongest advocate for the abolition of slavery, asking his advice about instituting a national prayer. Wilberforce suggested Christophe adopt the Anglican liturgy of the Church of England. Wilberforce also advised and aided Christophe in his effort to create a new educational system for Haiti as both envisioned an ideal, Black-ruled, divinely-inspired free society. Anglican influence was short-lived with Christophe’s death in 1820, but emerged four decades later when Haiti was viewed as a promised land for Black Americans beset by slavery and the Civil War. James Theodore Holly, an African American priest of the Episcopal Church—the American branch of Anglicanism—was a staunch abolitionist. In 1861 he led a mission of 110 men, women, and children from New Haven, Connecticut to Haiti. More than forty died within the year from yellow fever and malaria, but Holly persevered. He became a citizen of Haiti and built the first church. In 1865 he gained financial support for the Episcopal mission in Haiti, and in 1874 became Episcopal Bishop of Haiti. The first church burnt in 1866. It was rebuilt, and over the next half-century was burnt and rebuilt several times, the sixth and last time as a Cathedral in 1924.

Port-au-Prince celebrated its bicentennial in 1949, and on the occasion artists associated with the Centre d’Art—Philomé Obin, Castera Bazile, Rigaud Benoit, Gabriel Leveque, Adam Leontus, Wilson Bigaud, Jasmin Joseph, and Préfète Duffaut—began to paint larger-than-life scenes of the New Testament on the walls of the Cathedral. Fourteen murals were completed in 1950 and 1951. The biblical scenes highlighted the Ascension, the Last Supper, and other episodes in the life of Christ, Jesus and his Apostles, and their families were represented in the blackness of the original peoples of the Galilee and in obvious kinship with the people of Haiti.
The murals incorporated numerous symbols of Vodou and depicted Haiti’s two most important pilgrimage sites of Saut d’eau and Souvenance. The ‘Wall’ as it was called, became well known and almost mythic in character, as an iconic representation of Haitian identity.

Over the years, Holy Trinity also acquired a reputation as the first temple of sacred music, served by its exceptional Philharmonic Orchestra. Its boys’ choir became renowned and its music fills the air of the capital. Holy Trinity operated a music school, grade school, high school and college, and vocational training school. It also had a museum—the Museum of Haitian Art of the College of St. Pierre.

All were severely damaged or completely destroyed in the earthquake.

The Smithsonian and other cultural organizations focused on saving the three surviving murals for two reasons, one very specific, the other more profound. The first was a very practical one—the three murals had emerged mainly intact after the disaster but were now vulnerable in being exposed to the elements. They had to be saved or else they would be lost. The second reason relates to the more symbolic 150 years of history and memory that the Episcopal Church in Haiti represents. That presence, from the very beginning, is marked by the integration of the church into the Haitian experience, often against the odds. That is represented by the murals, but also by the composition of its large congregation, and its contributions to Haitian education and music. In a word, the church is part and parcel of Haiti’s national culture, and the “Wall” the expressive “tip of the iceberg” of a presence in Haitian society that includes health care centers, agricultural training programs, educational institutions, libraries, a museum, youth groups, and major programs for the empowerment of women.

So the act of recovering the murals is part of a larger act of community and national recovery.

Plans are now underway to rebuild the Holy Trinity Cathedral and the entire complex—schools, concert hall, and museum in a much more integrated way, and one that strongly contributes to the rebuilding of the central part of the capital city around the National Palace and the Champs de Mars. As part of that campus, the Episcopal Church has decided to establish a historic site in memory of earthquake victims. This might feature a memorial garden hosting the restored murals. Haitians would naturally visit to connect to their heritage and more recent history, but foreign visitors too would make a new pilgrimage to the “Wall,” to understand the Haitian experience.

And just as the restoration of the Citadel Henry as a symbol of national identity and world heritage that instructed all about the struggle for independence and freedom gave birth to ISPAN (Institute for the Protection of National Heritage), the rescue of the “Wall” is expected to generate a permanent organization responsible for valued items and collections of Haitian cultural heritage.

My mural in the new Cathedral will be better than the old ones!
—Prêfête Duffaut

Viviana Dominguez with Haitian Minister of Tourism Patrick Delatour observing progress in saving the murals. Photo by Kristín Gísladóttir
The challenges of taking the three surviving murals down off of the listing, cracking walls of the ruined Cathedral were legion. Thanks to Patrick Vilaire, his quickly installed scaffolding and tarping provided a bit of stability and protection. Yet, time after time visiting the murals I noticed more fading paint, more water damage, and another crack or two in the wall.

I worried that the walls would simply fall, or be blown down by the hefty gust of a tropical storm. Clearly we had to get them down—but would the mural surface separate from the unstable, rough, variegated substrate? I feared that as we tried to take down fragments in large sections, they would break apart into small pebbles. Stephanie Hornbeck's decision to bring in world-class expert conservators Viviana Dominguez and Rosa Lowinger was the correct one.

Reverend Stephen Davenport, a long-time tireless worker for Haiti and the Episcopal Church, helped pave the way. I had to explain what we intended to do to the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori in New York. I did so with some trepidation, knowing that we had to try, and hoped to succeed, yet unable to absolutely guarantee success. During the same period, officials of the Episcopal Church announced a world-wide campaign to rebuild the Cathedral and campus complex. They were counting on the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project to save the murals so they could be reassembled and then reinstalled—either into the walls of a rebuilt cathedral, or as free standing elements of a new cathedral, or as the key elements of an outdoor memorial garden.

We began studies early on, and undertook various measures, like having engineers design and Patrick Vilaire build a sturdier, more supportive second scaffolding. Olsen Jean Julien secured the confidence and permission of Bishop Duracin and local officials. It wasn’t until Rosa and Viviana had a definitive plan and did the preparatory work that we were ready to begin.

That day, poignantly, was January 12, 2011, the first anniversary of the earthquake.

As Olsen wrote to us in an e-mail, he was at the murals with a number of Center staff. They, and by extension of empathy, we, all understood the importance of the moment. About to begin, we were playing a role in saving one of Haiti’s true treasures.

Olsen also wrote a word of thanks. “We are thanking you Stephanie, Cori, and Richard for your leadership and your humanity. We are thanking all the conservators who came to help. What you have done and are still doing in this country is priceless and unforgettable.” Indeed, this was, despite any bureaucratic categorization, a deeply humanitarian project—one that recognized and respected the humanity of the Haitian people. We were all proud—not loudly or exuberantly proud, but quietly proud, with a sense of satisfaction that we had done the right thing in pursuing the project in partnership with our Haitian colleagues and friends.

The project to take down the murals continued for months and required the daily work of Haitian artists, technicians, carpenters, and others. It required the continual attention and cooperation of the leadership of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. The Smithsonian’s Materials Conservation Institute and the Getty Conservation Program helped out. It was all done under the expert knowledge and steady hands of Viviana and Rosa, who were physically and technically immersed in it. For the Haitian technical assistants, artists, carpenters, laborers, and security staff, it was hard, but meaningful work, as Junior Norélus called it, “the best experience of my career.”

Finally, as the project neared the end of the take-down phase in May 2011, I received an e-mail from Stephanie with an attached image file—which I immediately sent around to Cori Wegener, Rachel Gosling, Marsha Semmel, Charlotte St. Martin, Bill Hillman, Secretary Clough, and others who had been so involved and supportive of the project.

Attached please find the LAST wall painting fragment at St. Trinity, the face of Christ.

Viviana and team successfully lifted it an hour later.

Stephanie

It had been quite a journey. The murals were now safe.
A map of the Last Supper mural with annotations indicating the planned removal of fragments. Photo by Viviana Dominguez
On my second day in Haiti, I visited the nearly-destroyed site of the world-renowned wall paintings at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral with Olsen Jean Julien and Corine Wegener. It was evident that specialized conservation expertise was required to save the extant murals by protecting the paint layer and then lifting sections of the murals from the unstable walls.

The earthquake had destroyed eleven of the fourteen paintings in the mural cycle of New Testament images, painted in 1950-51 by master artists associated with the Centre d'Art. Three murals, Phlimé Obin's *Last Supper*, Castera Bazile's *Baptism of Christ*, and Préfète Duffaut’s *Nativity Procession*, though badly damaged, survived the earthquake. The great cultural value of the murals and their extreme vulnerability required commencement of work within weeks of the opening of the Cultural Recovery Center. The extant murals had serious and dramatic conservation issues. The three walls with Obin’s murals were structurally unstable; large fissures were present across the murals; sections were vulnerable to complete collapse. The wall for the Bazile mural appeared more structurally sound. The wall with the Duffaut was completely exposed, as, the roof above it had collapsed.

In addition, the technique of the murals rendered them vulnerable. These were not painted in a fresco technique, where the cured lime-plaster bonds with the paint layer to afford greater stability. They were painted in a very thin egg tempera layer over a lime mortar-based preparation layer only millimeters-thick. Further, exposure to extreme environmental conditions made it imperative that treatment begin. Haiti's tropical climate includes an annual rainy season which lasts from June to October, when the region experiences heavy rains and sometimes tropical storms and hurricanes.

Patrick Vilaire had quickly and valiantly built a scaffold structure that helped shore up the listing transept wall hosting the *Baptism* and *Last Supper* murals. A tarp offered some protection from the rain. But given the near-complete collapse of the Cathedral roof, the murals were still well-exposed to the elements. Heavy rains penetrated and widened fissures and extracted soluble salts which were deposited on the painted surface as white streaks, most notably down the center of the Christ figure, seated in the *Last Supper* mural.

When in June 2010 Zaché Duracin, Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Haiti, granted his formal permission to work on the murals both on-site and at the Cultural Recovery Center, the Church became one of our first collaborators for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. Shortly thereafter, two structural engineers, Dr. Steeve Ambroise and Marcel Dominique, assessed the structure and proposed to stabilize the walls and distribute the weight of the roof with a wood scaffolding network. Once again we called on Patrick Vilaire and his team to build the scaffolding and roofs designed by the engineers. This structure would support the walls and offer some added protection from the elements until conservation work could be completed.

The successful removal of wall paintings from their architectural context requires hybrid conservation skills, involving consideration of both the paintings and the walls. I prepared a detailed scope of work describing the need for a comprehensive assessment and steps for treatment and removal. We were fortunate to find highly skilled collaborators in painting conservator Viviana Dominguez and architectural materials conservator Rosa Lowinger. They had the expertise, experience, and ability to address a complex conservation project that had challenges at every step in the process. Viviana and Rosa also guided four assistants in the work, Junior Norélus, Franck Fontain, Wanglish Michel, and Junior Racine. In keeping with all conservation activities at the Center, an education focus involved teaching the assistants mural conservation techniques. The efforts of “Equipe Ste. Trinité,” as I thought of the team of six, would successfully preserve the project’s most important example of built cultural heritage.
THE STABILIZATION AND REMOVAL OF THREE WALL PAINTINGS AT HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

VIVIANA DOMINGUEZ AND ROSA LOWINGER

Our first encounter with the murals at Holy Trinity Cathedral was in July 2010. Six months had passed since the earthquake and we had been invited down to Port-au-Prince by our colleague Stephanie Hornbeck, Chief Conservator for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. We are conservators of architecture and mural paintings who had worked extensively together in the past and Stephanie had asked us to fly down and assess three murals that had survived the collapse of the Cathedral to determine what, if anything, could be done to safely remove them from the precarious walls on which they were painted.

At the time of the invitation, neither of us knew anything about Holy Trinity Cathedral. In truth, we knew very little about Haitian art and culture. We did not know, for example, that the Cathedral itself was the seat of an Episcopal archdiocese founded by African American abolitionists or that it was a lovely 1920s building built of limestone rubble walls. We knew that the building had been decorated with energetic color-saturated New Testament scenes, but neither of us could begin to fathom the importance of these wall paintings within Haitian artistic tradition or, more importantly, the country’s religious life. As we prepared for our trip in Miami, we learned that these murals held a deep spiritual meaning to Haitians because they used local people and settings to illustrate the life of Christ. This went well beyond the skin color of the figures depicted in the paintings. For example, in the painting *Nativity* by Rigaud Benoit, tropical palm trees, a thatched roof building, baskets of pineapple, and a waterfall with the distinct appearance of a local pilgrimage site called Saut d’Eau frame baby Jesus. In *Wedding at Cana*, artist Wilson Bigaud set the miracle of turning water into wine in a Haitian hilltop village, complete with musicians playing conga drums and flutes of local origin.

When we arrived at the roofless open plaza that had once been the nave of Holy Trinity Cathedral, both Benoit’s and Bigaud’s murals had been reduced to rubble. Gone also were paintings *Annunciation*, *Temptation of the Lord*, and *Crucifixion*, not to mention the building’s walls, roof, and pillars. Only three murals—Castera Bazile’s *Baptism*, Préfète Duffaut’s *Native Procession*, and Philomé Obin’s three-walled *Last Supper*—clung precariously to walls that looked about as stable as the piles of debris that surrounded them. Doused by rain and baked by the sun for six months, the paintings were starting to fade and powder. They had to come down immediately. The question was how to do it without destroying them.

That first day we furiously measured, surveyed and photographed hoping to come up with an answer. In the evening we sat on the porch of the house we shared with Stephanie, and voiced our worries. Could the murals really come down safely? Should they be done by removing the paint layer alone or should one use the broken fragments themselves as the means of separation? What size fragment could be safely removed? How would it be brought down? What sort of facing should protect the paint layers? How could one stabilize the powdering paint enough to keep it from sticking when we removed the facing? In 1994, we had worked together on earthquake salvage in Los Angeles, but the removal of these murals required us to figure out not only how to get the pieces down but how to store them in conditions of extreme humidity and even how to bring all of our materials to the site. For the three days we were in Haiti we went back and forth between excitement and anxiety, doubt and confidence. This was clearly the project of a lifetime. But were we going to come up with a way to make it happen?

Not long after we returned to Miami and sent in our original assessment and recommendations we got a call from Richard Kurin. "We want you to take the work on," he said. "We believe that you already know the project and are therefore the most qualified to tackle it." Anxiety then shifted to terror. Could we really do this? Had we been too sure of ourselves, too driven by conservator’s bravado? Either way, we began to flesh out our plan.
[Upper] Junior Racine compares his drawing with the physical condition of the mural. Photo by Viviana Dominguez

[Center] Junior Norélus on the scaffold as Viviana Dominguez annotates a map of the Baptism mural, carefully labeling each fragment to be removed. Photo by Franck Fontain

[Left] Franck Fontain, Junior Norélus, Olsen Jean Julien, and Junior Racine review plans for bringing mural fragments down from the scaffolding. Photo by Stephanie Hamebeck

[Background] A full-sized outline of Native Procession traced on plastic enables conservators to accurately plan the removal of the mural. Photo by Viviana Dominguez
The first thing we did was to decide definitively to remove the pieces by the stacco method, that is, together with their mortar render. Because the fragments were conveniently broken into mostly-manageable pieces, it seemed safer to proceed this way than try to do the gargantuan and risky job of trying to separate the paint layer from the backing.

We devised a system for safely bringing the fragments down and made a plan to import all our tools and practically all of our materials. We would require occasional support from Patrick Vilaire, an engineer who had installed shoring on the walls shortly after the earthquake, and daily full-time assistance from four technicians identified by the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. We would train these assistants and they, in turn, would work both under our supervision and on their own between our trips to Haiti.

With help from the Getty Conservation Institute's scientific division, and the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute, we were able to determine that the murals were painted in egg tempera on a basic lime and gypsum mortar base that ranged in thickness from one-quarter of an inch to one inch. (The paint type was later confirmed by Préfête Duffaut in a personal communication with Viviana.) This allowed us to devise a protocol that would begin with dry cleaning and consolidation of the paint surface and would be followed by full documentation with drawings and photographs, dry brushing and spot poulticing of salts that had begun to crystallize on certain surfaces, facing with gauze and a series of conservation-grade resins, localized cutting to make fragments manageable, then keying of the fragments to the drawings, and their removal, storage, and safe transport.

Viviana made a brief visit to the site in October to oversee Vilaire's installation of more stable and usable scaffolding. She also brought back small mural fragments which we used for testing materials and treatment techniques. Finally, it was time to plunge into the site work. We packed enormous suitcases with every material we could think of using and headed to Haiti.

By then it was January 2011, a year after the earthquake. The murals had survived the hurricane season, but though they were nominally protected with tarps and makeshift tin roofing, time was taking its toll on the paint surface. Colors had visibly faded in places. In others, salts had crystallized further. Meanwhile, a cholera epidemic threatened to thwart the entire venture. We added chlorine sanitary wipes and antibiotics to our arsenal of materials and forged onward.

In reality, there were so many extenuating circumstances to working in Haiti—for example, we could not travel through the city on our own, we had only partial phone service and sometimes no running water or electricity at the site—that we had no idea whether our time estimates would prove to be remotely accurate. We thought they were, but we were not sure.

Nonetheless, in order to maximize our onsite supervision time we came up with a plan for Viviana, as the wall paintings conservator, to be the primary site supervisor, for Rosa to supervise intermittently, and for both conservators to overlap on site when a joint troubleshooting session was needed. We relied on constant instant messaging and e-mailing to communicate questions back and forth between Miami and the Holy Trinity site, as well as on Stephanie's willingness to haul mortar, gauze, and adhesives down to Port-au-Prince.

The process of conservation, even in the best of settings, is like walking through a labyrinth. You come up with a plan and you move along it until you hit a dead end. You see the end in sight, and then something pops up that makes you go back two steps and then forward again to get around the obstacle. At Holy Trinity this was the rule rather than the exception. We decided that the only way to go about this was to tackle that which could be dealt with first.
For the murals this first step consisted of cleaning and consolidation of the powdering paint layer. Viviana began the process with the assistants on her first site visit. Yet even during this first relatively simple process we could see problems arising. There was, for example, an issue of communication with our assistants and the two carpenters who were on site to build the wood storage trays that would hold removed mural fragments and address ongoing needs for scaffold configuration. The two artists who began working with us spoke nominal English. Needless to say, we spoke no Kreyòl. During our initial interactions, we sensed a certain reluctance or lethargy. We could not tell whether this was a matter of indifference to the work before us or a resistance to get on board with our processes. The artists seemed skeptical at times and indifferent at others. They joked among themselves and seemed to be having a good time, but sometimes we surmised that the task of removing murals from a ruined cathedral was just not all that important to them in light of all the devastation they lived with. As projects go, this one required constant alertness to things going wrong, and a constant tweaking of the protocols. Our adjustments must have been frustrating, if not downright confounding.

An example: we decided to use the cracks caused by the earthquake as the natural border between fragments and try to keep pieces as whole as possible. Then we would bring the pieces down and find them difficult to safely flip face up. In other cases we would get a fragment almost fully separated from the wall only to hit a place where it was so tightly attached to a cinderblock repair in the wall that we had to stop and make an additional cut. We would find a repair mix that worked and a company to donate the material, only to find that we could not get the materials to Port-au-Prince when we ran out. As each fragment was brushed of dirt, photographed, labeled, keyed to a drawing, faced with cheesecloth, shored with wood strips, cut at the edges, chiseled from behind, lifted by three or four people, laid onto a cardboard tray, walked down the scaffolding by two or three assistants, laid down on a makeshift table in our lean-to workspace, injected with mortar or adhesive, then turned, cleaned of its wooden strips and facing, photographed, and placed into its long-term wooden storage trays, and finally transported to the Cultural Recovery Center under Stephanie’s gracious supervision, our process would go through several permutations.

Nonetheless, despite the heat, humidity, mosquitoes, and unforeseen curve balls like transit strikes, and a summer airline embargo on packages, our team managed to remove the murals from the walls of the Cathedral. First Native Procession came down, then Baptism, and finally the Last Supper. In the end, we removed 142 fragments in all, ranging in size from two to four foot square.

In the process we did become a true team. Viviana was affectionately called “Captain Dominguez” by Olsen indicating her firm leadership. Our conservation assistants—Junior Norélus, Junior Racine, Frankie Fontain, and Michel Wanglish proved to be a dedicated, hard working, proficient “dream team.” Patrick Vilaire and his carpenters Jean Marie Derazin, Snyder Clergé, and Andrice Félix worked diligently to support the removal. The staff of the Center, the drivers, even the guards all contributed.

[Left, top to bottom] Junior Racine and Junior Norélus on the scaffold, cleaning the Baptism mural; Viviana Dominguez applies adhesive for facing material on the Native Procession mural; Mural fragments are secured with lattice prior to their removal. Photos by Viviana Dominguez, Stephanie Hornbeck, and Carol Grissom/Smithsonian

[Right, top to bottom] Rosa Lowinger chiseling a fragment of the Last Supper mural as Viviana Dominguez gives her support; Junior Norélus cuts a section of the mural supported by lattice work in order to cleanly extract it from the underlying substrate; Junior Norélus and Viviana Dominguez carry a mural fragment from the Native Procession off the scaffolding with help from Junior Racine and Andris Félix.

Photos by Stephanie Hornbeck, Viviana Dominguez, and Éloïse Paquette
The mural fragments were carefully transported to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center where we set up an outdoor processing operation to further stabilize each and every fragment by treating them front and back. The plan is to reassemble the fragments sometime in the future when the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral complex is rebuilt—and our maps, diagrams, and photographs, will provide the definitive guide for doing so.

There are debates over how to re-install the re-assembled murals—should they be incorporated into the walls of a new church or left free-standing as the icons of a memorial garden? Should they be indoors or outdoors with some form of climate protection? There are dozens of issues to resolve about the efficacy of any plan, but that just goes with the territory of this sort of conservation—because more than preserving a material object, one is helping a people and a nation keep its heritage alive.

Viviana Dominguez is an art conservator who specializes in wall paintings. She coordinated the Art Conservation Program at the University Institute of Art in Buenos Aires, and has undertaken conservation projects in Argentina, Spain, Dominican Republic, and the United States. She is currently based in Los Angeles, California.

Rosa Lowinger is a conservator specializing in architecture. Winner of the Rome Prize for Conservation, she is the Principal of Rosa Lowinger and Associates, carrying out projects across the United States.
THE BEST EXPERIENCE IN MY CAREER

JUNIOR NORÉLUS

It was January 12, 2011, exactly a year after the devastating earthquake. We met at the Cultural Recovery Center to get acquainted with Viviana Dominguez, a conservator of wall paintings and a firm leader. Our job was to rescue the murals from the walls of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Originally a team of five, we were joined by others.

From day one, we started to carefully clean the wall. Over the course of the project’s first phase, we had to apply gum Arabic to consolidate or bind the paint. We had to make drawings of the wall murals, being as accurate as possible, and then make a grid so we could give codes to different fragments and understand how the whole mural fit together.

The second phase began with protecting the wall using gauze, Paraolid B-72, and small pieces of wood to form a grid to give each fragment strength when we removed it. Following this preparation, Rosa Lowinger, the architectural materials conservator, came with specially made chisels to remove the fragments. We had to do this carefully, taking into account the considerable weight of the fragments.

We prepared cardboard trays with sponge to hold the fragments. We then walked the fragments down the scaffold, put the fragments on a table, and applied mortar to the pieces to keep them firm. We then overturned the fragments, put them in wooden trays, photographed them, and readied them for transport to the Cultural Recovery Center. Once there, the pieces of wood and facing material were removed, cracks were glued, and fragments cleaned with acetone so they could finally be stored.

For me it was incredible to be able to remove a wall mural. As an artist, I thought at the beginning that this was an impossible thing to do. But it was done well, thanks to the conservators, the assistants, the carpenters, and the whole Cultural Recovery Center team. Saving the murals and being involved in the rescue of the cultural heritage of my country, is the best experience of my career.

Junior Norélus is a Conservation Assistant and the Chief Technician for the project to rescue the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral murals.
HAITI’S SCARS, AND ITS SOUL, FIND HEALING ON WALLS

DAMIEN CAVE

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—Colorful and sad, beautiful but cracked, the three remaining murals of the Episcopal Trinity Cathedral received the soft afternoon sun after last year’s earthquake only because the rest of the church had collapsed.

Haitians walking by looked heartbroken. All 14 murals had been internationally treasured. Painted in the early 1950s during an artistic renaissance here, they depicted biblical scenes from a proud, local point of view: with Jesus carrying a Haitian flag as he ascended to heaven; and a last supper that, unlike some famous depictions, does not portray Judas with darker skin than the other disciples.

“All of this was painted from a Haitian perspective,” said the Rev. David César, the church’s main priest and its music school director. He marveled at the image miraculously still standing: Judas, with the white beard and wavy white hair often assigned to God himself.

It was his favorite mural, he said, and now, it is being saved.

In a partnership between the Episcopal Church and the Smithsonian, all three surviving murals are being stabilized and carefully taken to a climate-controlled warehouse in Haiti where they will be protected until they can be redisplayed in a new home.

The painstaking 18-month project began in the fall, with conservators analyzing how the paintings were bound to the walls (weak mortar) and the materials that were used to paint them (egg tempera). It was clear that they were fragile. A portion of one painting near the former altar faded to abstraction during the rainy season.

The other collapsed murals seemed to disappear. Perhaps portions were pulverized by the earthquake; perhaps some were stolen. But when conservators and Haitian art students separated the fragments from the rubble, they found only tiny pieces, usually the size of a hand or smaller, that could not be reassembled.

“We have only about 10 percent of the 11 murals that fell,” said Stephanie Hornbeck, the chief conservator with the Smithsonian, whose master’s degree focused on Haitian art. “When you have that little left, there’s nothing you can do.”

For the murals still standing, she said experts had higher hopes and immediate plans. For the past several weeks, Haitian workers in what was once the sanctuary have been carefully constructing scaffolding. A web of wooden beams now holds up tin and vinyl to protect the paintings, supporting both the art and the workers trying to carefully chisel it away.

Simply hearing hammers and seeing scaffolding—what smiles they bring here in a city where reconstruction is practically non-existent. No less soothing is the classical music—the high wall of trumpets, the smooth pull of violins—that frequently comes from behind the church, where Mr. César teaches outside. He is one of the many in Haiti who learned his first bars of music at the church’s music school. “My whole identity is here,” he said, and on this campus at least, reconstruction means more than architecture: a full artistic life is also being rebuilt.

The effort to save the murals is a visible extension of a little-known cross-border bond. The Episcopal Church of Haiti was founded by an African-American named James Theodore Holly, who led about 2,000 black Americans to Haiti in 1861 as part of a wider emigration movement. He and his sons played prominent roles as professionals and scholars after founding “what was actually Haiti’s first national church, and the first Episcopal Church founded outside the Anglophone world,” said Laurent Dubois, a historian at Duke University.

The eight muralists, while Haitian from their toes to the tips of their paintbrushes, also had American ties. Many trained at an academy founded by an American artist, DeWitt Peters, who came to Haiti in 1943.

Credit for the work, though, must also be shared by the Haitian bishops and priests who “gave them the liberty they needed,” said Mr. César. Some of the unconventional images would later become controversial for Christians who saw links to Vodou, but for many Haitians and art historians, they represented one of this country’s proudest cultural moments.

The earthquake ruined much of that. Only the Last Supper, Native Procession and the Baptism of Christ survived—and each work bears the wounds of the vicious tremor that killed 300,000 people. The paintings’ winding cracks, running through legs, through torsos, and through the neck of a dark-skinned woman in the baptism scene who seems to be screaming, are violent and painful.

Ms. Hornbeck said that conservators and the church are still discussing which damaged elements must be fixed.

But Mr. César, standing near the church’s former entrance, said he had little doubt about whether the paintings would be fully restored, or left how they appeared after the quake. He said that instead of rebuilding the church, religious leaders are planning to create a garden for the murals, in which they can reside in nature, earthquake scars and all. He said it was the only way to remember, the only way to move on.

“We have to live with it,” he said, staring at the roofless sanctuary and piles of rubble. “We have to learn how to live with it.”


The mural Baptism painted by Castera Bazile in 1953 survived the earthquake. Photo by Corine Wegener
The removal of wall paintings is unquestionably one of the most challenging processes in the field of conservation. The training of technicians for such an endeavor is tricky under normal circumstances; at the Holy Trinity Cathedral it was made doubly difficult by the language barrier and the urgency of the project itself. The murals had to come down quickly. Our assistants—Junior Norélus, Junior Racine, Frankie Fontain, and Michel Wanglish—had to learn on the job and be able to work without direct supervision for at least half the time of the project. It was an unorthodox approach to training, to say the least. Nonetheless, it was our only hope for safely removing the murals.

The challenges became apparent on the first day of training. We began by explaining that the goal of the work was to remove the fragments and store them for future reinstallation. Immediately we noticed a drop in enthusiasm. We were not sure what this was about until one of the Juniors asked, “Will we be repainting the murals?” As artists, their idea of restoration was recreation of what was missing. Thus we began the process by clarifying the difference between salvage of something damaged, and its total reproduction.

We then moved to surface cleaning and documentation. Our goal was to get them up to speed on a particular task, so they would be prepared to work on something simple and straightforward in our absence. Instructions were written in English, and translated by Junior Norélus into Kreyòl.

To maximize the work in the short period of conservators’ time on site, we took turns going back and forth to Haiti. As the wall paintings conservator, Viviana served as the primary site supervisor. Rosa would fly in to assist with troubleshooting technical problems and supervising issues related to mortar stabilization. As the project expanded from twelve to twenty weeks, the assistants were assigned particular jobs in accordance with their skills. On a given day one would be tasked with gluing the wooden supports while another prepared the repair mortar mix. Junior Norélus was assigned the post of Chief Technician and provided supervision while we were not on site.

Still, because we had so much information to impart and we were operating with the language barrier, initially both we and our assistants were overwhelmed. When we would return to the site we would find that occasional liberties had been taken. We tried numerous tactics for getting our points across, arriving finally at two key successful methods. The first was to have the assistants repeat our instructions to each other in Kreyòl before committing them to paper.

The second was to film them as they worked. These processes imparted a sense of ownership for the project to them, rather than having them simply be the recipients of instructions.

With a little bit of Kreyòl here, some Spanish or English there, we developed a common language between us. Confidence grew and we all sang Wyclef Jean songs as we worked. We began calling them “the murals dream team,” and in turn they nicknamed Viviana “Teminato,” which is Kreyòl for “little terminator,” and called Rosa “Abit,” which means referee.

Our dream team’s confidence grew. They made recommendations to us for improving the protection and removal of the fragments and helped design new tools for removing difficult areas. At the project’s June press conference, the two Juniors, Frankie and Michel, impressed the Haitian media with their poise and understanding of the processes.

At Holy Trinity necessity was the mother of invention. In this case, a major result, in addition to the preservation of the murals, was the development of four fine conservation technicians who are well-versed in many of the basic processes of mural salvage and conservation.
The murals “dream team” with Snyder Clerge, Frankie Fontain, Jean Marie Derazin, Viviana Dominguez, Rosa Lowinger, Junior Racine, Michel Wanglish, and Junior Norélus. Photo by Erickson Pierre-Louis
To further help save Haiti’s heritage, the Smithsonian invited one of the employees of the Nader Gallery to attend a training seminar on the conservation of cultural works. Hugues Berthin, who received the intensive four-day training, learned various conservation and restoration techniques to apply depending on the type of damage. He is now on site at the Nader Gallery and will be in charge of the restoration of the 3,000 damaged paintings that were recovered from the Museum. While the process will be very long, the Smithsonian has given us the tools to get it up and running.—Georges Nader, Jr.

From the very first discussion of the activities that eventually led to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project, training was conceived as a central, integral component. My colleague Johnnetta Cole, a life-long educator, had made this abundantly clear. Given what we, in the United States familiar with Haiti knew of the situation, particularly with regard to collection management and conservation, we realized that Haiti needed help with professional skills, facilities, and materials for this type of work. Internationally, Mounir Bouchenaki, the Director-General of ICCROM, with his long experience at UNESCO, also knew that training was both needed and vital. No matter what the American or international intervention, the care and stewardship of Haiti’s collections would be in Haitian hands. The more adept those hands were, the better cared for the collections would be.
Patrick Delatour insisted on training as a central component of the recovery project as a matter of principal—he had received professional training that prepared him and an excellent team to work on the restoration of the Citadel decades before. Haiti would benefit from the transfer of knowledge and skills in order to build up the prowess of its own students and professionals. Beyond that, the Haitian government believed it important that the recovery efforts—in whatever sector, reinforce local and national capacity building in their country. Culture was no different. Our effort had to improve the knowledge and skill base and the expertise of Haitians and their institutions.

Olsen Jean Julien turned this orientation into action. He wisely conceived of the Center’s training program as upgrading and developing the skills of people already working with collections and institutions, public and private. They might have not received any prior training in, say, conservation, but, if they worked in the museum or library or gallery, they could improve their knowledge and upgrade their skills. And as long as they continued to work at that organization, they would serve it better than before. Olsen’s was a thoughtful alternative to recruiting young college students for training—because as able and willing as they might be, they were not as yet connected to Haiti’s cultural organizations.

In charting the work plan of the Cultural Recovery Center, we knew we could treat thousands of items and restore a small number, but that the key lasting contribution would be training. This would give Haitians the means to engage in what would surely be a generation-long activity to recover from the earthquake. Ultimately, it would be Haitians who would preserve Haitian cultural heritage.

The Smithsonian sought out ICCROM to help us with training and organizing a large course because they know their business well—and they could amass materials written in French, and trainers fluent in the language who could readily communicate with Haitian trainees. In addition to a formal course, the Center sponsored a series of workshops and training sessions—conserving paintings, conserving metal works, conserving photographs, books and works on paper, inventorying and collection management. Training was also included in the everyday work routines of staff, technicians, assistants, and the visiting conservators. Training was part of the everyday, on-the-job work in preparing and taking down the murals. Training was infused into the work of the team treating the Centre d’Art collection. Every visiting conservator and expert was drawn into training—give a talk, do a demonstration, gather people around to observe a treatment. Even I was asked to give a lecture and discuss project development, management, and fund raising.

It was not only the Haitians learning. We all did. Conservators learned by doing and interacting with people and collections unfamiliar to them. Insights from Haitian colleagues gave clues and perspectives useful for doing restorations and treatments. Having Préfète Duffaut, one of the Holy Trinity mural artists on hand to talk about the painting of the murals—the paints, the substrate—with the conservators charged with taking them down was particularly helpful and special. Similarly, discussions with Haitian artists and assistants about what, how much, and how to restore a painting, were rich and important.

Finally, we had several younger conservators from the U.S. and Canada participating in the project. They too learned about techniques, working in the field, and listening closely and carefully to their colleagues to understand the history and contexts of works to be treated.

As the project reached its sixteen-month mark, more than one hundred participants, representing some eighty different people from more than two dozen cultural organizations, had been involved in one or another formal training session. This broad participation has had the effect of diffusing knowledge of conservation and collection management widely in Haiti.
Building capacity via training is perhaps the most important and lasting legacy of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. The absence of a strong infrastructure devoted to the conservation of cultural heritage collections in Haiti necessitated building one from the ground-up during the response effort. Yet, providing introductory training while simultaneously responding to a disaster of large proportion is not an ideal sequence of events. Indeed, we seemed to be working backward from an advanced problem; we had to craft a conservation training model based on the practical needs demanded by the disaster.

Our training objective was not to create conservators, as that process requires years of formal study; our goal was to introduce concepts, ethics, and practical techniques to enable us to rapidly stabilize the highest volume possible of damaged art works, artifacts, and works on paper.

Foreign expertise has been provided by the Smithsonian Institution, the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), and the International Center for the Study of Restoration and Preservation (ICCROM). Cultural Recovery Center colleagues Olsen Jean Julien, Fritz Berg Jeannot, and Carmelita Douby identified potential Haitian colleagues at cultural institutions and at universities. Based on our conservation needs, I contributed topic proposals, course content development, and selection of appropriate instructors. Fritz Berg drew on his decade of experience as an educator to provide administrative support throughout the duration of the project. He assisted every instructor with the successful development and realization of training objectives and wrote formal reports on our training activities.

Training has been offered via various models, including courses, workshops, and on-the-job practical experience; all initiatives have been offered without cost to the participants. Indeed, the Cultural Recovery Center has offered stipends and salaries to trainees. Most Haitian culture professionals have had limited exposure to contemporary preservation concepts. So, it has been important to introduce conservation concepts like assessment, intervention, stabilization, repair, restoration, and the importance of documentation and ethical practices. A key educational outreach objective involved aligning foreign experts with local colleagues to reinforce theoretical concepts with practical work, often on-site at affected collections.

We began with a broad, first aid response to global collections care. This first large training initiative was custom-built by a team from ICCROM, who visited Port-au-Prince and selected affected sites in early June 2010. ICCROM Project Coordinator Aparna Tandon oversaw the curriculum and selected French-speaking instructors Vesna Zivkovic from Serbia and Elisabeth Joy from Canada, to join her. Twenty-six professionals from fourteen public and private institutions in Port-au-Prince participated in three weeks of study. Topics included preventive care, storage, documentation, stabilization, and health and safety.

Subsequent training sessions were developed and timed to prepare for work on specific projects. These sessions were offered to artists and chemists, selected via postings at local universities. The earliest works to arrive at the Cultural Recovery Center were badly damaged paintings from private collections. So, “Introduction to Painting Conservation” was offered first and taught by Viviana Dominguez. Paul Jett of the Smithsonian’s Freer and Sackler Galleries, AIC’s Jane Norman and I taught “Introduction to Metal Object Conservation.” Smithsonian conservators Rosemary Fallon of the National Portrait Gallery, and Emily Jacobson of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, taught “Introduction to Paper Conservation” in order to prepare teams to process damaged sculpture and works on paper in the Centre d’Art collection. “Preservation of Audio-Visual Materials,” taught by Sarah Stauderman of the Smithsonian Institution Archives, targeted participants who work primarily for broadcast communication outlets throughout Port-au-Prince. Over 100 colleagues have participated in training initiatives.

Several longer projects—stabilization of the Centre d’Art collection, the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral murals project, and the storage upgrade for the Lehmann Collection of Vodou Art—allowed for on-the-job reinforcement of theory learned in workshops. A corps of twelve studio assistants benefited from more involved study and aided in multiple projects. A primary objective involved developing capacity in multiple areas, which include data entry for inventories, photographic and written documentation, and surface-cleaning. Our assistants have aided both local professionals and foreign experts to stabilize collections. With further formal study, they may yet represent the future face of preservation efforts in Haiti.
From the beginning of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project, my job has been to organize conservation training. I have had to define the content of training programs, establish requirements, identify participants, form groups, organize training sessions, and attend to the follow-up. In short, I perform all the tasks related to training.

Over the past year, I coordinated the implementation of nine sessions, including several workshops and a three-week collection management course with ICCROM.

While I am a professional engaged in artistic and cultural education, this experience has allowed me to wander a bit into lesser known territory. I am more familiar with stimulating artistic creativity than in conveying the concepts and skills of cultural rescue and conservation.

For the Center’s training sessions, I am attentive to the concepts, methods, and techniques to be learned and the teaching strategies for accomplishing that goal. I have met instructors of different national origins, and have found them to be fully competent and enthusiastic about their work. I have found the Haitian participants eager to learn, to fill gaps, to shake up and consolidate their understandings.

I too have learned a lot, interacting with the institutions which care for the treasures of our nation. I’ve developed a better understanding of what Haiti needs by way of collections management training. I expect this experience will serve me well in my future actions to care for Haiti’s cultural heritage.

J. M. Fritz Berg Jeannot is the Training Coordinator for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.
ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY: BUILDING CAPACITY TO SAFEGUARD HAITI'S CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

APARNA TANDON

“...It embodies the spirit of our ancestors and gives us strength to go on in these difficult times” said one of the Haitian participants of the course. Aide d’urgence pour le patrimoine culturel Haïtien: Former pour conserver, as she explained the significance of a partially damaged Vodou flag that she had painstakingly salvaged from the wreckage of a fallen building.

Her words were deeply moving and set the tone for the rest of day one of the three-week course organized by ICCROM (the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property), and the Smithsonian Institution in cooperation with Haiti’s Ministry of Culture and Communication and UNESCO. It was led by a volunteer team from ICCROM, the Canadian Conservation Institute, and Serbia’s Central Institute for Conservation. It included twenty-six Haitians of diverse educational backgrounds drawn from fourteen different public and private cultural institutions. In most cases, their institution’s buildings and collections had been damaged by the earthquake. In many cases, collection records were lost or simply did not exist. Discussions on day one reinforced the reasons for saving cultural heritage, identifying the priorities of such work, and assessing the status of their collections in terms of location, types of material and estimated number of objects damaged.

The training was organized in order to aid Haiti’s cultural recovery by building a strong team of Haitian professionals who could take appropriate actions to mitigate post-disaster risks and ensure maximum protection of their respective collections.

Initial sessions of the course focused on the material composition of Haitian collections and the identification of various risks they were exposed to; their documentation especially, in the absence of previous records; handling of damaged objects; first-aid treatments using locally available materials and so on.

After an intense week of lectures and hands-on training, course participants were charged with the task of creating temporary but safe storage for the collection of Centre d’Art, which at the time still remained in the two shipping containers. Trainees realized that the containers were not properly sealed, allowing moisture to seep in and the paintings to be infected with mold.

The participants and the course team worked together to plan and implement a workflow that involved removing the paintings that had been crammed in the containers, documenting, disinfecting, surface-cleaning, labeling, and placing them systematically in a temporary storage area at the Cultural Recovery Center. Eight of the course participants later joined the project team that completed the task of transferring Centre d’Art collection from the containers to the temporary storage within three months after the course.

At the time of the training, four of the fourteen participating institutions had parts of their collections buried under the rubble of flattened buildings. The final week of the course thus included a salvage exercise that was carried out with the technical assistance of MINUSTAH troops. Twenty U.N. peacekeepers drawn from the Japanese Force Engineering Military Section, the course team and participants gathered at the site of Centre d’Art to salvage art works and archives still buried under the wreckage of the building. The participants were organized in an emergency team and were given specific tasks ranging from documentation to first aid treatments. While the Japanese army personnel cleared the heavy rubble with heavy machinery, the participants and the course team worked to recover the artifacts that had been trapped under the debris for more than six months. Over 150 artifacts and documents were salvaged as a result of this exercise.

“The training has given me hope,” said Marise Desrosiers, a participant and staff member of Centre d’Art, as she described her experience. In the final days of training, participants worked together to develop action plans for safeguarding the collections of their respective institutions. Subsequently, they have improved the storage for their collections, undertaken special conservation projects, and have met several times at the Cultural Recovery Center to share their progress. Their spirit is best described in the words of one of the participants, Colette Armenta: “From now-on we cannot live alone—the course has given me a fresh perspective on the value of teamwork.”

Aparna Tandon has been a Project Specialist at ICCROM since 2004. She has advanced training in the conservation of art, paper and audio-visual materials with residencies at the Harvard University Art Museums, the Library of Congress and the Getty Conservation Institute.
ICCROM’s Aparna Tandon (center front) leads the three-week training workshop that included site visits to museums such as MUPANAH. Photo courtesy of Aparna Tandon
"Ikimashoo," or let's go," shouted the chief of the Japanese engineers forming part of the United Nations relief team. Their men were operating the backhoe to help unearth and save artworks that might still be found in the rubble of the half-destroyed Centre d'Art. Peace keepers from Nepal were guarding the site; American and local TV crews were interviewing; Haitian workshop participants along with conservators born in the U.S., India, Canada, and Serbia were digging in a collaborative on-site effort.

We were a mixed and international group of hopeful helpers each equipped with dedication, hard hats, and gloves. Our goal was to rescue any remaining artworks which included sculpted limbs mostly buried, damaged and still intact as well as broken frames and soggy shreds of painted canvas. Unfortunately, exposure to the elements over the months was apparent with weeds and grass growing amongst the debris of crumbling bricks, wet earth, rusty nails, rotting wood, and art.

As a paintings conservator, I had volunteered for two weeks to be put to use where best needed. Upon my arrival, the conservation training workshop offered by ICCROM was already in progress but a member of their team had had to cancel at the last minute. I was asked to step in, especially since I spoke French. With the amazing determination and expertise of instructors from ICCROM, CCI, and the Smithsonian, I was able to partake in an unforgettable experience. In that short time, I had to build a close, educational relationship with the workshop participants. My job was to communicate the basic steps of the handling and rudimentary cleaning of paintings on canvas and masonite and to help organize their removal from the temporary storage containers.

This project provided a stimulating exchange of information. Sometimes group dynamics and our cultural differences sparked but we seemed to always be able to reunite with our shared goal of rescuing the artworks. Often, it was necessary to put aside egos, surmount fatigue and frustration to consider the personal loss of others with our recovery mission in mind—save and conserve the art!

This approach was reinforced when one participant physically shoved me aside while I attempted to direct her newly learned conservation efforts. Her other team members berated her action but she sat there in muted defiance. At that point, I decided irrespective of whether she was going to accept my direction or not, whether my feelings were hurt or not, somehow I had to impart the importance of her new role as guardian of the art. It was essential to calmly convey that I was not a foreigner imposing my ideas on another culture. Rather, I was trying to be a sensitive and sympathetic conservation teacher to a reluctant and perhaps overwhelmed student. Undaunted and trying a different approach I patiently persisted and by the next week, at the end of the seminar, my efforts were rewarded with a big hug and thank you from this new student of conservation.

Recovery was ongoing on many levels and saving the artworks seemed to be connected to saving hope for the future as well as remembering the past. As someone said to me in Kreyòl, "art ak Lannmou rekompen," or "art and love reward you."

Dawne Steele Pullman is an International Paintings Conservator and Professional Associate, AIC.

Workshop in the conservation of works on paper and photographs led by Rosemary Fallon of the National Portrait Gallery and Emily Klayman Jacobson of the Freer and Sackler Galleries. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck.
There was a nagging uncertainty in the back of my mind about the unsettled political situation and the prevalence of disease but I still felt compelled to volunteer for the Haiti project. Stephanie Hornbeck asked Freer/Sackler colleague, Emily Jacobson, and me to teach a three-day workshop on paper and photographs conservation to Haitians at the Center. The range of topics included in the workshop was the deterioration and care of art on paper and photographic collections, disaster preparedness and recovery, and preventive conservation in a tropical climate. Basic paper conservation procedures were taught in practical sessions to prepare the Haitian students with skills to stabilize collections when processing damaged works on paper and photographs.

We touched down on the tarmac at Port-au-Prince with all of our supplies in tow in our luggage and a bit anxious, hoping our workshop would not be cancelled due to political unrest. The trip from the airport to the Cultural Recovery Center was an abrupt orientation to the conditions in Port-au-Prince. The streets were teeming with families struggling to survive.

Flexibility and improvisation were essential due to limited equipment and supplies one might usually have at hand, and the unpredictability of the schedule. That first week we assessed the condition of damaged and moldy works of art on paper salvaged from the Center d’Art that were stored in quarantine at the Center. Mold remediation and surface cleaning was completed on several of these artworks. Some of these pieces were used in the practical sessions of the workshop. These sessions were geared towards stabilization of artworks using basic paper conservation techniques of surface cleaning, mending tears, and proper storage. Occasionally we stumped our Haitian translator when using specific conservation terminology.

There were some dozen students from varied backgrounds in our workshop. Some were artists, chemists, a gallery owner, and employees from the National Library. They enjoyed the practical sessions and wished they had more time for hands-on work. More time would have been beneficial because it was difficult to cover such a range of topics in three days. The hope is that we had as much impact on the students as they had on us.

Rosemary Fallon is a Paper Conservator at the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery.
I traveled to Haiti from January 31 through February 10, 2011 with fellow Smithsonian paper conservator Rosemary Fallon to co-teach a workshop on basic preservation of art on paper and photographs. Before we left for Haiti the scope of the course kept growing—we were asked to include information on disaster planning, mold removal, and basic paper repair techniques—each a subject that could take a week alone.

The course included topics such as: preventive conservation in a tropical climate; identification of print and photographic processes; proper handling of prints and photos; condition problems and conservation treatments; and demonstrations of various treatment techniques. This was followed by hands-on practice in the treatment techniques by the participants.

It is extremely difficult to get good quality supplies in Haiti so we ordered materials that we would need to bring with us. Since shipping to Haiti was difficult we had to hand-carry everything with us. I brought an entire duffel bag with supplies, including materials such as soft dusting brushes and acid-free folders and tissues for storage. Additionally, we brought folders for each participant that included handouts on preservation in both English and French.

We had twelve students in the workshop who were a mix of people from private galleries, public institutions, such as the National Library of Haiti, and artists and scientists who were being trained to become conservation technicians. Teaching the workshop was the best part of the trip. The participants were extremely interested and attentive students. They asked a myriad of questions and were like sponges for information.

Since neither Rosemary nor I spoke French we had a translator which caused a bit of a problem since many conservation terms and English idioms can be difficult to translate. At one point we discovered that our description of wheat starch paste (a commonly used conservation adhesive) being the consistency of skim milk was translated into adding skim milk to the paste!

Normally after a natural disaster the one way that I can contribute is to donate money. The establishment of the Center allowed me to contribute in a much more fulfilling way by sharing my expertise directly with the Haitian people to help them preserve their cultural heritage.

Emily Klayman Jacobson is a Paper & Photographs Conservator in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research at the Smithsonian’s Freer & Sackler Galleries.
TEACHING COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

SHARLA BLANCHE

I spent a few days in June 2011 teaching “Collections Management Workshop: Documentation and Registration” to more than a dozen Haitian professionals at the Cultural Recovery Center. Because I do not speak French or Kreyòl I had to rely on the assistance and translation skills of Éloïse Paquette, the Conservator from the Centre of Conservation in Quebec.

I sought to give students an overall sense of what is entailed in such positions as registrar and collections manager. Typically, advanced-level coursework related to the basics of collection registration and collections management occurs over a semester—and we simply did not have the time for that. So we collectively decided what information would be most beneficial to learn within the brief three day period allotted for the workshop. Through a lively exchange of ideas and questions by the students, they settled on their own goals for the workshop which meant paring down of my course outline. Their participation made the workshop an enjoyable and engaging experience.

The Cultural Recovery Center has a number of collection objects that I borrowed from the labs. Éloïse and I taught the workshop attendees how to handle objects appropriately, how to accurately measure artwork, write condition reports using standard museum terms, label objects, use photographic documentation, and understand the necessity of using a catalogue system. Having the students participate in a “hands-on” manner gave them a sense of professional practice and allowed them to actively acquire knowledge rather than be mere observers. For example, writing condition reports to record the overall details and current state of an object can often be seen as tedious. Yet these professionals engaged in serious debates, challenging one another to really look at objects and note the current condition, daring one another not to overlook the minutest of details.

The outcome of the program was wonderful. The Haitian attendees gained a more thorough understanding of collections management practices while I gained a deeper knowledge of their culture and art.

Sharla Blanche is an Associate Registrar at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian.

HELPING WITH WHAT IS DEAR

ÉLOÏSE PAQUETTE

When I first saw the announcement from the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) asking for volunteers to go and treat art work in Haiti, I asked myself “why should we restore art when people are homeless and hungry?”

I was a bit reluctant to answer the call for help. But, upon further reflection, and wanting to help Haiti in any way possible, I asked myself what I could offer and how I could really help them? The answer just came straight up in my mind: by being a paintings conservator. Is there any better way to help people than with the thing you are good at and the thing you love to do? I submitted my name and deployed to Haiti in January 2011 with my employer, the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition Féminine of Québec giving me the time to do so.

I arrived in a country still in rubble, but found the people of Haiti full of joy and eager to reconstruct something better. My first language being French, I could communicate well with the Haitians working at the Cultural Recovery Center, and I’m pleased to say some of them became my friends. Because of my language skills, I did the translation work for two workshops given by Smithsonian conservators, and carried out some conservation treatments as well.

My first stay was not even finished when I decided to come back, which I did months later. This time I took vacation time to go to Haiti and was happy to do so in order to help people who really needed it. In Haiti I learned that when you have nothing left, art and culture are the things you hold on to. It is what the Haitian people hold dearly on right now while they try to rebuild a better country for themselves. I am proud to have helped.

Éloïse Paquette is a Paintings Conservator at the Centre de conservation du Québec, in Québec City, Canada, part of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition Féminine of Québec. She received her Master of Art Conservation degree from Queen’s University, Canada.
I came to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project as an M.A. student, fresh from my coursework and on my way out into the field to apply what I’d learned in the classroom. Having conducted all of my pre-program conservation work in field laboratories that were chronically short of both money and resources, I felt that I had a handle on the upcoming challenges and difficulties that working in Haiti might present. Still, I was apprehensive—but I was going and I was ready to learn.

During my four week stay in Port-au-Prince, I was able to work on a number of different objects, allowing me to truly expand my skill set. I treated a series of fer découpé sculptures rescued from the collapsed Centre d’Art, papier-mâché architectural moldings from a school in Jacmel, and a number of pieces being held for ISPAN (L’Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National) including the Acte d’Indépendence and a series of busts of the four Haitian “founding fathers” made of varying materials including painted bronze and plaster. During my final week in Haiti I worked on site at the Lehmann Gallery, helping to clean, assess, and catalogue the vast collection of Vodou objects that made up the collection.

The Haitian conservation assistants that I had the opportunity to work with were an absolute pleasure. In particular, I worked with two assistants, Junior Norélus and Marc Gerard Estimé, both of whom were artists—a sculptor and a painter. I worked with both Norélus and Estimé on the ISPAN objects. Though both men came from similar backgrounds, their working styles and approaches to conservation differed significantly. Both learned extremely fast, but while Norélus was interested in the most efficient and pragmatic approaches to conservation treatment, Estimé wanted to better understand the decision making process, not only to grasp our reasons and justifications for materials and methods, but so that he could better develop the ability to make those decisions himself in the future. Their insightful questions forced me to better understand my own reasons and methods. Their hunger for knowledge and their desire to learn reminded me of why I had become a conservation student in the first place, because, let’s face it, there are not too many of us who enjoy a lively conversation about adhesives!

Outside of my experience as a conservator, I also learned while working in Haiti that many of our perceptions are wrong. What we see in the media is loss, destruction, and an utterly daunting lack of progress. But there is progress—everywhere you look, people are working every single day to take back their city and their homes. It isn’t about destruction and loss—it’s about living and rebuilding. I’ve learned that the Haitian people deserve our respect. I’ve seen them work harder than anyone I’ve ever seen, without a complaint; I’ve seen them smile in the face of their own tragedy, and I’ve seen in them a pride of country and culture that is truly inspiring.

Cindy Lee Scott is a graduate student in the UCLA/Getty Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials Program.
I arrived at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center ready to vacuum moldy books and take inventory of archive documents day after day. Instead, my four weeks were filled with learning about new materials and the responsibilities of an advisor.

As my deployment was a full month, I was assigned to work on an involved treatment project; an acrylic on masonite painting by Stivenson Magloire with numerous breaks. Executing a full-scale treatment was unusual at the Center, and this was to serve as a great material for training the conservation staff. Being a student specializing in photograph conservation, both of these responsibilities were new experiences.

On day two, I was introduced to Erntz Jeudy, a Haitian assistant working at the Center. Erntz worked with me on the painting. He was a recent graduate of the University of Haiti and a true multi-media artist, working in clothing design, and as a painter, sculptor, and musician. Erntz had minimum experience in conservation, but he had wonderful hand skills, was a critical thinker, and was strongly motivated to learn.

I explained the rationale of each step of the treatment to help him understand what we were doing, and although this slowed down the treatment, I realized that it was time well spent as our discussions could achieve more than my initial goals. Giving explanations and answering questions forced me to review my thinking and to evaluate the procedures. Erntz was full of ideas, and together we often discovered improvements to our approaches.

The practice of guiding someone was one of the most rewarding and important aspects in my involvement with the project.

Saori Kawasumi is a third year student in the Conservation Department at Buffalo State College, majoring in conservation of photographic materials. She received training at Heugh-Edmondson Conservation Services, LLC, prior to entering the program.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONSERVATION: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

Our conservators have achieved some remarkable and dramatic results. Such stable treatments preserve cultural patrimony for future generations and prove that advanced conservation work is certainly possible in Haiti.—Stephanie Hornbeck

The treatment of art works, artifacts, historical documents, rare books, architectural features, and other cultural materials has been at the heart of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. The objective has been to safeguard objects—clean, stabilize, and securely store them. In some cases this has meant the relatively simple act of vacuuming off the detritus of the earthquake. In other cases, such as the murals, it has necessitated months of complex activities. In some hundred cases conservators have gone further and actually completed time consuming restorations.

What I have learned is that conservators work very carefully and deliberately. They are like doctors treating patients—understanding the needs of each and every item before them, rendering a proper diagnosis, and implementing a solution to their illness. Even more than most physicians these days, conservators spend a lot of time with the items they treat—really getting to know them and the particularity of their ailments. And conservators deliberate over, discuss, and explore a variety of options and alternatives in developing a treatment plan.

Of the dozens of Smithsonian and AIC-affiliated conservators deployed through the project, each and everyone had his or her own dialogue with particular objects of Haiti’s material culture. These dialogues were clearly exercises in cultural learning; set in a context of post-earthquake trauma, in a nation artistically and historically rich, yet bereft of so many resources and comforts.

The project enjoyed enormous success, treating some 30,000 items and training scores of Haitians to continue treatments into the future. While the projects with the Centre d’Art and the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral were large and newsworthy, the conservation of rare books from the National Library, the Corvington and Trouillot collections, and treatment of documents held by the National Archives were just as important. We had thought that the International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) would establish a parallel recovery center—called “The Ark”—for the treatment of books and
archival material, as they had intended and publicly announced. The Smithsonian and the ICBS had even signed a memorandum of understanding providing for a division of labor in cultural recovery efforts. Yet, when their plans fell through, the need to preserve valuable historical materials did not disappear. The Smithsonian and its partners stepped in. While the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project has helped preserve a good deal of Haiti’s material culture, much more remains to be done.

There were also some areas where solutions to conservation problems eluded us, and even where we agonized over outright failures.

Television and radio stations, professional and amateur documentarians in Haiti have amassed a great deal of audio-visual material—photographs, film, videotape and sound recordings—that provides a record of ceremonies and performances, concerts and readings, speeches and songs of the Haitian people. It is a record of Haiti’s living culture—what UNESCO calls “intangible cultural heritage.” Some of those documentary recordings were made in theaters and reflect formal, schooled performances; others were made in the countryside, in Vodou hounfôns or temples, and reflect the grassroots, authentic folklife of Haitian communities. A large number of organizations and individuals have such materials. Though we examined and assessed many of these collections, and conducted workshops in the preservation of photographs and in the basic care for sound recordings, we were unable to develop a truly effective means of working with all these collections. This remains important work to be done in the future.
So too, much work needs to be done on Haiti’s living cultural traditions. Various attempts to document, and support work on intangible cultural heritage in Haiti came to naught. Laval University in Québec, which has an ongoing educational program with the State University of Haiti, proposed survey and researcher training projects, but failed to muster both the funds and the institutional arrangements to bring its proposal to fruition. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project developed a proposal on intangible cultural heritage with the Haitian Ministry of Culture and Communication for submission to UNESCO. The project would examine the impact of the earthquake on the cultural practices and the material conditions of community temples in the capital region and explore the ways that local people could preserve the traditions closest to them. Perhaps caught between the UNESCO and Haitian bureaucracies, that proposal received no support.

Notably, with regard to material culture collections, the project was unable to develop viable collaborations with two important organizations. One eluded engagement, the other moved too slowly, until it was too late. This respectively imperils the collections of the National Bureau of Ethnology and resulted in the loss of the stained glass at the National Cathedral.

The building housing the ethnological collections is on the same street as the Centre d’Art, and like it, collapsed in the earthquake. Thousands of artifacts, documenting Haiti’s history, spilled off shelves and into the debris and rubble. Many were housed in plastic Tupperware containers, and when I first went by the building, the massive potpourri of blue plastic container covers offered a sad and striking visual incongruity. The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project allocated funds to the recovery of this collection. Much could be done by merely picking artifacts up off the ground. We were ready to bring in heavy equipment and depending upon engineering assessments, either demolish or shore up the damaged building so as to allow for the retrieval of thousands of artifacts. We tried over and over again to obtain permission to work on the site, yet could not. Over the course of some sixteen months, we’ve seen two seasons of rain and storms come and go, and nothing being done to save this unique record of Haiti’s cultural history. Inaction by the leadership of this public organization remains inexplicable.

An even more dramatic failure has been evident with the stained glass of the National Cathedral. We’d been amazed from our very first visit that the beautiful glass—arranged in decorative rosettes as well as in figurative saintly representations—did not break or shatter in the earthquake as the whole massive church caved in and was reduced to rubble. We sought from the outset of the project a means of retrieving the stained glass. Like the murals at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, we realized this would be a long and somewhat complex process involving the clearing of steel and concrete and the use of lifts and scaffolding in order to remove glass from their lead encasements, some set in damaged walls forty or fifty-feet high. It took months and months to get permission from the Cathedral’s officials to do the work. We contracted with a Haitian American stained glass expert, Kesler Pierre, to do an assessment and develop a plan. When finally we received permission to proceed, we sent guards to help secure the site. What they found was that almost all the glass was gone. Some turned up on eBay, but most lay shattered on the site, discarded as valueless to looters out to salvage the lead that had held it in place.

I did not share with Kesler his depth of knowledge or emotional history with the stained glass. But I had been in the Cathedral amidst the dismaying rubble on one superbly beautiful day. I’d seen the glass aglow, peacefully and brilliantly channeling light onto the hulking, lifeless remains. It did so in such a hopeful, literally uplifting way—so that one could easily imagine light itself cleansing the bent steel rafters and massive concrete boulders from the Cathedral floor. The artistry of the stained glass was evident, producing the visual cue for transcendence. Now, it was gone—and so too, as Kesler notes, something sacred was now lost forever.
Assisting in disaster recovery of cultural heritage goes to the heart of what it means to be a conservator, one who protects and prolongs the life span of damaged artistic and historic works for present and future generations. By its nature, disaster response work involves aspects that swing from tragic to uplifting. We worked alongside Haitian colleagues, who had suffered traumatic personal loss and significant damage to national cultural patrimony. Together, we tried to repair what fractures we could.

On several fronts, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project faced significant challenges. The application of a broad-based conservation approach was needed to confront a spectrum of pressing issues: first aid intervention, stabilization, overall collection care, and treatment. Progress on the project’s priorities also involved navigating a multi-cultural environment. As the American professional working on the ground in Port-au-Prince for the longest period on the project, I wondered how to communicate in a culture that seemed insular to me. Knowledge of a background context of decades of American involvement, with periods of unwelcome interference, in Haiti lodged in my thoughts. To transmit conservation knowledge effectively, communication and receptivity were both necessary. To introduce conservation here, Haitian colleagues had to value what we offered. Yet, inserting specialized foreign expertise into a local infrastructure that lacked the needed expertise required delicacy.

I believed that understanding the impact of our collaboration on our Haitian colleagues was important to achievement of our work goals. We opened several training sessions by asking course participants why cultural recovery of Haitian patrimony was important to them. Many expressed their beliefs in the importance of saving their artistic heritage, which they spoke about in sincere terms reflecting a sense of national pride. In many conversations, colleagues described their experiences with limited access to information and variable, often random, professional opportunities for exposure to current preservation methods. Many expressed enthusiasm for our efforts to expose them to current practices by sharing our expertise.

CHALLENGES: DISASTER AFTERMATH, FRACTURED INFRASTRUCTURE, INSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES

The over-arching challenge involved response to a cultural catastrophe of devastating proportions while simultaneously building a local base of preservation and conservation professionals from the ground-up.

The damage sustained by thousands of individual art works, public monuments, and historic structures posed advanced conservation problems. These included: paintings that are torn, punctured, or broken; works on paper that are badly torn and crumpled; sculpture that is broken, deformed, or corroded; and built heritage in total collapse. Haiti has a tropical climate which encourages biological degradation and infestation; two issues, which when encountered
Over a period of four months I treated a dozen paintings from the Centre d’Art, Nader Museum, National Palace, and MUPANAH. These paintings represent different twentieth century movements in Haitian art, and the cultural heritage of the country. Working on complex treatments after a disaster is a very rewarding experience. Paintings at the Center would undergo transformations not commonly seen in conservation laboratories—in some cases literally from torn rags to beautiful art. This unique situation was an extraordinary opportunity and demonstrated clearly the importance of our work.

—Kristín Gísladóttir, Painting Conservator from Iceland

on works of art must be addressed foremost, as they result in continuing degradation, which can spread to other works of art.

Site visits to private and public collections revealed that basic collections care and housekeeping measures were largely non-existent, even pre-earthquake. A decades-long problem with electricity meant that even collections that have it and can provide air-conditioning or fanpower for air circulation, cannot provide it continuously. Many institutions did not have screens on their windows, allowing for a build-up of dirt and exposure to pollution. Except in rare cases, most institutions do not have basic written or photographic inventories of their collections. Similarly, most collections have not been prioritized to identify the most culturally important art works. The absence of this information significantly impaired recovery and treatment efforts because we had to undertake cataloguing documentation simultaneously with our recovery work.

At the outset, I encountered misperceptions about conservation, mainly an expectation of full restoration—the addition of non-original materials to achieve aesthetic integration—of art works. While restoration is not a conservation priority when collections have been gravely damaged in a natural disaster, it amounted to the main exposure colleagues had had to repair work. Many antiquated methods are in place and these rely on what materials are available locally, including shoe repair glues, impure waxes, cellophane, and masking tapes.

An education component to the project was critical, as many colleagues had limited or non-existent exposure to contemporary preservation concepts, theory, ethics, and practices. A professional conservation perspective involves a global approach comprising preventive care, stewardship of collections, stabilization, and treatment. It was important to explain the need to first stabilize collections, then to prioritize works by cultural importance prior to treatment, as a significant time commitment is involved to treat badly damaged works. It was necessary to correct and update detrimental practices by teaching that inaction, poor storage conditions, and improper treatment methods using unstable materials are damaging to works of art, too.

Establishing a multi-national project that depends on Haitian partnerships requires time to build relationships and trust. From June until late August 2010, numerous meetings were held to lay the ground-work for collaboration. During this period works of art were slow to arrive at the Center and critical work time was elapsing.

Larger environmental and societal conditions impacted project staffing and activities, as well. A cholera outbreak in October 2010, Hurricane Tomas in November 2010, political unrest around the presidential election results in December 2010 and February 2011, a strike by public employees in April 2011, and Tropical Storm Emily in August 2011 caused the Center to close its doors temporarily. These were times of particular stress and uncertainty.

[Left] Paintings Conservator Kristín Gísladóttir from Iceland examines the restoration treatment given a painting. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian

[Center] Paper Conservator Bernard Colla from Belgium works with an artwork on paper. Photo by Stephanie Hornbeck

[Right] Anaïs Gailhbaud examines an iron sculpture. Photo by Richard Kurin/Smithsonian
PROGRESS: PARTNERSHIPS, IMPROVED COLLECTIONS CARE, CONSERVATION TREATMENTS

The response to these challenges involved the application of a systematic approach to collaboration with our partnering institutions, staffing projects, and outfitting facilities. To build a response team, we needed both foreign conservation experts and local culture professionals. The Center had a bilateral structure with an administrative side to interface with public and private institutions in Haiti and an operational side to execute work activities. The former comprised mainly Haitian colleagues and the latter foreign conservators and eventually Haitian studio/project assistants. To undertake our work we also needed partnering institutions in the public and private sector.

The careful groundwork laid by Richard Kurin, Corine Wegener, and Olsen Jean Julien realized important breakthroughs when the murals conservation project for Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral began in July 2010 and then when the Centre d’Art board agreed to bring its damaged collection of nearly 5,000 works of art to the Cultural Recovery Center for processing and stabilization. In addition, the late summer 2010 ICCROM course served an important educational outreach function, as representatives from fourteen public and private institutions participated. The reputation of the Center was being established, paving the way for other institutions to trust in our ability to undertake conservation work on their cherished collections.

Over time, the Cultural Recovery Project realized meaningful progress leading to tangible conservation results in stabilization of collections, storage improvements, training, and treatment of individual works. The project provided significant conservation assistance to public and private institutions, including the Centre d’Art, National Museum of the Pantheon, the Lehmann Vodou Collection, the Nader Museum, the National Library, and the National Archives. Assistance included site assessments, stabilization measures such as dry cleaning and treatment for mold, improved housing, and storage upgrades. Assessments and stabilization measures were performed at the Centre d’Art, the Lehmann Vodou Collection, Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, the National Archives, the National Library, and the Corvington Library. Other institutions like the Museum of Haitian Art, Galerie Flamboyant, and Rainbow Art Gallery would benefit from complex treatments of individual, culturally important works of art. Training sessions have been offered to support project conservation activities. Over 100 Haitian colleagues have participated in at least one of these training sessions. Some 30,000 works of art, books, documents, monuments, and wall paintings have been recovered and stabilized. More involved conservation treatments were performed by professional conservators on over 100 badly damaged works deemed of high cultural priority.

Providing eighteen months of expertise and exposure to preservation concepts and methods to a region that previously had little such exposure, marks a good and important start. The continuation of basic stabilization efforts, the creation of inventories, and implementation of storage improvements must continue for years to come. Building systematically on these efforts will advance the decades of work that remain in Haiti’s post-earthquake cultural recovery.
SEARCHING FOR ART IN THE NATIONAL PALACE

DAWNE STEELE PULLMAN

It was eerie. Our footsteps echoed down the corridor of the third floor of the National Palace in Port-au-Prince, the now deserted office and residence of Haiti’s presidents. I imagined this architectural homage to the White House to have once been a buzzing bustling center of government activity and bureaucracy. We passed room after room void of desks, lamps, chairs, files, phones, and people that had been present only nine months before. Absent were the usual office paraphernalia and staff to run a country. Instead, now it was apparent that all was gone except for the odd file cabinet or lone chair left behind as a ghostly reminder.

We were in search of paintings that had gone missing, since the country was starting to reclaim its cultural heritage after rescuing the living first, then claiming bodies where possible, and now feeding its souls by seeking to preserve its cultural heritage, its art—the outward expression of this vibrant, colorful, and complicated country.

Only five of us from the Cultural Recovery Center had been allowed access to the National Palace and as we turned the corner to the president’s private quarters we saw that the iconic columns of the loggia had been shifted to a drunken forty-five-degree angle and the roof caved in exposing the blue sky. Walls had collapsed leaving a landslide of plaster, concrete, and twisted wire mesh. Reaching our destination, only a gilded corner of a frame, which must have held the prized painting, poked up out of the six-foot-high pyramid of debris. Our hopes sank as there was no way we could unearth this artwork, except by removing one by one, and by hand, each chunk of rubble. This was not a wise option, considering the structural state of the building as well as the lives at risk. Reluctantly, we retreated in order to continue our conservation efforts of the 4,000 other artworks baking in the emergency storage containers back at the Cultural Recovery Center.

SYSTEMATIZING DEPLOYMENTS

ERYL P. WENTWORTH AND ERIC POURCHOT

No conservation work in a disaster situation is really routine, yet the deployment of conservators, both by Smithsonian and AIC volunteers, became more regularized over the life of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

Chief Conservator Stephanie Hornbeck set priorities and created systems that gave more continuity to efforts. Training programs at the Center created a cadre of people, including talented local artists, who could work on larger-scale projects over extended periods of time. Conservation work shifted from conservation treatments on a few “showcase” pieces to larger-scale cleaning, stabilization, and storage projects. The storage containers began to empty out.

At the same time, working and living conditions became more predictable, and FAIC was able to start sending volunteer conservators based on needed skills and expertise, beyond the small pool of 107 AIC Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT) responders. AIC-CERT coordinators Aimee Primeaux and Beth Antoine were able to schedule volunteers several months in advance based on Stephanie’s work calendar.

Given agreements in place with the Smithsonian, we developed arrangements for the purchase of materials and supplies and for getting them to conservators to carry down to Haiti. Communication lines were always open, and over time, problems were solved and challenges met. A year after initiating the project the amount of work was still staggering in scale, but the partnerships, preparations, and systems were beginning to pay off.
THE CENTER’S PAINTINGS LAB

VIVIANA DOMINGUEZ

The paintings conservation atelier at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center is up and running at full speed as if it has been this way for many years. It is hard to believe that this very well equipped lab was a timid almost empty room in June 2010.

Every single painting to be conserved in this lab was severely damaged in the earthquake and in need of urgent care. The overwhelming and scary sight of these wrecked paintings has never intimidated the fourteen paintings conservators who have worked in the lab. Their extraordinary efforts are reflected in the twenty-five Haitian paintings that have received major restoration treatment. They have been helped by three skillful and dedicated Haitian artists now trained in conservation techniques, and serving as conservation assistants at the Center.

I began to oversee activities in the paintings lab after completing the project to rescue the murals at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. I found Jean Ménard Derenoncourt and Franck Louissaint hard at work. These are two very dignified gentlemen and professional artists who teach at the Ecole Nationale des Arts (ENARTS). They were retouching a very large, five-foot by seven-foot portrait of an elderly Haitian woman. Her worried eyes, looking upwards, drew my attention to her earthquake-damaged forehead. One of the gentlemen handed me an old amateur photograph of the complete image. The woman’s anguished expression made it seem to me that she’d anticipated the damage.

The painting by Mario Benjamin, one of Haiti’s leading contemporary artists, was rescued in two separate pieces by Patrick Vilaire and his team from the rubble of the Presidential Palace. Kristín Gísladóttir, a paintings conservator from Iceland reassembled the painting and with Jean Ménard and Franck, patiently repaired the fifty-eight tears in the canvas. The team did a remarkable hand relining of this very large painting and re-stretching the canvas. They then in-painted damaged areas, bringing the piece back to life.

The color reintegration of the large lacunae on the forehead and background presented a real challenge. I had to solve an ethical dilemma of how to resolve the large missing area. On the one hand, we had to respect the historical integrity of the piece and the earthquake has become part of the painting’s history. On the other hand the missing area was too predominant for a “purist” approach, which would imply applying a neutral color. So I found an alternative. I stipple painted hundreds and thousands of small dots like Seurat’s “pointillism” bringing the image back together. This treatment was the most complicated and longest treatment undertaken at the Center’s conservation studios. Chief Conservator Stephanie Hornbeck regarded this project as evidence that advanced conservation work can be achieved in Haiti.
CONSERVING IRON SCULPTURE

JANE NORMAN AND PAUL JETT

As conservators of objects, we went to Haiti to develop a treatment protocol for a collection of approximately 350 works of iron sculpture rescued from the rubble of the collapsed Centre d’Art, and to present a short training course with Stephanie Hornbeck on basic collections care for objects, with an emphasis on iron sculpture. Nine students were selected by Center staff with the expectation that they would be hired to work on the iron sculpture collection and other conservation projects.

We arrived in Haiti on December 6, 2010, an inauspicious time to start a project. The next day, the announcement of results for the recently held presidential election led to demonstrations that shut down Port-au-Prince for two-and-a-half days.

We felt safe in our hotel, but could not leave the premises. We spent the time planning the training course and watching CNN for news of the local situation. Once we were able to begin work at the Center, we proceeded with the development of the iron treatment protocol and finalizing the course. Training was carried out over two days, a much shorter time than we had hoped, but nonetheless, the training of the students in basic handling, assessment, documentation, and cleaning of the iron sculpture seemed successful. The trainees were an interesting mix of people who had either an art or chemistry background, and the dynamic of the group was provocative and engaging. It is our understanding that a number of these individuals went on to work with the ironwork recovered from the Centre d’Art and on other projects.

Near the end of our stay, we went to the Croix des Bouquets area of Port-au-Prince where many of the ironworking artists have their studios. It was exciting to see that the tradition of ironworking not only continues but, in fact, thrives. The visit reaffirmed our optimism in the importance of cultural recovery in Haiti, in spite of the many obstacles.

Jane Norman is a conservator in private practice; Paul Jett is the Head, Conservation and Scientific Research, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
CONSERVING SCULPTURE

CAROL GRISSOM

Working with Helen Ingalls, another Smithsonian objects conservator, in March 2011, we initiated the first conservation treatments of earthquake-damaged items at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center from the Musée du Pantheon National Haïtien (Haitian National Pantheon Museum), known as MUPANAH, and the Parliament building.

My major project was reassembly of an orientalist-style statue of a female slave signed “Bracony,” probably the Italian-American sculptor Leopold Bracony. Made principally of white marble, it was apparently broken and shattered as tremors tipped the statue over forward during the earthquake. Broken stone fragments were reattached, as were undamaged flesh parts of the statue cast in bronze. We successfully found additional marble fragments at MUPANAH, but time constraints and the absence of many photographs of the statue before it was damaged prevented replacement of some shattered and missing portions. For the Parliament building we began cleaning a plaster and bronze relief of the Haitian Act of Independence by Montagutelli and examined granite reliefs by Drabanet from its Chamber of Deputies.

Since the objects laboratory at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center was well equipped by the time of our arrival, we were able to begin work immediately, and we worked long days. However, two weeks was too short a time period to complete work on both the MUPANAH statues and the Parliament reliefs. We estimate our contribution to the artistic recovery effort to be very small compared to the enormous need, but our desire to see cultural recovery continue is strong as a result of our experience.

It was a pleasure to be part of the well-functioning Center and its committed Haitian staff, even for such a short time. We also enjoyed visiting the wall painting conservators, who were removing damaged mural fragments from the almost completely destroyed Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

Carol Grissom is a Conservator at the Smithsonian’s Museum Conservation Institute.

The bust of Alexandre Pétion, a General in the Haitian revolution and President of the Republic of Haiti is restored at the Cultural Recovery Center. Conservation record photo by Stephanie Hombrek/Haiti Cultural Recovery Project
A painted plaster bust of Alexandre Pétion (1903) by Haitian artist Normil Charles sat on a wooden pedestal next to other busts of Haitian heroes in the atrium of the Museum of the Pantheon of Haiti (MUPANAH) when the earthquake hit Port-au-Prince. Alexandre Pétion (1770-1818), President of the Republic of Haiti from 1806 to 1818, is considered one of Haiti’s founding fathers. During the quake, the bust of Pétion fell from the pedestal and landed on the gallery floor, its head shattering into pieces. The damaged bust was salvaged, and seven fragments were collected and boxed. Debris from the building’s damaged ceiling tiles and flooring was also swept up and placed outdoors for eventual disposal. This would assume significance later on.

When Carol Grissom and I, Smithsonian staff conservators, arrived at the Cultural Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince to assist in the conservation of art damaged in the earthquake, I chose to conserve the damaged bust of Pétion.

I cleaned the broken shards of plaster using soft brushes and a vacuum cleaner, consolidated with dilute adhesive the loose plaster at the neck where the shards would attach, and dry-fitted the existing fragments to assess the order in which I would need to reassemble them. Significant portions of the head were missing, including the right eye, left ear, and so large a portion of the top of the head that reassembly of the broken shards was rendered impossible.

Rumor had it that there might still be additional shards belonging to the sculpture at MUPANAH. The Recovery Project Registrar Carmelita Douby accompanied us on a visit there. We discovered that the museum’s stepped entryway was lined with low hedges where building debris from the earthquake had been deposited. Directed to search there for missing fragments, Carol and I looked quizzically at each other and began carefully combing through the pile of rubble. There we found many painted plaster fragments with curled and dirty black paint, some unmistakably parts of the Pétion bust, such as a left ear and a large brow-like piece with two eyebrows.

In all, nine large painted plaster fragments and many small ones were unearthed. Although somewhat the worse for wear, the fragments we found proved indispensable to the reconstruction of the Pétion bust. I sized the porous edges of each fragment with a synthetic resin adhering them together with a heat-resistant adhesive incorporating the unearthed shards. The head of Alexandre Pétion began to take shape. After I had used all of the fragments available, I filled voids left by missing shards with plaster of Paris, an inert and strong structural material. After seven days of intensive work, the sculpture was reassembled, ready for the finishing steps of filling and retouching remaining losses. Though incomplete, the restoration of this important historical likeness was enormously satisfying.

Helen Ingalls is an Objects Conservator at the Smithsonian’s American Art Museum, specializing in the treatment of fine, decorative, and contemporary art.
Almost exactly one year from when I had left I was asked to return again and arrived with much joy. So much had changed and so many things had improved both at the Cultural Recovery Center and within Port-au-Prince as well. All of the labs were filled with art and the courtyard was filled with shipping containers packed with art. The Cultural Recovery Center sent me to work at the Haitian National Archives and to the Haitian National Library. I spent my two weeks giving workshops, wrapping books, and working with other conservation professionals—Haitian, Canadian, Japanese, and American. I even got to vacuum paintings again!—Vicki Lee

My primary work focused on the preservation of nineteenth century historic collections of the Archives Nationales d’Haiti (ANH).

The materials consist of unique manuscript civil documents—records of births, marriages, divorces, deaths, customs records, and newspapers, both bound and bundled loose documents. I was asked to organize general care and training for handling documents in advance of a planned air-conditioning retrofit of the collections storage space. I also surveyed the overall environmental and space needs. Given the many challenges, including costs, both financial and environmental for maintenance of a generator fueled air-conditioning system, I met with the architect-engineers from the Cultural Recovery Center, suggesting the feasibility of a more sustainable on-demand dehumidification and exhaust system for the already significantly aged materials. My sharing of recent conservation research which acknowledges real-world conditions and strategies versus “ivory tower” theory was met with favor by our Haitian colleagues, who are familiar with shortages of budget, supply, and systemic maintenance.

When asked about the most significant aspect of my experience in Haiti, the word that immediately comes to mind is respect. I was happy to both give and earn respect from my Haitian colleagues at the Cultural Recovery Center and the National Archives during discussions, training, and dusty, hot, hands-on hard work—all of which exercised my ability to rapidly adapt and offer solutions to diverse needs. One of my long-term recommendations is to include all the staff—including temporary laborers, technicians, and the office staff—in project discussions. That way, everyone involved can understand the mission and goals, and hopefully appreciate and respect the value of each others’ work. It also gives people respect for the collections themselves, their value to the Haitian people, and to academics, researchers, and journalists, who will use the records to contribute to Haiti’s own history and future.

Another fun personal challenge included my surprise guest turn as a paintings conservator, due to discoveries made in the stacks at the National Archives of an extremely damaged painting on masonite by Stivenson Magloire. This work has a moving history, due to the circumstances surrounding the death of the artist, and for me to help bring it back together from fragments guided by the eyes of the gallerist, a friend of the artist, was very rewarding.

Nora Lockshin is a Paper Conservator, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Center for Archives Conservation.
**TREATING RARE BOOKS AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY**

**KATIE WAGNER**

Our project at the National Library of Haiti took place on-site at the library located in downtown Port-au-Prince. The library building remained sound after the earthquake but the stacks toppled like dominoes. As a result, the collection sustained considerable damage.

The scope of the project was to clean and re-house the rare monographs and journals with the assistance of nine library staff members. The first challenge we faced was that the supplies we anticipated having at our disposal were not available when we arrived in Haiti. Some were in a container that had yet to clear customs at the airport and some had simply not been ordered.

The second challenge was that the tropical climate of Haiti combined with the lack of a stable storage environment had led to the rapid deterioration of the collection. Many of the monographs consisted of paper so brittle that it was in shards. Without the boxes we had anticipated having at our disposal, we had to come up with an alternative way of re-housing these fragile items. We had brought in acid-free tissue paper and decided that the best way to ensure that the brittle shards remained together, and to flag items for future treatment, was to wrap the books in the tissue paper.

Invaluable to the success of our project was the training that the staff of the National Library had received previously by the paper conservator at the Cultural Recovery Center and from the ICCROM training course. We set to work cleaning, sorting, and re-housing 1,500 items in our two-week period. With the assistance of this well trained and hard working staff, we were able to meet our project goals and leave the rare collection in stable condition.

Katie Wagner is a Book Conservator with the Smithsonian Institution Libraries. She primarily works on materials from the rare book collections at The Cullman, Dibner, and Cooper-Hewitt Libraries.

**THE NATIONAL LIBRARY—AN OASIS OF ENTHUSIASM**

** VANESSA HAIGHT SMITH**

My Smithsonian colleague Katie Wagner and I arrived with much anticipation, landing early in the morning in Port-au-Prince with four suitcases and three oversized boxes filled with conservation supplies. Upon arrival we were greeted by the soon-to-be familiar face of our driver provided by the Cultural Recovery Center. The drivers who delivered us safely between several locations during our visit turned out to be capable and punctual, making it possible for us to accomplish our rewarding task of cleaning and re-housing the 1,500-item rare book collection at the National Library of Haiti located downtown.

In a nation suppressed by poverty and a devastating earthquake, we discovered an oasis of enthusiasm and kindness within the Library, punctuated by an inspirational work ethic by their staff in order to achieve so much in just two weeks. Scenes on the streets were indeed troubling and local customs were baffling to us at times. The daily commute between locations was exhausting. Important supplies were limited. However, it was the optimism of those assigned to work with us that made the effort worthwhile.

We are still in touch with the Library staff and hope that our efforts to stabilize their rare books, for eventual permanent storage in a new environmentally-sound collections space, continues to be a source of encouragement for these lovely people in support of the immense cultural treasures of Haiti.

Vanessa Haight Smith is a Book Conservator and Head of the Preservation Services Department, Smithsonian Institution Libraries.
A BEEHIVE OF ACTIVITY

MARIANNE LEHMANN

A few weeks after the earthquake Olsen Jean Julien, Manager of the Cultural Recovery Project, invited me and other Haitian cultural leaders to a meeting with experts from foreign cultural organizations to help figure out what we could do to save our cultural heritage. The exchange of ideas was very interesting and promising.

Later, I was invited to participate in a three-week training session on collection management organized by the ICCROM, the Smithsonian and the Government of Haiti. Each day I learned something new. Practical work done in this course was very informative and useful to those of us who have collections. I realized that I could do a great deal to better preserve my collection of objects with little cost, while more extensive treatment would take considerable funds.

At the end of the course, participants from the different Haitian cultural organizations were encouraged to propose a project relating to the care of their endangered collections. The Cultural Recovery Project would then select projects to implement and also provide financial assistance for them. I recorded this information with satisfaction, careful not to rejoice too much, for as the Haitian proverb says, "sa k nan vant kabrit la, se pou li," which means once you have the means firmly in your hands, you can plan.

Still, I hoped that my project would be selected. Miraculously, it was!

Now, the house at No. 71 Rue Grégoire in Pétion Ville, home to a collection of about 2,700 objects of the sacred arts of Vodou has been transformed into a beehive. Items are moved, cleaned, measured, numbered, labeled, photographed, and stored under the watchful eye of Marie-Lucie Vendryes. She has created a good working atmosphere and leads a well-spirited group of conservators who will finish the project on time. The Cultural Recovery Center is also working to fortify a storage area that will stand up to the weather and future earthquakes, and has provided a generator to so we have a dependable source of electricity.

I am so thankful for the aid to my collection and the work of the Cultural Recovery Center in aiding Haitian cultural heritage generally. We have much to do. Currently, 369 works from my collection are in an exhibition traveling in Europe and to Canada so that we can raise funds for the construction of an Ethnographic Museum in Haiti. I hope too with all my heart that the Cultural Recovery Center can continue to operate for the good of Haiti’s cultural heritage.

Marianne Lehmann is a collector of the sacred arts of Vodou and a founding member of the Foundation for the Preservation, Enhancement and Production of Haitian Cultural Works (FPVPOCH)
CARING FOR THE CLOTH OF CULTURE

SARAH SCATURRO

As the only textile conservator on the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project, I worked on the important Haitian Vodou collection of Marianne Lehmann.

Comprised of more than 3,000 objects, it features a large number of textile-based objects, including sequined and beaded flags, embroidered costumes, dolls, and a large group of life-size statues called Bizangos. The Bizangos, which were created by members of a secret society also called Bizango, include human remains and are covered in tightly stitched black and red fabric embellished with mirrors. Used in Vodou ceremonies as warrior-like manifestations of the Lwa, divine spirits, they, along with all other objects, were “deconsecrated” when they entered into the Lehmann collection.

The collection was largely unaffected by the January 2010 earthquake—a fact that some Haitians attribute to the power the objects still have. However, it was stored in conditions that endangered its long-term survival. I was able to train the team of Haitian technicians in how to handle, clean, and store textile objects so that work could continue after my two-week assignment was completed. I also trained them to recognize the difference between “bad” dirt—which needed to be removed since it was damaging to the artifact, and “good” dirt—which was evidence of the object being used in a ceremony.

While there were many challenges in working on this project—space and time constraints, material shortages, no environmental controls, language barriers, and so on, the biggest challenge was the lack of reliable electricity. My main goal with the textile collection was to remove through vacuuming the decades’ worth of dust, insect debris, and soot that blanketed everything, yet I only had access to electricity about twenty percent of the time! Therefore, I developed a different approach that involved using a soft brush and makeup sponges. Luckily, the day I left the much-needed generator arrived, so the team finally had reliable electricity.

Having successfully conserved more than 170 objects, I left the project after two weeks with a strong sense of accomplishment. More importantly, I played an important role in establishing the methodology on conserving textile-based Vodou artifacts through developing an excellent rapport with the team of technicians.

Sarah Scaturro is a Textile Conservator, at the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum.

[Above] Sarah Scaturro, a Textile Conservator at the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum treats a Vodou Bizango figure in the Lehmann Collection.

[Left] Items in the Lehmann collection, including Vodou figures, required cleaning and needed improved storage. Photos by L. H. Shockey, Jr.

Smithsonian (left) and Corine Wegener (far left)
The actual conditions of living in Haiti while engaged in our conservation work were difficult, and in unexpected ways. Due to concerns about security as stories of kidnapping and rape were reported in the media, we were virtually sequestered in our hotel. Pre-trip visions of communing with Haitian artists and sharing materials and techniques across disciplines were not to be realized. Our only real contact with Haitian people other than Cultural Recovery Center staff and drivers was by eye contact through a closed car window as we were shuttled to and from work in a locked car. Though these interchanges were usually positive, they were all too brief and ultimately frustrating. The realization dawned that relief work is full of unexpected hardships and deprivation of a human, even cultural sort. It is fraught with the boredom of restricted social contacts, the repetition of hotel meals and routines, and emotional ups and downs of grief, outrage, and frustration. Perhaps worst is the worry that one is not doing enough, that the work is not valuable given the yawning need of a culture in trauma, that art is not the first human priority. There was a wry sense of connectedness to relief workers and expatriates across the globe and throughout time, trying to bring something of value to a troubled place far from home and its norms.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson stemmed from the challenges of working with limited materials in a setting plagued by limited local resources, even within the relative oasis of functionality of the Recovery Center. Shortages of materials dictated that we save everything for re-use: cardboard, plastic cups and bags, water bottles cut off to serve as vessels for brush-cleaning or plaster-mixing. Ingenuity is essential in a setting of scarcity, and we found pleasure in creatively adapting our saved/found materials to new uses. Necessity is indeed the mother of invention and that is the great reality and strength of the Haitian people. It took immersion, however brief and escapable, in a scenario of shortages and difficulties to really grasp the triumph of the Haitians, which is enduring resourcefulness and creativity in the face of loss.
The goal of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Program, working with the Foundation for the Preservation, Enhancement and Production of Haitian Cultural Works (FPVPOCH) is to complete an inventory of Marianne Lehmann’s singular collection of approximately 3,000 Vodou artifacts and create a searchable database that includes key information such as object number, name, dimensions, material, function, and location as well as an object image. In addition to assigning numbers for tracking and identification, the objects in the collection must be cleaned and organized by type, size, and material in order to maximize the limited amount of space available for storage in the Lehmann house where the collection is currently stored. I assisted with this project in July 2011.

During my two weeks at the Lehmann house, I worked with the FPVPOCH team to create an Excel database to record object catalog information, making sure that all important data fields were represented. I also reviewed the team’s object numbering system and made recommendations for clearly numbering object components and sets of objects with multiple components. This is especially important when documenting related objects, for example, those used in the same ceremony.

Working on the Marianne Lehmann Vodou Collection was not without its challenges. The balcony, which offered the only available work space, was crowded and exposed to the elements, and the building’s open windows have left the collection covered in decades of dirt and dust. Electricity was intermittent, which was problematic since most objects required vacuuming. The project at times seemed overwhelming. Still, the Haitian team showed me that meaningful work can be accomplished under difficult working conditions with limited supplies. The progress made in two weeks—365 objects processed—has left me optimistic that the entire 3,000 object collection can be processed by the year’s end.

Bethany Romanowski is the Assistant Registrar at the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York. She is currently planning the move of the Museum’s collections to a new off-site storage facility as part of a major renovation project.

There are probably tens of thousands of things that have been damaged. When you think that even in a normal year a conservator typically works on a few hundred objects not many of which require major treatment, you get a sense of how long it is potentially going to take to restore Haiti’s material culture.—L. H. (Hugh) Shockey, Jr.
A SURVEY OF AUDIO-VISUAL CONSERVATION NEEDS

PETE REINIGER

I went to Port-au-Prince one year after the earthquake to survey selected audio-visual collections. Though by no means a complete survey of the country, the sites I visited provided a look at the range of impact the earthquake had on collections and at the current state of audio-visual preservation.

While much content is of popular and non-Haitian materials, all the collections contain some important Haitian cultural and political documentation such as performances, Vodou ceremonies, and political events. Held by organizations including a filmmakers’ association, radio and television stations, as well as individuals, they largely lack curation and most are not well-catalogued. Some were severely affected by the earthquake, others minimally or not at all. All are aware of the need to preserve their media holdings.

Current storage of physical collections varies and no site I visited is able to provide recommended best practice environmental conditions. Collections most impacted by the earthquake need the most urgent attention and triage due to damage from dramatic environmental change including media physically falling from shelves, exposure to dust, moisture, mold, heat, and relocation.

Needs include:

- Prioritization of what to preserve based on clearly established criteria such as cultural and historical significance;
- Training people to work with each media type, its physical characteristics, how to safely treat it in the analog and then bring it into the digital domain. Training in international standards and best practices;
- Video and audio cleaning equipment and supplies and for repackaging physical media;
- Operational “legacy” equipment to play back older media;
- Digital equipment and software;
- Best possible storage of the analog sources after transfer;
- Cataloging system(s);
- Secure, managed storage of audio and video data and assurance of backup and off-site redundancy. The integrity of each collection needs to be retained;
- Controlled access to data with attention to use and intellectual property rights.

One idea for minimizing expense—as funding is a real issue—is to form a coalition of committed organizations to work with the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center and pool resources such as equipment and technical expertise. The National Archives or some other warden of national heritage might be included as a possible digital repository while assuring appropriate control of access and use of individual collections to their owners.

Hopefully, this will become an opportunity to move forward with preservation of important audio visual materials in Haiti. Such preservation is of concern worldwide as technology rapidly changes and older media deteriorates. The earthquake has heightened those concerns in Haiti.

Pete Reiniger is Sound Production Supervisor for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. In much of his audio engineering for Smithsonian Folkways as well as audio preservation, he works with the audio holdings of the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections in the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.
Haiti is not alone in having a preservation crisis when it comes to audio-visual heritage. Archives and libraries throughout the world have declared that film, video, and audio collections are deteriorating so rapidly that a vast record of human experience from the twentieth century is disappearing. The question for me as I toured television and radio stations in Port-au-Prince was how much remained after the earthquake.

The good news is that many historic recordings are kept by the broadcasters; the bad news is that circumstances keep these recordings from being used and preserved. In the cramped air-conditioned studios, producers are creating content on contemporary broadcast formats; but on the shelves in small side offices there are thousands of rare LP records and analog audio and videotape recordings waiting to be resurrected.

At Radio Lumiere a friendly electronics engineer showed me audio decks that he had fixed in his immaculate workshop, using his special skills and an elusive part from the United States. There was another pile of equipment that is all but useless, that no amount of engineering know-how could fix in a poorly resourced country like Haiti.

In the TV control room at Radio Métropole the staff held a lively conversation about the march towards everything digital; being behind the curve is not always a bad thing when trendy technologies decline in price over the course of a year. But the cost of even two-year-old technology is often beyond the capability of poor broadcasting stations.

On the staff patio at Radio Antilles Internationale with a mango tree dropping its ripe fruit just a few feet away, we delved into the concerns of cataloguing the sounds and sights contained on fragile magnetic media. Access to expertise in the library and archives field is infrequent, so some of the most cost-effective and efficient means of capturing data and making it accessible via the Web has not come to Haiti.

On my second to last day in Haiti I led a group of broadcast professionals in a custodial exercise at the National Television of Haiti; we spent an afternoon wiping off dust and grime from over 500 vintage political tapes, and removing the red “record buttons” from the tapes that will prevent them from being accidentally erased when they are placed into a playback deck. Afterwards, we celebrated a worthwhile accomplishment in the television’s canteen with delicious Haitian coffee and Prestige beer. One thing that Haiti does not have a shortage of, it seems, is collegiality and good will among professionals.

Sarah Stauderman is the Collections Care Manager at the Smithsonian Institution Archives. She is an expert on legacy audio and video media and authored the Videotape Identification Guide found on the video preservation Website http://videopreservation.conservation-us.org

Haiti’s audio-visual collections are in urgent need of care. Photo by Pete Reiniger/Smithsonian
A CONSERVATOR'S JOURNAL

MARK ARONSON

My experience was but a brief two week stay as an AIC volunteer painting conservator in Port-au-Prince. It was rewarding and thought provoking.

My flight to Haiti was uneventful. I met fellow conservator Vicki Lee in Miami and we left on time and flew without a bump to Port-au-Prince. I was pleasantly surprised by the sounds of a live island band that greeted us as we de-planed and approached the terminal shuttle bus. The day was warm, sunny and the mood sprightly. The pleasant beat made the wait worthwhile. The terminal was just barely lit and the baggage conveyor not running, so our bags were handed through several windows at once. Somehow retrieving suitcases was a cacophonous snap—as if my bags knew where to find me. I hardly had to look as I was suddenly just standing on them.

Running the gauntlet of official and unofficial porters eager to help with my bags was easy, though I was amused by touts approaching arriving passengers with rolled up paintings to sell. I couldn't think of another country where this would happen—and it occasioned a quick reflection on Haiti as a visually rich society with such big problems. What would my two bits accomplish here?

We found our driver, Erikson Pierre-Louis, without me parting with a proverbial tip. I felt poorly that I was not emphatically solicited and had not taken the opportunity to support the local economy.

Erikson drove us directly to the Cultural Recovery Center in Bourdon where I met the staff. I was introduced to Olsen Jean Julien, Project Manager, of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center, Robine Melse, the office assistant, and then Viviana Dominguez, my boss for the week, and two Haitian artist/conservators Franck Louissaint and Jean Ménard Derenoncourt. Viviana, Vicki, and I sat down for lunch and I was confronted with my first two rule violations; a lovely green salad and iced water. “Yes, you can eat this and drink that,” I was promised. Lovely.

I was given a tour of the Center and was really taken aback. I had expected a hardship post—warnings about electricity and furniture shortages. In reality I found a clean, well-lit, and air-conditioned building. While not plentiful there was a goodly amount of modern conservation supplies and two stereo microscopes. Obviously many hurdles and problems reported in the early months of the project had been taken care of. I was introduced to colleagues, including two conservation students from the States. I saw a bunch of the painting projects underway and the ones I was asked to treat. Yikes.

We took off down the hill for hotel check-in and dinner. Like the Recovery Center, the Plaza Hotel was way more hotel than I had expected—a pool, palm trees, fans, a pleasant bar and restaurant, rooms with air-conditioning, or at least a reasonable interpretation of air-conditioning, and hot showers for seven of my eleven days. There was live music at the outdoor bar two nights a week! The hotel garden, as with many urban hotels, is a bit of a green oasis and during my two weeks I was able to tick off a modest list of birds including Hispaniola woodpecker, Hispaniola bullfinch, Vervain hummingbird, Grey flycatcher as well as Zenaida and Mourning doves.

It is a bit of a different picture directly outside the gates of the hotel. Between the hotel and the destroyed National Palace, just three blocks away, is a sprawling tent city occupied by thousands of people displaced by the earthquake. It’s rough and tumble just outside the door. There is also a handicraft market just across the street, and it is worth a look see. I became enamored with the bracelets made from downed utility cables.
I had good luck with the weather, though it rained a couple of times and you could see it
storming elsewhere (lovely lightning zinging across a cloud darkened sky,) I did not get caught
by bad weather during my visit. Because it was rather dry the mosquitoes so many reported
as problematic were not present in great number or simply not interested in me. I did not find
it necessary to wear repellent either at the Cultural Recovery Center or in the Plaza Hotel.
However, I did develop a funny bumpy rash on both arms, from my elbows to my wrists; it did
not appear to be the result of munching creatures but was more likely caused by some type of
contact dermatitis. Though everyone was rather impressed with it, the rash struck me as small
beans. As of this writing, I have both arms, can still type, and the bumps are just about gone.

Earnest work began Tuesday morning. Viviana Dominguez directed the activities of all the
painting conservation team. She reviewed the project goals with me and then put me to work.
Though the project goals did not emphasize aesthetic reintegration my conversations with
Viviana were informed by the many badly damaged early Italian paintings I had treated and
those experiences helped me better appreciate the damaged Haitian paintings.

My two weeks had two phases, a very active treatment phase during week one and then
during week two, when Viviana was stateside, I added a bit more project management and
organization to my days. I found Louissaint and Jean Ménard were terrific colleagues, very
skilled, observant, methodical, and patient. It was easy to discuss treatments with Viviana
and Louissaint in English, start the work and then as it progressed we let Louissaint and Jean
Ménard carry forward many tasks leaving me to think about other pictures and try and keep
the documentation up to date. We periodically assembled as a group to review the work,
decide what was going right, and what processes could go better or to change. I made periodic
visits to the paper lab where Saori Kawasumi and Erntz Jeudy were reassembling a large
painting on mason's board by Stivenson Magloire which had been blown into many pieces.
We discussed methods, the ideal solution and materials, and then that which we had on hand
and could live with.

My biggest project during the week was a long oblong canvas by an artist named Bourmand
Byron. It was a naïve depiction of the rural countryside. The damages were several fairly long
tears, one straight and one rather jagged, but thankfully there was very little associated paint
loss. It was already off its stretcher and areas around the tears had been consolidated. We set
to work drawing the open tears closer together, using blue painter's tape, and then improvised
a "Dutch" method, pulling the two sides of the tear closer and closer together with brown
Kraft paper and wheat starch paste and water. While drawing the major tears together we also
realigned smaller tears and punctures, and mended them with canvas fibers and a white glue
emulsion. We did a variety of flattening and distortion removing procedures with moist blot-
ter and weights—to help align the torn fabric, close the tear and bring the picture to a more
planar state. I left Jean Ménard and Louissaint to do the lion's share of the jade fiber mend-
ing as they had obviously spent many hours doing this before and their work was quite good.
Though working faster than I would normally, we managed to piece the canvas together and
line the picture by hand, using a plain old Black & Decker steam iron and BEVA 371 to polyes-
ter. Louissaint filled the minor losses and retouched the work by the time I left Port-au-Prince.

While there I also worked on several other pictures, one by Max Pinchinat, another by Herve
Telemaque, and a third by Gesner Armand. The Telemaque was least damaged, though its
appearance was quite chalky perhaps caused by concrete dust and debris. There was much
flaking along the perimeter and a certain amount of loss within the picture plane. This was
consolidated with Lascaux consolidating adhesive and filled before I left. A whimsical, abstract
painting by Gesner Armand on mason’s board had snapped in two and required gluing. Vicki Lee helped begin the treatment by fitting the two halves together and consolidating loose paint along the edge. Working with the methods Saori and Erntz were using on the large panel in the paper lab we mended the break and then applied a canvas support across the back with BEVA 371. The losses were filled by Jean Ménard and then retouched.

The picture by Max Pinchinat was the most damaged canvas I worked with. This abstract portrait was painted with much thick paint. It was seriously whacked by the earthquake, suffered several large, distorted tears and much loss of paint. The painting was encrusted on the back, a sign of some burial, and there were loose and displaced flakes of paint just about everywhere. After Louissaint and Jean Ménard consolidated the picture for a day, we humidified the picture to try and bring it back into plane before mending the tears. The first humidity treatment only brought the picture so far. There was still much active flaking and I had to leave a next phase of treatment for the next group to tackle.

SOME OTHER THOUGHTS

My first week was spent doing much treatment and learning the skill set held by Louissaint, Jean Ménard, and Junior Norélus. Once Viviana left I found myself directing a variety of treatments and making sure they were productively busy. I enjoyed several lengthy discussions with Saori Kawasumi regarding the progress of her and Erntz’s treatment of the Magloire. We imagined how we might treat the painting in her Buffalo, New York studio, versus in a museum or private studio and then in Haiti, using what we had on hand. While I came down expecting to just do treatments or surveys or whatever was asked of me, I was surprised to be doing some managing, discussing projects, and training.

Towards the end of my second week, e-mails from Stephanie Hornbeck and Viviana asked me to plan treatment activity for the Haitian conservation team who would be working without a states-side conservator for a couple of days. The Haitians I met in the Recovery Center were caring, engaged, and skilled. The training they had, the projects they had accomplished in the months before my short stay, and their eye and hand skill made this an easy and comfortable task. We discussed the treatment work they would do, and when I left I did so with complete confidence in their ability and direction. They were enthusiastic about their art and made it clear to me, we were not conserving single objects but parts of an entire culture.

Throughout my two weeks our discussions brought to the fore my thoughts about the kind of work we were trying to do in Haiti and what and how we might do treatments differently if we were at home in the States. If we do a different kind of work, how should it be different and why? Those of us at home, especially in larger institutions, are used to an almost limitless number of supplies, alternatives, and even with our deadlines, more time. The adage about perfection being the enemy of good came to my mind several times.

Oh how I wish I had learned to do a paste lining in school! In Haiti, anything like BEVA or Lascaux adhesives must be imported and must be very dear. Yes of course glue paste has its issues with propensity to grow mold, but really might it be an equally valid method, given the circumstances? I also realize that conservators in private practice probably see a lot more of profoundly damaged art work than I do in a museum filled with paintings that just don’t see a lot of this type of damage.

The conversations the Haitian artists/conservators had during the day were a joy to listen to, even though I had not much idea what was said. They spent time looking at the Center’s coffee table books on Haitian art, took “photocopies” with their camera phones of the paintings they
liked, as they don’t have copies of these books, nor photo copy machines. Snapping pictures
with their cell phones seemed to do the trick. They discussed whatever it was they were dis-
cussing enthusiastically and I could tell they were eager for the conversation. I advised future
conservators deployed to Haiti to bring down more books on Haitian art, either for the Center
or for Haitian colleagues. I am sure they would be appreciated. I also advised conservators ar-
riving at the Cultural Recovery Center to take a good visual picture of all the supplies available
in each of the labs. Several times during my weeks I came across things I wish I had known
were there earlier in my stay.

Another suggestion, try and find some ways to spend a bit of time out of the hotel. I had a
friend in Port-au-Prince and she took me to the Oloffson Hotel for the weekly Ram concert,
which is both a pleasure and experience. To see and meet some of the scores and hundreds
of twenty-somethings down in Haiti working for this or that NGO, “dot-gov,” or “dot-org,”
partying down to great live music every Thursday night puts you in touch with some of the
other relief efforts going on, and it’s another nice place to eat and relax. Port-au-Prince is
not a place with many plain old tourists, and I felt completely comfortable walking up to any
foreigner and just asking them “so what are you doing here,” and that almost always led to
an interesting story, and an occasional surprise and second question “really? You are Haitian?”

And one more bit—if you dare, the barbecued chicken on offer from street vendors, just near
to the now closed Museum of Haitian Art, is truly delicious.

I had a rewarding time, and would surely go back. I learned a lot, and thought a lot about
our “stuff.” I go to disaster planning meetings at work and find the conversations often so
abstract and institutional. We live in one of the richest of museum cultures and replete with
hefty budgets, and can get so worked up about the “what ifs,” can make mountains out of ant
hills, and too often project a gloomy picture over minor disadvantages and problems. My time
in Haiti offered me a reality check with regards to our work back home.
FAILURE AT THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL: NO VESTIGE OF THE SACRED

KESLER PIERRE

For months I sent e-mails introducing myself to anyone I could find who was connected with the effort to preserve Haiti's cultural heritage and particularly the surviving stained glass in the otherwise devastated National Cathedral. In October 2010 the Smithsonian's Richard Kurin sent me back to Haiti to do an in-depth survey of the remaining stained glass and help devise a plan of action for its emergency conservation. Olsen Jean Julien, the Manager of the Cultural Recovery Project, obtained proper permission for us to enter the Cathedral and arranged a meeting with Reverend Eric Toussaint. I included Florence and Georges Celcis, who own and operate a stained glass studio in Haiti.

The five of us met at the Cathedral, along with two structural engineers. A partial fence erected along the south side of the building did little to impede access. Reverend Toussaint commented this was his first time inside the ruin since the earthquake. As we stepped inside I could hear a saw being used somewhere in the Cathedral. "There are things in here we'd really like to preserve," the Reverend said. We all stood a moment, taking in the landscape of razed concrete. Eyes moved up to the jagged roof fragments dangling above. "Okay, let's get out of here," was the next sentence, and we all stepped back outside. The engineers said they would be able to stabilize the area so the work of removing the stained glass could be done in relative safety.

After some more discussion, we said our goodbyes and I went back inside the Cathedral to take photos. Further into the ruins I found people were busy cutting, smashing, and prying loose anything saleable. Some of them were literally climbing the walls and balancing themselves on exposed sections of rebar. After being lucky enough to have survived the earthquake, they were risking their lives for the meager sums of money they would collect for scrap metal. All this was going on with no interference from any authority. It was clear these people were the only continuous presence the Cathedral had seen in the ten months since the catastrophe.

I saw there were fewer windows now than there had been in February and they hadn't been lost to the elements. I was in a race.

I spent three days at the Cathedral counting, mapping, and photographing windows. When I returned to the U.S. it took me longer than I would have liked—about ten days—to assemble the report, which stressed the immediate need to secure the site. Olsen submitted the report to the Catholic Church authorities and I was told steps would be taken to protect the ruins. This was the first week of November. There was talk we might be ready to begin the actual removal of the stained glass by February 2011. I began to relax; it was really going to happen.

Then in January, a couple of days after Haiti's Independence Day celebration, I received a call from a Haitian friend who told me all the Cathedral windows were gone and there was a rumor they had been stolen at gunpoint.

Stolen at gunpoint? There were eighty or so large windows. How many days would this great stained glass heist have taken? I tried to picture it—armed glaziers with scaffolds making a quick getaway in trucks carrying large fragile glass panels—it didn't sound like a very likely scenario to me.

I searched the Haitian media on the Internet and found no mention of such an occurrence.

I wrote Richard and Olsen to ask if they'd heard anything. Was all the art glass really gone?

A couple of days later Olsen let me know that all but the most inaccessible glass was gone, but no one seemed to know what had happened. I guess the Church's bureaucracy is no less time consuming than government's, because it turned out security guards didn't make it onto the site till the last week of December and, apparently, by then it was too late.

I returned to the Cathedral in April, intending to talk to the homeless people who basically live outside the church. I had developed relationships with these people during my visits; I'd brought them food and taken their pictures. They would definitely know what happened to the windows.
Looters at work at the National Cathedral. Photo by Kesler Pierre
When I got there, asking questions turned out to be unnecessary because I found the process of stained glass removal still underway.

There were a few guys. They had climbed up the wall and were smashing the glass with a hammer to get to the lead. Next they would pull the metal frames from the wall. They told me they had worked their way through all the windows and now they were working on the highest ones. These were the last few left.

I photographed the men at their work. From their perspective they were only doing what was necessary. They took the initiative; making use of debris that no one else appeared to have any interest in, and at considerable physical risk. I looked around, there was no sign of any security, no sign of any Church presence; the metal scavengers’ work continued unhindered.

I couldn’t help but feel this would have been less likely to happen had the site not been left so abandoned. A wall around the perimeter and guards would of course have been great, but it might have been enough of a deterrent just to have people on the premises working to stabilize the ruins and clear the rubble. It might have been enough, if it just looked as though something was happening, as though someone cared. It might have been enough just not to have left it sitting here like a trash heap for a year.

It’s complicated, I know. In the wake of the human tragedy, with all the emergent needs of the people that weren’t being met, that have never been met, you can’t expect the Haitian populace to indulge in the luxury of caring about art, or about a building.

But there are people in the Haitian government whose job it is to care. And these windows had value; the Catholic Church should have cared. In the entire organization of the Catholic Church was there no one who could have taken the time to look inside their own Cathedral and see that it was being pulled apart? Did they really need me to fly in from New York, ten months into the crisis to do that for them? Did they really need me to recommend security?

Given the lack of concern over the deterioration of the windows before the earthquake, the apathetic behavior on the part of the stewards of these artworks is hardly surprising in its aftermath.

However, in this moment, the world was poised to help with funds and volunteers pouring in; it is amazing to me that somehow this was still not enough to spur action. The world at large was more interested in saving Haiti’s cultural heritage than the Haitian authorities were themselves.

One of the metal scavengers had a section of stained glass panel. I asked him if I could take a look before he smashed it. Perfectly willing, he handed it over.

After all this time I was finally holding one of the Cathedral’s panels in my hand. I looked at this remnant of what I’d been trying to save for years and thought, with virtually nothing left to preserve, the best thing I could do now was be a witness and record what happened. I held the section of stained glass up and photographed it, and then I handed the panel back to the man who valued it only as scrap lead.

Still, for a moment, I considered paying the men to not break the little glass that was left. I could buy a few more days, maybe even weeks—but at this stage—what would be the point? It was over; the race was lost.

Looking around the desolate space now, I felt no vestige of the sacred, for me at least, it was gone. I felt as though I were standing inside a huge carcass whose bones were being picked clean. If this goes on long enough, there will be nothing left of the Cathedral at all.
Stained glass panels at the National Cathedral before and after the earthquake.  

[Next page] People scavenge the remains of the devastated National Cathedral.  
Photos above and next page by Kesler Pierre
The world’s outpouring of compassion in the wake of the January 12 earthquake was truly amazing. One could only imagine going back 200 years, when much of the world regarded Haiti as a pariah nation, one whose people had boldly and bravely fought Napoleon to achieve their independence and also put a firm end to the slavery which had brutalized them. Then, many in the world—particularly those slave-holding and trading peoples had only loathing and maybe even fear of what Haitians had done. It is now of course very different, with Haitians integrally part of the human family. The earthquake demonstrated the fragility of life and society, clearly in Haiti, but also for all people everywhere. It didn’t take much imagination to be awestruck with how the earth could wreak such damage and devastation upon its inhabitants. But if the world’s heart went out to the Haitian people, its mind marveled at their strength, fortitude, and resilience in the face of disaster. There was, in the aftermath of the earthquake a profound respect for the victims in their basic act of survival.

Pride, hope, and confidence, characteristics born of Haiti’s heritage, infuse the younger generation—even in the wake of the earthquake’s devastation. Photo by Ken Solomon
Patrick Delatour, Leslie Voltaire, and many other Haitian leaders developed the initial plans for Haitian relief and recovery to which, by April 2010, various donor nations and organizations had committed more than $9 billion. An international organization—the Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission—composed of Haitians and donor nation leaders was put in place to collect the funds, to assess the worthiness of different projects, and to transparently dispense funds and evaluate project impacts and consequences. As reported by many sources, the process has not worked as hoped. Pledges of funds have not turned into cash; and when they have come, it has often been via a slow and circuitous route. The Commission’s structural viability has been questioned and its work has been hobbled by political and bureaucratic challenges, not the least of which was a delayed presidential election in Haiti. Only a small fraction of the funds have been disbursed, and on the ground, Haitians remain homeless and jobless. While a significant amount of the rubble has been cleared, schools, roads, and the country’s infrastructure have seen little improvement.

The cultural sector mirrors much of the larger situation. The outpouring of appreciation for Haiti’s cultural resources and empathy for their possible loss or endangerment from the earthquake was resounding and widespread among cultural organizations worldwide. UNESCO, ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA, ICA, International Blue Shield, and closer to the affected region, Caricom, all made statements—heartfelt ones, with concerns for Haiti’s historical buildings and cultural sites, collections, living traditions, and cultural industries. Some help for Haiti did come very quickly. UNESCO provided boxes for disbursed and damaged books and papers, as well as a small amount of fencing to protect cultural sites from looting. Caricom sent in emergency conservation supplies, so Haitian archivists and libraries could protect and preserve materials. Other organizations sent delegations to assess the situation, the damages, and propose a course of action.

Though well-intentioned, most efforts suffered from want of quickly available funds. There was simply no money to accomplish any cultural relief effort of any scale. Cultural organizations are always relatively poor, and always raising money. They do not have large amounts of spare funding unrestricted from governmental allocations or donor purposes, to devote to an unpredictable tragedy. Many organizations scrambled to raise money quickly. UNESCO put out an announcement for a flash appeal, raising about $400,000. ICOMOS tried to raise funds through donations. The International Committee of the Blue Shield sought commitments from various governments and foundations, but it took months and months to get even relatively small pledges. In the delays, its ambitious large scale and totally unrealistic cultural recovery project to rescue books and archives had to be increasingly trimmed back until it disappeared.

The U.S. was no exception. The U.S. Department of State did not have a fund for cultural relief or recovery. U.S. AID did not regard cultural work as part of its humanitarian assistance mission. Originally, several advocates sought $10 million for cultural recovery in the Haiti supplemental appropriations bill to present to the U.S. Congress. That was cut in half and then eventually to $2 million due to skittishness about including “an arts project” in such funding because it might engender political debate and thus distract attention from passing the larger $1.5 billion appropriation. In the end, those U.S. AID funds came through to support the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project, but had we not had the $276,000 so generously donated from The Broadway League, there would not have been a project.

The failure to have in place a cultural relief fund for disasters is remarkable. Just now, after more than eighteen months since the earthquake, UNESCO has released its request for approximately $23 million for Haitian cultural recovery projects. Even if successful, it is likely to take months, if not years to raise the funds, at which time work can be planned and eventually start. It is way too long a delay.

The other drawback to putting plans into place quickly revolved around the organizational match-ups, in Haiti and with various international organizations. Haiti’s cultural world, not unlike that in other nations, is divided between a public, governmentally controlled sector, and a private sector, with the latter ranging from governmentally recognized foundations, cooperatives,
and non-profit organizations to private individuals, informal groups and commercial enterprises. All were affected by the earthquake and faced as well infrastructural and other challenges both pre- and post-disaster. Putting in place plans to deal with the non-government sector is daunting. The churches constitute a huge number of significant buildings, possessed not only of historical architecture, but also work, such as the Biblical murals of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, which are popularly regarded as national treasures or of great public interest. In Haiti, the non-government institutions—the Centre d’Art, the Nader Museum and Gallery, the Museum of Haitian Art at the College of St. Pierre, the Lehmann Collection—possess the lion’s share of paintings, sculpture and objects of art. Private libraries, like that of George Corvington, are significant. Audio-visual holdings are widely distributed, particularly among private individuals and groups.

The government cultural sector too, while under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Culture and Communication, is divided among various organizations—ISPAN, the National Library, the National Archives, the National Museum (MUPANAH), and the National Bureau of Ethnology. There is nothing inherently problematic about this—in fact, in normal circumstances it helps focus mission, resources and operations. The organizations are largely autonomous, and given the authorities involved in appointing or removing directors, the Minister has limited powers. They are also terribly under-resourced, so that even prior to the earthquake they suffered from budgetary allotments inadequate to their tasks. Staffs were thin, facilities worn, particular types of expertise absent, and labs, storage, and project funds lacking. Hence, overall, the government organizations have limited roles vis-à-vis the coordination of private entities, and among them, coordination and concerted action are not a given, but rather have to be forged in particular cases and circumstances. After the earthquake, with the loss of staff, vehicles, and equipment, and the destruction of or damage to facilities, it was even worse.

In coming to Haiti’s cultural aid, international organizations reached out to their known colleagues and to seemingly cognate agencies. All of the international organizations agreed there should be a coordinated means of developing and implementing plans with the Haitians, but that route was not clear. UNESCO expeditiously called a meeting in mid-February 2010 to which it invited many of the organizations likely to help. But it didn’t form an International Cultural Committee composed of three Haitian and seven non-Haitians until June. That Committee—of which I was a member, had few meetings and precious little realistic discussion—and it wasn’t until over eighteen months later that UNESCO’s proposal on what it sought to do was released. That is far too late. And it was startlingly too little. UNESCO offered a mere proposal largely to talk and plan, and not how already planned, vetted, reviewed, and funded activities were ready to be implemented. While the proposal did call for some training and capacity building in Haiti, and some improvements to actual cultural collections, facilities, and events, much of it is devoted to preparing Haiti to implement UNESCO treaties.

Because of UNESCO’s slow movement in the cultural arena, other organizations sought action, not talk. In Haiti, that was not easy because there were a variety of people to talk to given the relative autonomy of the government cultural agencies and of course the range and diversity of private cultural organizations. In many cases, the issue of prior relationships and trust emerged to the fore. Haitians became suspicious of disaster tourists, professionals from international organizations included. “How many more assessments do you have to do, and how many more reports do you have to write before you do something,” was a common refrain among Haitians.

While many Haitians could not tell if an international organization was serious or not, could be trusted or not, so too was the inverse true. A number of Haitian cultural leaders talked passionately about the importance of cultural relief and recovery, but didn’t seem to have the foggiest notion about what to do or how to do it, to the point that some even reveled in it as theme and actually obstructed viable efforts. Others vied for control over potential funds and resources with their colleagues, mirroring professional jealousies and inter-necine battles. In several cases, demands for payments in return for cooperation seemed suspiciously like the solicitation of bribes.
The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project succeeded in this challenging environment, though at numerous intersections it looked like it might not. It succeeded because as a necessary condition it had a very clear goal—save Haiti’s endangered material collections. Its means was clear—establish a Cultural Recovery Center in Haiti, use Smithsonian and other volunteer conservation experts to do the work and to train Haitians along the way.

That however was not sufficient. The project succeeded because it brought financial and technical resources to the table. There were funds and people to undertake concrete actions. It also succeeded because of trust—a key group of influential Haitian cultural leaders had a good experience in working with the Smithsonian in 2004 for the production of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival program on the occasion of Haiti’s bicentennial. People knew each other. They had worked together in the past on a significant, positive undertaking. They could trust each other. That trust was used as currency, almost like a voucher system, to reach out beyond that relatively small group of Haitians to others in the cultural sector. This was particularly important in the private sector, where people were entrusting their most valuable treasures to the Smithsonian for care and treatment. Finally, the project was successful because it had blessings from people at the top, who wanted to see it happen. Through partnership with the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and the encouragement of the First Ladies of both the U.S. and Haiti, the project had the requisite moral support it needed to help move obstructions and obstructionists to the side.

Clear goals and means, adequate funding, trust among partners, and high level encouragement positioned the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project for success. Realizing that success took an immense amount of incredibly hard work by the staff of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center, the work of Smithsonian and American Institute for Conservation conservators and staff, the managerial ability of Olsen Jean Julien, the conservation expertise of Stephanie Hornbeck, and the diplomatic skills of Corine Wegener, and many, many others involved with the project.

What next?
As we were initiating the Haiti project, the Smithsonian received a call from colleagues in Chile where a 9.0 magnitude earthquake had struck. Could we help with their cultural relief and recovery effort? Through the life of the Haiti project, we’ve seen the massive flooding of the Indus Valley in Pakistan, the looting of museums and archaeological sites in Egypt during the Arab Spring uprising, the earthquake-tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, and the debilitating flooding caused by Hurricane Irene in New York, New Jersey, Vermont, and other parts of New England.

In all of these cases there was help to deliver, if it could be clearly defined, focused, funded, and properly delivered. Yet, the truth of the matter is that since Hurricane Katrina’s ravaging of cultural sites and collections in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, and the debacle of the looting of the Iraqi National Museum, neither the U.S. nor the world has made much progress in figuring out an effective response to human and natural disasters that threaten our heritage.

This is a lesson we seem to repeatedly fail to learn.

On the governmental level, a solution is complicated. For the United States, when there is a domestic crisis, FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is the lead actor. If libraries or museums or local historical societies and theater companies are damaged and endangered by say massive flooding, they might typically report to state agencies which then coordinate with FEMA to develop rescue, relief, and often with other agencies, such as the Department of Interior, grant or loan programs that can help them get back on their feet. Internationally, if it is humanitarian crisis, as most natural disasters are, such as in Haiti, the U.S. Department of State is the lead agency, and it mobilizes other U.S. departments and agencies and coordinates with international organizations such as the United Nations.

If the crisis is one of conflict—such as war—then the Department of Defense plays the lead role. Typically in such crises, cultural issues revolve around avoiding bombing or military action involving heritage areas, military or police protection of museums, libraries and archaeological sites, the prevention of looting and interdiction of stolen national treasures and other cultural property.
Absent the equivalent of a U.S. Department of Culture, there is no one U.S. entity which coordinates matters when a crisis threatens cultural resources, domestically or internationally.

Whatever the crisis though, at some point FEMA, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense call upon governmental cultural agencies and/or non-governmental organizations and experts to help plan or carry out specific work. Too often the pathways for doing this have to be recreated anew with every crisis. Funding requests have to justified, resources secured, and agreements crafted. It simply takes too long to put arrangements in place so that partners can be mobilized and actions pursued on the ground.

Thankfully, as a direct result of the Haiti project, there has been some movement in this regard. The Department of State has authorized the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to initiate an official process to create a mechanism for integrating cultural heritage into that agency’s emergency response decision-making process with regard to humanitarian disasters in foreign countries. It has also authorized the Bureau to convene representatives from Federal agencies to discuss the creation of an interagency task force on cultural heritage at risk in such situations that could not only coordinate government efforts, but also mobilize private, non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the Smithsonian has had initial discussions with the National Defense University in an effort to place cultural heritage matters on the training agenda of military officers serving in crisis situations.

While these are positive developments, the wheels of government turn slow. Entrenched bureaucracies, agency silos, and narrow ways of thinking have impeded progress toward establishing a viable cultural emergency response operation. The cultural sector can and should learn from others. In the health care field, Médecins Sans Frontières or Doctors Without Borders has figured out how to respond quickly to crises. It has funds in place to mobilize immediately, a network of workers and volunteers to call upon, and agreements with countries to operate.

While cultural crisis work is significantly different than providing emergency health care to individuals it can adapt its best practices. First, what is needed is not a cumbersome bureaucratic organization, but rather a flexible, ready and able network of cultural “first responders.” In any particular situation it could be one or other cultural agency taking the lead role as coordinator—depending upon the particular expertise required and nation or region afflicted. In one crisis it could be UNESCO, in another ICRROM or ICOMOS or the Blue Shield; in the U.S. it could be the National Archives, the Smithsonian or the Library of Congress, or others. Second, there should be an extant fund to draw upon immediately during a crisis to support cultural rescue, relief, and recovery operations.

Third, there should be pre-existing ties between this cultural relief network and national governments and international or regional agencies, so that its efforts can be easily activated and readily coordinated. Simply, to do the work quickly, well, and efficiently, we cannot take months and months negotiating agreements and raising funds. Lastly, any such organized effort has to keep in mind the prize—to save cultural sites, materials, and living traditions, and enable those of the culture to be better able to carry, care for, and extend that culture into the future.

We have a lot of work to do—and as Cori Wegener so poignantly reminds us, “the time to plan for the next disaster is now.”
LEAVING THE FOG BEHIND

OLSEN JEAN JULIEN

We did not lose our way in the fog of the earthquake which threatened to overwhelm us.

Instead, through the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project we made steady progress. Though beset by difficulties and challenges, we built an institution—the Cultural Recovery Center in a matter of mere months, setting up conservation labs and studios, bringing in equipment and supplies, forming a great staff, and establishing the support services, infrastructure, work routines, and protocols that made it efficient and productive. We coordinated scores of Haitian, American, and international conservators and experts. We succeeded in recovering tens of thousands of items of our cultural heritage—murals and architectural features, paintings and sculptures, artifacts, rare books, and archival documents. We made significant improvements to cultural institutions, public and private, and trained more than 100 Haitians in conservation and collection management.

The project was a true partnership that brought together a combination of diverse strengths and resources. Intense commitment, communication, and effort among these partners were an absolute necessity when it came to planning, mobilizing, organizing, and implementing the project—and realizing our success.

I was also lucky enough to be accompanied in this journey by some truly talented and experienced people who sincerely committed themselves to the project. Together, we were able to leave the fog behind and pave the way for the future. While there are many challenges still ahead of us to recover our cultural heritage, we now have the experience and accomplishments to move forward with full confidence in our ultimate success.

CULTURAL CONSERVATION: A SOURCE OF DIGNITY

MAGDALENA CARMELITA DOUBY GUILLAUME

The earthquake that devastated Haiti has weakened if not destroyed cultural institutions already in need of recognition in a country where everything is classified as an urgent priority.

How to spend the few resources available to recover artworks and cultural institutions, while the affected population still lives in tent cities, while medical care is a luxury, while famine and lack of care gut children?

Our cultural heritage and creativity are valuable sources of dignity. It is our culture that gives the Haitian people the courage to survive and dream of a better life. It is a duty we owe to ourselves and our descendants to preserve it.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Center took on part of this responsibility. It was a challenge, but also a victory. Day after day, we built a true relationship with our public and private partners to protect the collections that represented and embodied the heritage and creativity of the Haitian people.

When we started, the need for recovery was huge and urgent while the conservation infrastructure, the materials, and resources did not exist. With the help of the Smithsonian, the AIC and others we learned, invented, and adapted ways of saving our cultural heritage. About 30,000 objects were stabilized and restored, and many cultural institutions made stronger through the introduction of technology, facilities, equipment, and skills.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project is a testimony to a national and international synergy of competence and determination to confront a daunting challenge. Many things are still to be done, but the project stands as a concrete way to meet our preservation needs and as a model for other such efforts in the future.
HELPING HAITI FACE THE FUTURE

MICHÈLE D. PIERRE-LOUIS

There is a basic paradox in Haiti’s cultural sector. On one hand we have artists and artisans, with an unfathomable creativity, possessed of an energy that defies time and the burdens of daily life and who give Haitian culture its entire characteristic splendor. On the other hand, we give very little importance to the process of cultural management—making inventories, classifying, maintaining and conserving collections, regulating and scheduling these tasks.

So, when the disastrous earthquake hit, we were caught off guard and doubly surprised. First, the wealth of our capital—as measured in history, memory, art, and culture was virtually destroyed. At the same time, we found ourselves unprepared and impotent to deal with the cultural crisis at the scale needed to save our heritage before it disappeared. Cultural ignorance, contempt, even inertia also played a role.

Thus we have seen vandalism at the Palace of the Ministries, the pillaging of the windows at the National Cathedral, and looting of other important, symbolic sites. It was as if in this ruined capital, added to the natural disaster and desolation, were acts of self-mutilation of an important part of us, our collective memory.

It was to the heart of this matter that the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project intervened. The international organizations bound to Haiti by conventions and partnerships mobilized immediately, aware of the irreparable losses and desiring to help us save what we could. The Smithsonian Institution took the leadership of this movement, and given its strong relationship with Haiti and experience in the field of collections conservation, obtained the necessary authorizations from the Government of Haiti to get to work.

The results are clear for all to see. Thousands of cultural objects that otherwise would be sad memories have been saved. They have been treated, carefully and patiently, as if to recognize that they have a soul. There surely is in all these artistic creations, books, documents, and archives, something infinitely precious, a memory, something that recalls Haiti’s unique history and yet also speaks to us in a wide-ranging universal way.

We have developed a cultural recovery infrastructure over the past eighteen months, and we must, at all costs, preserve the knowledge and know-how we’ve gained. We are also apprehensive about ensuring the sustainability of this effort in a long term institutional framework. We not only have to take stock of the work done, but also assure that this work continues, so that not only can our heritage be preserved, but that our creativity, forged out of the present chaos, can help us face the future.
From the beginning of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project we were always mindful of how it might be sustained beyond the eighteen-month emergency period. For one, we knew that the damage caused by the earthquake had endangered tens of thousands of artworks, artifacts, and Haitian national treasures. Treating and restoring these items would entail the work of a generation. Furthermore, even with the stabilization of Haiti’s material culture, there would always be an ongoing need for conservation work. This is not something you do once; stewardship requires continual care and attention.

Under Olsen Jean Julien’s leadership, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center had various legal experts examine ways in which the project could be incorporated into a Haitian governance structure and still retain its flexibility for involving and working with other national, foreign, and international organizations as well as receiving fiscal support from the broadest range of sources—government allocations, philanthropic gifts, intergovernmental grants, and even earned revenue. Discussions with and among Olsen, Ministers Patrick Delatour and Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, and Richard Kurin explored various possibilities. We were all mindful of the central importance of meeting the conservation needs of both public and private collections in Haiti and ensuring the creation of a cadre of Haitians trained in the conservation arts and sciences. Our expectation was that the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center would evolve into a new kind of public institution, attached to the government through the cultural sector, but with strong ties to tourism, education, and public works. It would have the legitimacy of a solid governmental unit, with the efficacy and flexibility of a robust, service-oriented non-governmental, non-profit professional organization.

Delays in the presidential elections in Haiti and the ultimate formation of a government and cabinet occasioned concomitant delays in the development of the future plans for the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project. As the clock ticked down on the formal end of the project, Patrick Delatour met with Cheryl Mills, Counselor and Chief of Staff to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in Washington. Cheryl headed the U.S. relief and recovery effort for Haiti. Patrick sought Cheryl’s support for the continuity and transition of the project. Cheryl, who has visited Haiti often and is immersed in its recovery effort, was amenable. How could we assure a positive, sustainable outcome for the project?

We went to work again and we envisioned options where the Haitian Government would gradually assume the full management of the project in the near future. Richard met with Cheryl and U.S. AID officials and outlined a proposal. The Minister of Tourism, Patrick Delatour, was able to offer a historical gingerbread building and its grounds near the Presidential Palace and Champs de Mars, managed by the Ministry of Tourism, as a new home for the project. This would provide ongoing government support. The building, currently known as the "Maison du Tourisme," would require an extensive restoration, installation of climate control, eradication of termites, and outfitting for conservation labs and studios. A storage facility could also be built on the property, and Olsen and Patrick immediately drew up plans. Richard and Olsen developed a budget and terms of commitment, so that the Haitian government could support basic facilities maintenance, security, and staff costs, the State Department/U.S. AID could support the building restoration and project transition costs, and the Smithsonian transitional management and conservation/training costs.

We envisioned that private sources could also be tapped for programmatic costs—to support ongoing training and special projects. A workable plan for a modest $2 million investment over a two-year transition period was developed and is now in the process of consideration. If it comes to fruition, the important work begun by the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project will continue to grow and have important impacts throughout Haiti. If it doesn’t, a back-up plan to create several storage units at key cultural sites will assure that the items treated and saved by the project can at least be safely and securely stored by the cultural organizations who own them, so that the marvelous conservation work done in the wake of the disaster will not have been done in vain.
The gingerbread "Maison du Tourisme" on land near the Presidential Palace has been designated by the Ministry of Tourism for the future home of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. Photo courtesy of Olsen Jean Julien
Heritage is a creator of value.

All over the world, tens of millions of people come to see Machu Picchu, Angkor Wat, the Taj Mahal, the pyramids of Egypt, the Vatican, the Statue of Liberty, and the Robben Island prison of Nelson Mandela. Thirty million people visit the Smithsonian's museums to see its collections; eight million visit the Louvre.

From these visits people learn about history, art, technology, the values, and works of their fellow man.

No less is true in Haiti, where the Citadel, Sans-Souci, Ramiers constitutes a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and educates and inspires visitors with the story of Haiti’s struggle for independence and freedom. We have more to do here, such as the creation of a National Historical Park truly integrated with roads, facilities, and ports, so that the region can be a magnet for domestic and foreign visitors and provide a livelihood to guides, transporters, restaurateurs, artists, artisans, and performers who can benefit in extraordinary ways by a vital and robust heritage industry.

Similarly, the recovery and restoration of our collections, our art, artifacts, books, and other treasures can inspire and educate the Haitian people. Our children need to have access to these resources, whether in their classrooms, through textbooks and other media, or in the places they visit. Exposure to our heritage will excite the imagination and surely result in new creations and creativity that benefit society.

Restoration of historic buildings, the “Wall,” museum collections, and exhibitions can also help draw the attention and respect of tourists. These items of our heritage have value to fuel a new Haitian cultural economy. If we give them up, we lose our historical investment in their value, and squander an opportunity. Instead, we need to embrace our heritage as a resource for the benefit of future generations.
LESSONS FROM HAITI

ERYL P. WENTWORTH

The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) has been honored to bring our expertise to assist in saving Haiti’s cultural heritage, yet other events during 2010 and 2011 have raised major questions about the role of the U. S. in international cultural emergencies.

The earthquake in Chile and the tsunami in Japan had American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Team (AIC-CERT) members and American conservators asking if we should, would, or could be involved. The answers aren’t simple. In addition to the obvious issues of funding and logistics, there are cultural and language barriers to be bridged.

Several models have been proposed, ranging from an endowment for AIC-CERT for emergency deployments, to creating a cultural analog to “Doctors Without Borders” that would mobilize anywhere in the world. Complicating these ideas are the regulations and laws that limit what the U.S. government can do internationally—FEMA, the State Department, and the Defense Department all have roles, but there is no clear authority for assisting other countries when their material culture is at risk. Discussions are underway to clarify federal roles and responsibilities, but it’s unclear how any decisions made will affect response efforts of NGOs.

The AIC-CERT program was designed to be a team of collections specialists who could respond to domestic emergencies quickly, safely, and effectively. Funds for training, upkeep of team members, and deployment are primarily from U.S. government sources, such as the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts. FAIC will continue to make the 107 trained AIC-CERT volunteers available as widely as resources allow. Volunteers staff a twenty-four-hour hotline (202-661-8068), and provide advice by phone and e-mail, and stand ready to provide hands-on expertise, and often supplies, at no expense to the collecting institution.

International requests, however, will always have to be considered on a case-by-case basis and only in partnership with other organizations. FAIC depends on those who can serve as liaisons with national and local authorities, along with other international responders. Before agreeing to an international deployment, we must be sure that our team members will be safe, have housing and local transportation, and will have people looking out for their welfare on the ground.

The success of this model was made eminently clear to me when I joined a “site visit” to Haiti in June 2011. Surrounded by an island still devastated by the disaster, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center was the embodiment of hope for Haiti’s future. Haitian artists were working side-by-side with visiting conservators to document, assess, stabilize, and treat the art that reflects Haiti’s heart and soul. The dedicated teamwork that made this possible stemmed from the partnership of the Smithsonian, the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, and FAIC—each bringing valuable expertise and experience to join with those in Haiti who will ensure their art both survives and is reinvented in response to disaster and recovery.
CONSEQUENCES FOR CULTURAL RECOVERY

CORINE WEGENER

It is difficult to view the success of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project without looking through the lens of past failures, such as the looting of the Iraqi Museum and Hurricane Katrina, just to name two. Even with international outrage over the looting, the cultural heritage community failed to provide any emergency response for the Iraqi Museum until months afterwards. There simply was not a cultural heritage NGO capable of fielding an emergency response team and the same is still true today. After Hurricane Katrina, museums and collections were only gradually acknowledged as part of the recovery effort. However, these failures also raised awareness about the risks to cultural heritage from armed conflicts and natural disasters. Organizations such as the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield and American Institute for Conservation Collections Emergency Response Teams were created, leading to a partnership with the Smithsonian and the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

What lessons did we learn from working in Haiti? First, even in the midst of a catastrophic disaster, people value their culture because it gives them hope for the future. Second, you cannot begin disaster planning after the disaster. Experts must be on call, funds must be available, equipment and supplies must be on hand. Third, assistance must be timed to the situation—not so soon that it interferes with the humanitarian aid effort, but in time to save valued cultural resources. Finally, we must work side-by-side with local and national authorities, even if that slows things down—in the end, the cultural heritage belongs to them and they must set the priorities.

What about the next disaster? Here are a few recommendations based on my own experiences from Iraq to Haiti.

At the international level, the United Nations must acknowledge cultural heritage as part of disaster response in their “cluster” system and the International Blue Shield must create an independent organization devoted to cultural property emergency response.

The same holds true in the U.S. For domestic disasters, culture is now more recognized with FEMA’s Incident Command System, but we still need better coordination and clear leadership in the absence of a U.S. Department of Culture.

When the U.S. is involved internationally, whether in an armed conflict, peacekeeping, or humanitarian relief operations, we must also take protection of cultural heritage into consideration—it is a legal requirement in the 1954 Hague Convention as well as U.S. domestic law.

The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project provides one possible model, with an organization such as the Smithsonian Institution playing a leading role. NGOs like the U.S. Blue Shield would also have an important coordinating role to play. Regardless of which organization leads, there must be a full-time staff with funds to carry out the cultural protection mission. Anything less will be ineffective and may even create an unrealistic expectation for assistance such as what we experienced in Iraq. In the face of increasing threats from political instability, armed conflicts, and disasters caused by global climate change, the U.S. must begin to incorporate cultural heritage considerations into planning for contingency operations. The time to plan for the next disaster is now.
CULTURE IN CRISIS: FUTURE U.S. RESPONSES

RACHEL GOSLINS

We expect and hope that the impact of the Haiti project on future cultural recovery efforts by the United States will be lasting and profound. Too many times, defending and preserving a country’s cultural assets is the last thing to be prioritized in a time of war or tragedy. And yet the cultural artifacts of a country—its paintings and sculpture, its antiquities and historic documents—are one of the few things that are truly irreplaceable. Protecting them is essential to preserving the spirit and history of a people, and their ability to tell their own story to future generations. With this unprecedented collaboration between U.S. federal cultural agencies, the Haitian government, the private sector, and the NGO community, the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project has proven that it can be done—that with enough political will, creative use of resources, and plain determination, the United States can play an essential role in safeguarding a country’s cultural legacy.

Everyone loves a success story, and this one could not be more inspiring and unequivocal. Often the beginning of a project can be the most exciting part—its lofty goals and high hopes still unsullied by the slings and arrows of factors beyond our control. As a project wraps up, one frequently finds oneself celebrating partial success and ruefully shrugging off the grand expectations of the early days. But the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project has been one of those rare and wonderful instances where the reality has exceeded the expectations, where its success transcends even the hopes invested in it at inception. Replicating this success will not always be easy, or even possible. In this case, we were fortunate to have found the perfect mix of ingredients—a universally understood tragedy, a unique and concrete opportunity to help, strong leadership in the form of the Smithsonian, and a network of potential partners who had the courage and vision to step up when asked to do so. And while every situation that comes afterwards will be different in its particulars, the impact of our project in Haiti will be felt for many years to come. The clarity of its mission, the demonstrable achievements of its execution, and the alliance of partners, both domestic and international, who came together to make it happen will pave the way for more efforts in this area in the future, which will benefit us all.

Rachel Goslins is the Executive Director of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, an advisory Committee to the White House on cultural issues.
APPENDIX ONE

HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT TIMELINE

2010

JANUARY

12 A 7.0 magnitude earthquake strikes Haiti, centered in the capital region.
13 Haitian cultural workers begin to salvage thousands of paintings, books, and documents at various cultural sites.
13 UNESCO, U.S. Department of State, Smithsonian Institution, and other organizations begin to gather reports and document the damage and destruction of cultural sites.
23 Patrick Vilaire, a Haitian sculptor, cultural worker, and curator is quoted in a New York Times front page article as he tries to save damaged rare books from the rubble in Port-au-Prince.
24 Richard Kurin, the Smithsonian’s Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture begins to communicate with the State Department over a possible role in Haitian cultural relief and recovery work.
29 Richard Kurin convenes a meeting of various Smithsonian staff to discuss possible ways of aiding Haiti’s cultural recovery.

FEBRUARY

1 ISPAN Director-General Daniel Elie and Monique Rocusert e-publish and digitally distribute the first of many issues of the Bulletin de l’ISPAN, documenting the damage and destruction to Haiti's built heritage.
1 UNESCO's Fernando Brugman undertakes a mission to Haiti to assess earthquake damage to cultural sites, collections, and activities.
3 UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova writes to Haiti's Minister of Culture and Communication Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, proposing an International Coordinating Committee to mobilize aid to Haiti in its cultural recovery; she also alerts international agencies such as the United Nations and Interpol to prevent the illegal export of cultural objects from Haiti.
4 CARBICA, the Caribbean Archives Association, issues a call for emergency archival supplies for Haiti.
5 U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield President Corine Wegener chairs a meeting of cultural agencies and organizations in Washington, D.C., hosted by American Association of Museums Executive Director Ford Bell, including representatives from the Department of State, Department of Defense, National Gallery of Art, Eryl Wentworth, Executive Director of the American Institute for Conservation and Richard Kurin, among others.
15 Richard Kurin meets with Mounir Bouchenaki, Director-General of ICCROM, and Haitian Ambassador to Italy Geri Benoit in Rome to discuss cultural recovery possibilities.
16 UNESCO convenes a meeting of cultural organizations on Haitian Cultural Relief and the establishment of an International Coordinating Committee for Haiti; the meeting is chaired by Irina Bokova and Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue. Haitian representatives include cultural advisors Magali Comeaux Denis, Daniel Elie, Lassègue, and Fernando Brugman. Elie, Mounir Bouchenaki, Richard Kurin, Gustavo Aroaz, Director of ICOMOS, and others make presentations.
18 UNESCO, ICOMOS, and World Monuments Fund mission to Haiti to assess cultural damages. The group meets with Haitian counterparts, and begins exploration of possible recovery projects.
25 With encouragement from the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities Executive Director Rachel Goslins, Richard Kurin presents the idea of a cultural recovery project in Haiti to a sub-committee.

MARCH

6 Richard Kurin, Corine Wegener, the Smithsonian’s Diana N’Diaye, and State Department’s Gregory Borgstede visit Haiti to explore the possibility of setting up a cultural recovery base. They meet with Minister of Tourism and Chair of the Emergency and Recovery Commission Patrick Delatour, the Minister of Culture and Communication’s cultural advisor Magali Denis, FOKAL President Michèle Pierre-Louis and Director Lorraine Mangonès, historical architect and former Minister of Culture and Communication, Olsen Jean Julien, Patrick Vilaire, museum director Georges Nader, Jr., crafts cooperative leader Giselle Fleurant, U.S. Embassy and AID officials, U.S. Joint Task Force Commander Lt. General Keen, and others. The Smithsonian commits to buying crafts and featuring Haitian artists at the 2010 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.
The Bulletin de l’ISPAN, published by Daniel Elie, documented and informed the world about the cultural destruction in Haiti.
Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough meets with U.S. First Lady Michelle Obama, presents the idea of the Smithsonian and other organizations establishing a cultural recovery project in Haiti and asks for support.

UNESCO's Irina Bokova visits Haiti.

In Washington and learning of the Smithsonian's plan, Haitian First Lady Elisabeth Préval meets with Richard Kurin to discuss the cultural recovery project.

Secretary Clough writes to Rocco Landesman, Chair, National Endowment for the Arts, Jim Leach, Chair, National Endowment for the Humanities, Marsha Semmel, Acting Director, Institute of Museum and Library Services, asking that they support the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project in partnership with the President's Committee. They agree to provide $30,000 each in grants to the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works to support the deployment of volunteer conservators to Haiti.

APRIL

12 Richard Kurin and Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Director of the National Museum of African Art, meet with Mrs. Préval about mounting an exhibition of Haitian children’s art at the Smithsonian.

20 Patrick Delatour and Richard Kurin sign a memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Government of Haiti and the Smithsonian establishing the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

24 Olsen Jean Julien agrees to serve as the Manager of the Cultural Recovery Project in Haiti.

29 The Broadway League agrees to donate $276,000 to initiate the project.

MAY

3 The Smithsonian and the National Museum of African Art commit to producing the Healing Power of Art exhibition.

4 Corine Wegener, Smithsonian Director of Engineering Mike Bellamy and his team, Conservator Hugh Shockey and AIC Conservators Vicki Lee and Susan Blakney arrive in Haiti, visit cultural sites, and explore possible locations of a cultural recovery center. The former UNDP building and compound in the Bourdon area of Port-au-Prince is identified and selected as the site of the Cultural Recovery Center.

5 The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project is announced at a meeting in Washington of Haitian cultural leaders Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue, Patrick Delatour, Françoise Thybulle, Director-General of the National Library and U.S. cultural leaders Wayne Clough, Margo Lion, Co-Chair of the President’s Committee, Rachel Goslins, Rocco Landesman, Jim Leach, Marsha Semmel, Richard Kurin, and The Broadway League group of Paul Libin, Charlotte St. Martin, Nina Lannan, and Bob Wankel.

10 New York Times article by Kate Taylor from Port-au-Prince details the formation of the Cultural Recovery Project.
UNESCO's Haiti representative Elke Selter and Richard Kurin agree to coordinate cultural relief efforts in Haiti. Stephanie Hornbeck agrees to serve as Chief Conservator of the Cultural Recovery Center in Haiti. UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture Francesco Bandarin meets with Richard Kurin in Washington. Richard Kurin visits Haiti, meets with President and Mrs. Préval, inspects the facility which is under renovation, and with Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue signs a memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Smithsonian and the Ministry of Culture and Communication to operate the Cultural Recovery Center. An ensuing press conference with Lassègue, Kurin, Olsen Jean Julien, and other cultural leaders is covered by the Haitian media, CNN, Reuters, BBC, et al.

The Smithsonian signs a lease for the property at 387 Bourdon with owner Samir Handal.

David Lombardi, Director of Museo Vault in Miami, agrees to receive conservation supply shipments gratis for a six month period and transfer them to Stephanie Hornbeck for distribution and transport to Haiti.

JUNE

1 The Smithsonian takes possession of the Cultural Recovery Center. Olsen Jean Julien hires initial staff of Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor, Carmelita Douby, Fritz Berg Jeannot and others, and organizes facility.
5 Corine Wegener and conservators Hugh Shockey, Vicki Lee, and Hitoshi Kimura gather at the home of Stephanie Hornbeck in Miami to pack conservation supplies and equipment to take to Haiti.
6 Smithsonian Registrar Gail Joice begins work with Carmelita Douby to set up Center registration system.
11 The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project takes in the first pieces to be treated, five paintings from the Nader Museum, including two by Hector Hyppolite. Hitoshi Kimura repairs and restores a Celestin Faustin painting, Un Beau Rêve.
17 Healing Power of Art: Art by Haitian Children After the Earthquake exhibition organized by the National Museum of African Art opens at the Smithsonian's Ripley Center.
23 With the support of the U.S. Mission to UNESCO, Richard Kurin is selected to be one of seven non-Haitian members of UNESCO's International Coordinating Committee.

JULY

5 The Smithsonian Folklife Festival ends, with sales of Haitian arts and crafts topping $50,000.
6 The Smithsonian and the Foundation for the American Institute for Conservation sign a memorandum of understanding for the latter to provide supplies and coordinate the identification and facilitate the deployment of conservators to Haiti.
7 Members of the U.S. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, including Margo Lion, Vice-Chair Mary Campbell Schmidt, Ricky Arioli, Pamela Joyner, Olivia Morgan, Ken Solomon, The Broadway League, including Chairman Paul Libin, Past-Chair Nina Lannan, Charlotte St. Martin, and Bill Hillman of Affirmation Arts, visit Haiti, seeing the National Cathedral, National Palace, Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, the Nader Museum site, the Centre d'Art site, and the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center. They attend a reception hosted by President Préval and Mrs. Préval at their home, and hold discussions with cultural leaders including Patrick Delatour, Michele Pierre-Louis, Lorraine Mangonès, and others.
7 UNESCO holds its first session of the International Coordinating Committee in Paris.
13 Viviana Dominguez and Rosa Lowinger conduct a preliminary study of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral murals to assess the prospects and means of their preservation. Dominguez stays on to teach the first training session for Haitians at the Center, a four-day Paintings Conservation workshop.
23 Lorraine Mangonès and Axelle Liautaud meet with Olsen Jean Julien, Stephanie Hornbeck, and Carmelita Douby to develop a plan for the preservation of thousands of Centre d'Art works stored in two tractor trailers adjacent to the destroyed building. A formal proposal is presented by the end of the month.
29 The Smithsonian and the International Committee of the Blue Shield together with the Association of National Committees of the Blue Shield, sign a memorandum of understanding to keep each other informed of their efforts in Haiti and coordinate activities as appropriate. The Smithsonian efforts are to concentrate on art works, artifacts, media, and historical documents; Blue Shield's on books and archives.
29 The Smithsonian and FOKAL formally sign a memorandum of understanding for the latter to operate as fiscal agent for the project in Haiti.
29 President Obama signs the Haiti Relief Supplemental Appropriation.
29 Government of Haiti Steering Committee meets at the Recovery Center to review project plans.
AUGUST

2 Viviana Dominguez and Rosa Lowinger submit their plans for saving the murals at Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.
4 Smithsonian and State Department begin discussions on the transfer of $2 million for the project included in the Congressional supplemental appropriation for Haitian relief.
5 The Government Steering Committee meets at the Center with its leadership and reviews plans for ISPAN project work and discusses plans for other institutions.
Smithsonian signs a gift agreement with Bill Hillman’s Affirmation Arts Fund to support work on the Centre d’Art collection and training programs.
16 Centre d’Art project begins.
23 ICCROM organizes and Aparna Tandon leads a three week course in Collections Management and Conservation Techniques for two dozen Haitian trainees at the Center and in the field. One hands-on project is the excavation and salvaging of materials from the rubble of the Centre d’Art site with the aid of MINUSTAH troops organized by Elke Selter of UNESCO and ICCROM with Minister Lassègue’s endorsement.
29 Richard Kurin, Corine Wegener, and Smithsonian Under Secretary for Finance & Administration Alison McNally visit Haiti, review administrative and financial procedures, and meet with Olsen Jean Julien, Stephanie Hornbeck, Patrick Vilaire, Carmelita Douby and others to review project plans for MUPANAH, the National Bureau of Ethnology, and ISPAN.

SEPTEMBER

1 Smithsonian magazine publishes a cover story on earthquake art and the impact of the disaster among the Haitian art community by Bill Brubaker. Frantz Zéphirin’s specially commissioned painting, used as cover artwork, is auctioned off to support the Cultural Recovery Project.
6 Walker Morris of the William J. Clinton Foundation communicates with Olsen Jean Julien about mounting an exhibition on Haiti at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas.
12 The Cultural Recovery Center hires six assistants to work under the leadership of Marie-Lucie Vendryes on the Centre d’Art project.
27 The Cultural Recovery Center provides a proposal on the preservation of the tangible and intangible heritage associated with Vodou temples and the Rara musical traditions by Louis Rodrigue Thomas, Louis Carmelle Bijoux, Jean Yves Blot, and Fritz Evens Moise for the Ministry of Culture and Communication to submit to UNESCO.

OCTOBER

1 Extensive termite eradication treatment begins at the Center.
5 Patrick Vilaire and his team start to build new scaffolding designed by engineers Steeve Ambroise and Marcel Dominique at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.
13 The Center agrees to send eight fragments of the Holy Trinity murals to the Clinton Presidential Center for display at the exhibition Haiti: Building Back Better.
16 The Smithsonian is informed by U.S. AID that the spending plan for the Haiti Supplemental appropriation is on hold pending review.
19 Richard Kurin presents the progress and accomplishments of the Cultural Recovery Center to a meeting of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.
20 First Lady Michelle Obama hosts the National Youth Awards ceremony at the White House. President’s Committee Vice-Chair Mary Schmidt Campbell describes the Committee’s visit to Haiti, the work of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project and with the First Lady presents an international award to a Jacmel Youth Group.
23 The Smithsonian signs a memorandum of understanding with the William Clinton Foundation for cooperation for a Clinton Presidential Center exhibition.
NOVEMBER

9 The Smithsonian American Art Museum hosts an evening program “Rescue, Recover and Restore—Smithsonian’s Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.” Organized by Nona Martin and Hugh Shockey, it includes Richard Kurin, Olsen Jean Julien, Stephanie Hornbeck, Corine Wegener, Rachel Goslins, Eryl Wentworth, Steve Mellor, Diana N’Diaye, and Mike Bellamy.

10 Kojo Nnamdi devotes his WAMU radio show to Haiti, including a discussion with Richard Kurin and Olsen Jean Julien.

22 The Smithsonian signs a contract with the Ministry of Culture and Communication for the conduct of special projects with ISPAN, MUPANAH, and the National Bureau of Ethnology.

24 Building Back Better opens at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock.

25 Minister of Tourism Patrick Delatour arranges for storage trailers donated by Spain to be delivered to the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center.

DECEMBER

14 Smithsonian conservator Paul Jett, AIC’s Jane Norman, and Stephanie Hornbeck teach an Introduction to Cut Metal Sculpture workshop.

27 U.S. AID and the Smithsonian sign an Inter-Agency Agreement to transfer Haiti relief funds to the Smithsonian.

The sign on the gate and building of the Cultural Recovery Center recognizes the project’s various partners and supporters.
2011

JANUARY
12 The effort to take down the murals at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Cathedral begins.

FEBRUARY
7 Smithsonian Conservators Rosemary Fallon and Emily Jacobson, with translation help from Éloïse Paquette, lead a three-day Paper and Photographs Conservation Workshop.
14 The first of three new conservators, Kristín Gísladóttir, Anaïs Gailhbaud, and Bernard Colla, begins work at the Center. Six Haitian Conservation Assistants are hired for Cultural Recovery projects.
28 The Haiti Cultural Recovery Center begins its project with MUPANAH to install a new generator and provide for adequate storage space for artwork.

MARCH
16 The project to treat art works, paintings, art works on paper, and administrative documents from the Centre d’Art is completed.
22 The project to process and stabilize the Centre d’Art’s iron sculpture collection begins.

APRIL
1 The Smithsonian amends the contract with the Ministry of Culture and Communication to add projects with the National Archives and the National Library.
13 Book and Paper Conservation Workshop (with the National Library and National Archives) is held.
15 CRC hosts a conference to present the Centre d’Art project. Olsen Jean Julien, Stephanie Hornbeck, Marie-Lucie Vendryes, Axelle Liautaud, and Marise Desrosiers participate.
18 The U.S. Department of State issues a memorandum on the process for dealing with cultural heritage at risk from humanitarian disasters in foreign countries.

MAY
5 The Haiti Cultural Recovery Center begins its project with the National Library to treat rare books.
11 The Haiti Cultural Recovery Center begins its project with the National Archives to treat rare documents.
15 A workshop in Documentation and Cataloguing is held.
19 The last fragment of the Holy Trinity murals, the face of Jesus, is removed from the wall substrate and saved.

JUNE
7 Haiti Cultural Recovery Center begins its project with the Lehmann Collection to clean, catalog, re-arrange, and safely store all items.
19 Wayne Clough, Rachel Goslins, Richard Kurin, Johnetta Cole, Corine Wegener, and Eryl Wentworth visit Haiti to examine project progress guided by Olsen Jean Julien, Stephanie Hornbeck, and Rosa Lowinger, and participate in a press conference with Patrick Delatour, Daniel Elie, Francoise Thybulle, Marianne Lehmann, Jean Julien, and others covered by all major media.
A graduation ceremony for trainees, appreciation for all staffers, collaborators, and stakeholders follow.

JULY
7 Smithsonian Conservator Sarah Stauderman teaches Preservation of Audio-Visual Collections workshop.

AUGUST
22 Patrick Delatour, Minister of Tourism, meets with Cheryl Mills, Chief of Staff to the U.S. Secretary of State, about the continuity of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.
A gathering of stakeholders and staff at the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center includes Mireille Pérodin Jérôme, Corine Wegener, Bertrand Nader, Georges Nader, Jr., Marianne Lehmann, Aparna Tandon, Marie Desrosiers, Olsen Jean Julien, Marie Jose Nadal, Carmelita Douby, Fritz Berg Jeannot, Henry Celestin, Gail Joice, Hitoshi Kimura, Fallo Baba Kela, and Vicki Lee. Photo by L. H. Shockey, Jr., courtesy of Corine Wegener

SEPTEMBER

27 AIC Conservator Karen Zukor leads a three-day Paper, Document, and Book Conservation workshop using a suction table provided by the Library of Congress and shipped to Port-au-Prince by the Smithsonian.

30 Professional Development Day for Cultural Recovery Center Conservation Assistants to present their conservation work on the project to colleagues in the culture sector.

OCTOBER

3 Richard Kurin meets with Cheryl Mills and USAID Coordinator Thomas Adams and Eileen Smith to discuss options for the transition and continuity of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center in Port-au-Prince.

7 Minister of Tourism Patrick Delatour signs an agreement designating the Maison du Tourisme gingerbread house and land near Champs de Mars and the National Palace for the use of the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.

10 Patrick Delatour and Richard Kurin sign an agreement to continue the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project under Smithsonian management until December 31 at the Bourdon location. The Haitian Government agrees to assume responsibility for its management after January 1.

TBD A workshop on using The Museum System as a computerized collection management tool is planned.

TBD The Center plans the return and disposition of more than 25,000 items stored on its premises that belong to the various museums and cultural organizations in Haiti.

DECEMBER

TBD Wayne Clough awards the Smithsonian Secretary's Gold Medal for Exemplary Service to Olsen Jean Julien and Stephanie Hornbeck for their work on the Haiti Cultural Recovery Project.
APPENDIX TWO

HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT
ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT-A-GLANCE

Items Recovered, Restored, and Treated, Facilities Improved, Formal Training Sessions Held (As of September 15, 2011)

1. MAJOR SITE RECOVERY

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL
Removal of three surviving murals
- Baptism by Castera Bazile
- Last Supper by Philomé Obin
- Native Procession by Préfète Duffaut

CENTRE D’ART
152 works rescued from the rubble

2. LIST OF ITEMS RESTORED (111)

CENTRE D’ART (55)
12 paintings
- Marchande de Poules Luce by Turnier
- Untitled painting by Jacques Laroche
- Untitled paintings (2) by Armand Gesner
- Untitled paintings (3) by Bourmond Byron
- Untitled painting by Hervé Télémaque
- Untitled painting by Yvon Desrouleaux
- Untitled painting by Jacque Laroche
- Untitled painting by Robert Saint-Brice
- Untitled painting by Luckner Lazard

15 works on paper
- Oil on board by G. Noel
- Colored crayon and gouche by Antonio Joseph
- Mixed media by Saul
- Serigraph by Becky Wolford
- Pastel by André Mallebranche
- Mixed media by C. Caze
- Drawing by Antonio Joseph
- Engraving by Consogra
- Acrylic on paper by J. Martinez
- Unknown media by Lucien Price
- Unknown media by Luce Turnier
- Works (4) by unknown artists

28 fer découpé sculptures
- Works (4) by Gabriel Bien-Aimé
- Works (10) by Murat Brierre
- Works (4) by Serge Jolimeau
- Works (6) by Georges Liautaud
- Works (4) by Damien Paul
NADER MUSEUM (18)
9 paintings
Pot de Fleurs by Hector Hyppolite
Calie by Hector Hyppolite
Un Beau Rêve by Celestin Faustin
L'homme avec fruits by Antonio Joseph
Le Quartier by Antonio Joseph
Le serment de Pétion by Sénèque Obin
Pot de fleur et de fruits by Wilson Bigaud
L'homme est son chat by St. Louise Blaise
Rue Petit Pont St-Michel de la Petite by Anse Philome Obin

9 works on paper
3 works by Alix Roy
Loa marrassas and Untitled by Prospère Pierre Louis
Nue assise and Femme assise by Luce Turnier
Les branches by Lucien Price
Santos de Puerto Rico by Angello de Botello

HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL (12)
3 wall paintings
Last Supper byPhilomé Obin
Baptism by Castera Bazilé
Native Procession by Préfète Duffaut

9 sculptures/artifacts
Terra cotta figures and decorative panels (7)
Apostles Gallery and Screen by Jasmin Joseph
Tapestry

HISTORIC SUGAR CANE PARK & MUSEUM (6)
1 historical document
Service Record of General Alexandre Pétion

MUPANAH—Musée du Panthéon National Haitien (5)
3 paintings
Le Tambourine by Max Pinchinat
Untitled (elder Haitian woman) by Mario Benjamin
Untitled

2 sculptures
Femme Esclave by Leopold Bracony
Bust of Alexandre Pétion by Normil Charles

ECOLE ATÉLIER JACMEL (5)
5 Papier mâché architectural moldings

ISPAN (2)
2 sculptural works
L’Acte d’Independence (monumental plaster plaque)
Bust of Toussaint Louverture by Ed. Laforesterie

RAINBOW ART GALLERY (2)
2 paintings
Untitled by Bernard Sejourne
Untitled by Jean-Claud Garoute (Tiga)

GALERIE FLAMBOYANT (1)
Untitled painting by Stivenson Magloire

GALERIE GINGERBREAD (1)
Engraving by Belais Ayón Manso

MUSEUM OF HAITIAN ART (1)
1 painting
Ville Imaginaire by Préfète Duffaut

LES ATÉLIERS JEAN RENÉ JÉRÔME (1)
Maquette
3. **COLLECTIONS TREATED**

**TOTAL (30,165 ITEMS)**

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**CENTRE D’ART (7,402)**

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**TROUILLOT LIBRARY (7,010)**

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**CORVINGTON LIBRARY (5,949)**

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**NATIONAL ARCHIVES (4,052)**

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**MARIANNE LEHMANN COLLECTION (3,035)**

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**NATIONAL LIBRARY (2,140)**

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**MUPANAH (503)**

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**NADER MUSEUM & GALLERY (34)**

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**HOLY TRINITY EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL (18)**

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<tr>
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**ISPAN (17)**

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**SUGAR CANE PARK & MUSEUM (8)**

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**RAINBOW ART GALLERY (2)**

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**ATELIER JEAN RENÉ JÉRÔME (1)**

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**FONDUCTION CULTURE CREATION (1)**

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**GALERIE FLAMBOYANT (1)**

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<tr>
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**GALERIE GINGERBREAD (1)**

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**MUSEUM OF HAITIAN ART (1)**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
4. FACILITIES IMPROVED

MUPANAH
Addition of a generator for climate control
Construction of storage space and shelving for paintings

MARIANNE LEHMANN COLLECTION
Reorganization of shelving to house the collection
Addition of a storage facility on site for the collection

NATIONAL LIBRARY
Reorganization of shelving to house the collection
Improvement of a storage facility on site for the collection

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
Reorganization of shelving to house the collection
Improvement of a storage facility on site for the collection

5. FORMAL TRAINING SESSIONS

PAINTING WORKSHOP
July 7 - 9, 2010
7 participants

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION TECHNIQUES (WITH ICCROM)
August 23 - September 10, 2010
26 participants

CUT METAL SCULPTURE
December 14 - 15, 2010
9 participants

PAPER AND PHOTOGRAPHS CONSERVATION
February 7 - 9, 2011
15 participants

BOOK AND PAPER CONSERVATION (WITH THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND NATIONAL ARCHIVES)
April 13 - 14, 2011
36 participants

DOCUMENTATION AND CATALOGING
June 15 - 17, 2011
17 participants

PRESERVATION OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS
July 5 - 7, 2011
15 participants

PAPER, DOCUMENT, AND BOOK CONSERVATION
September 27 - 29, 2011
9 participants

THE MUSEUM SYSTEM
TBD
The Haiti Cultural Recovery Project was organized by the Smithsonian Institution with the Government of Haiti, Ministry of Culture and Communication, and the Presidential Commission for the Emergency and Reconstruction, in partnership with the U.S. President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The project has been supported by the U.S. Department of State through U.S. AID, the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Broadway League and Broadway community. Additional funding has been provided by Affirmation Arts Fund, Peggy Burnet, Smithsonian magazine, National Haitian Art Society, Macondo Gallery, Waterloo Center for the Arts, Friends of the Art Center, Jerome and Thao Dodson, Paul Peck, and Henry Louis Gates. Program partners included the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation, Fondation Connaissance et Liberté (FOKAL), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), UNESCO, and the William J. Clinton Presidential Center.

The project was managed by the Smithsonian Institution. FOKAL served as fiscal agent in Haiti. The Haiti government Steering Committee consisted of the Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN), Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien (MUPANAH), Bibliothèque Nationale (BN), Archives Nationales d’Haïti (ANH), and Bureau National d’Ethnologie (BNE) of the Haitian government.

SPECIAL THANKS
Michelle Obama,
First Lady of the United States
Elisabeth D. Préval,
First Lady of Haiti

GOVERNMENT OF HAITI
Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassègue,
Minister of Culture and Communication
Patrick Delatour, Minister of Tourism and Chair, Commission for the Emergency and Restoration
Wilfrid Bertrand, Director General, Archives Nationales d’Haïti (ANH)
François Thoby, Director General, Bibliothèque Nationale (BN)
Suze Mathieu, Director General, Bureau National d’Ethnologie (BNE)
Daniel Elie, Director General, Institut de Sauvegarde du Patrimoine National (ISPAN)
Robert Pare, Director General, Musée du Panthéon National Haïtien (MUPANAH)

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
G. Wayne Clough, Secretary
Richard Kurin, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, and Project Director
Lonnie Bunch, Director, National Museum of African American History and Culture
Johnnetta Cole, Director, National Museum of African Art
LeShawn Burrell-Jones, Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture
Geoffrey Cavanaugh, Administrative Officer, Office of the Under Secretaries
Veronica Conkling, Research Assistant to the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture
Toby Dodds, Webmaster, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
Lauryn Guttenplan, Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel
Christine Kreamer, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, National Museum of African Art
Kyrstyn MacGregor, Designer, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
Steve Mellor, Chief Conservator, National Museum of African Art
Carol Monahan, Associate Director for Simplified Acquisitions, Office of Contracting & Personal Property Management
Diana N'Diaye, Cultural Specialist, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
Karen Otiji, Assistant Director of Grant Management, Office of Sponsored Projects
Scott Robinson, Director, Office of Sponsored Projects
Roberta Waldford, Financial Analyst, Office of the Under Secretaries
Cindy Zarate, Supervisory Attorney, Office of Contracting & Personal Property Management

PRESIDENT’S COMMITTEE ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES
Margo Lion, Co-Chair
Mary Schmidt Campbell, Vice-Chair
Ricky Arriola, Member
Pamela Joyner, Member
Olivia Morgan, Member
Ken Solomon, Member
Rachel Goslings, Executive Director
Traci Slater-Rigaud, Director, Coming Up Tall

HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY CENTER
STAFF AND PROJECT CONSULTANTS
Olsen Jean Julien, Manager
Stephanie Horneback, Chief Conservator and Principal, Caryatid Conservation Services, Inc.
Corine Wegener, International Coordinator and President, American Committee of the Blue Shield and Curator, Minneapolis Institute of Art
Patrick Vilaire, Special Projects Director and Principal, Gataphy
Joseph Jean Baptiste Mentor, Office Manager
Magda Carmelita Douby Guillaume, Registrar
Jean Malherbe Fritz Berg Jeannot, Legal Advisor

APPENDIX THREE
HAITI CULTURAL RECOVERY PROJECT SUPPORTERS, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS
SMITHSONIAN STAFF DEPLOYED TO HAITI

MANAGERIAL/ADMINISTRATIVE
G. Wayne Clough, Secretary
Richard Kurin, Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture
Alison McNally, Under Secretary for Finance and Administration

Johnnetta Betsch Cole, Director, National Museum of African Art

FACILITIES EXPERTS, OFFICE OF FACILITIES, ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS
Mike Bellamy, Director, Office of Engineering Design & Construction
Ed Rynne, Associate Director, Real Estate
Evi Oehler, Architect/Project Manager
Ramy Bindra, Architect/Design Manager
Hung Nguyen, Design Manager, Electrical
Mark Wright, Senior Fire Protection Engineer
Veronica Shaw, Assistant to the Director

CURATORS, CONSERVATORS, COLLECTION MANAGERS, AND OTHER SPECIALISTS
Sharla Blanche, Supervisory Museum Specialist, National Museum of the American Indian
Rosemary Fallon, Paper Conservator, National Portrait Gallery
Carol Grissom, Senior Objects Conservator, Museum Conservation Institute
Helen Ingalls, Conservator, Smithsonian American Art Museum
Emily Klayman Jacobson, Paper Conservator, Freer/Sackler Galleries of Art
Paul Jett, Supervisory Conservator, Freer/Sackler Galleries of Art
Gail Joice, Collection Manager, National Museum of the American Indian
Nora Lockshin, Paper Conservator, Smithsonian Institution Archives
Diana N’Diaye, Cultural Specialist, Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage
Pete Reingier, Folkways Production Supervisor, Center for Folklore and Cultural Heritage
Bethany Romanowski, Assistant Registrar, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum
L. H. (Hugh) Shockey, Jr., Objects Conservator, Smithsonian American Art Museum
Vanessa Haight Smith, Supervisory Conservator, Smithsonian Institution Libraries
Sarah Scaturro, Conservator, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum
Sarah Stauderman, Collections Care Manager, Smithsonian Archives
Deborah Stokes, Education Specialist, National Museum of African Art
Katie Wagner, Book Conservator, Smithsonian Institution Libraries

SMITHSONIAN CONTRACTED CONSERVATORS AND EXPERTS DEPLOYED TO HAITI

Bernard Colia, Conservator, Belgium
Viviana Dominguez, Murals and Paintings Conservator, Principal at Art Conservation LA
Anaïs Gailhaud, Conservator, France
Kristin Gisladottir, Conservator, Iceland
Stephanie Hornbeck, Principal, Caryatid Conservation Services, Inc.
Rosa Lowinger, Principal, Rosa Lowinger Associates
Kesler Pierre, Conservator, New York
Corine Wegener, President, U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield

CONSERVATORS AND TRAINEES DEPLOYED TO HAITI BY ICCROM
through Smithsonian Contract
Aparna Tandon, Project Specialist, ICCROM
Fallo Baba Keita, Manager, Africa, ICCROM
Elisabeth Joy, Manager of Objects, Canadian Conservation Institute
Vesna Zivkovic, Curator, Preventive Conservation, National Museum of Serbia

CONSERVATORS DEPLOYED TO HAITI BY THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
under grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and under contract with the Smithsonian Institution
Mark Aronson, Chief Conservator of Paintings, Yale Center for British Art (July 18–29, 2011)
Dennis A. Baltuskonis, Fine Art Conservation Services (August 24–September 3, 2010)
Susan S. Blakney, West Lake Conservators (May 4–9, 2010)
Nicholas Dorman, Chief Conservator, Seattle Art Museum (June 25–July 2, 2010)
David Goist, Goist Art Conservation (July 5–10, 2010)
Susanne Grieve, East Carolina University (September 19–30, 2011)

Renee Jolly, Biltmore Estates (January 31–February 11, 2011)
Sian Jones, Art Conservation Services (October 25–November 3, 2010)
Saori Kawasaki, Art Conservation Department, Buffalo State College (July 4–29, 2011)
Hitoshi Kimura, Art Conservation of Central Florida (June 7–11, 2010)
Teresa Myers, Myers Conservation (June 6–18, 2011)
Jane Norman, Jane Norman Conservation (December 6–17, 2010)
Anne O’Connor, O’Connor Art Conservation (November 8–19, 2010)
Caitlin O’Grady, Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (August 29–September 9, 2011)
Éloïse Paquette, Centre de conservation du Québec (January 31–February 11 and June 6–18, 2011)
Karen Pavelka, University of Texas (July 5–14, 2010)
Beverly Perkins, Buffalo Bill Historical Center (July 6–14, 2010)
Marie-Chantal Poisson, MCP Conservation (November 9–19, 2010)
Anton Rajer, Fine Arts Conservation (August 1–12, 2011)
Veronica Romero, Rustin Levenson Art Conservation (October 25–November 3, 2010)
Sylvia Schweri, private practice (August 5–14, 2010)
Cindy Lee Scott, Conservation Intern, Museums of New Mexico (July 4–29, 2011)
Martha Singer, private practice (August 1–12, 2011)
Dawne Steele Pullman, private practice (August 31–September 14, 2010)

FOKAL—Fondation Connaissance et Liberté
Michèle Pierre-Louis, President
Lorraine Mangonès, Executive Director
Vanessa Goscinny, Finance Officer


Brubaker, Bill, “In Haiti, the Art of Resilience,” Smithsonian magazine, September 2010.


“Historians work to restore Haitian murals,” The Today Show, NBC TV, March 3, 2011.


“Lancement du Centre de sauvetage de biens culturels,” Haiti en Marche, September 6, 2010.


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Schjonberg, Mary Frances, “In Haiti, painstaking mural-restoration work due to begin this week,” Episcopal News Service, January 12, 2011.


Swanson, Stevenson, “Public and private U.S. sources unite to help Haiti’s art community recover from the earthquake,” ARTnews, September, 2010.


“Un projet pour sauver le patrimoine culturel Haitien,” HPN, August 20, 2010.


