

EXHIBITION

Slaves in Paradise

Modern-day slavery in the Dominican Republic

From September 18 to October 2, 2007

MosaikArt Gallery

SYMPOSIUM

Blood, Sugar and Sweat

September 19, 2007

CBC building

Reservations required

PRESS KIT



**An initiative of the Fabienne Colas Foundation
Sponsored by Rights & Democracy**

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EVENT LEADER

For the third Montreal International Haitian Film Festival (MIHFF), the organizing committee would like to make this annual event a springboard for new social debates of international proportions through many different kinds of activities. To this effect, because the city of Montreal is the crossroads of French-speaking America, it is quite conducive to cultural, social and even socio-economic dialogue. It is therefore in a spirit of promoting awareness that the MIHFF welcomes the international “Slaves in Paradise” exhibition by Franco-Peruvian photographer Céline Anaya Gautier.

This exhibition proves and shows that **slavery**, as lived by Haitian sugar cane cutters in the Dominican Republic, does indeed exist in **this very day and age**. It challenges our social conscience as well as our collective responsibility as citizens of the world. Millions of vacationers flock each year to the Dominican tourist paradise, unaware of the faceless pain of hundreds of thousands of children, women and men who are living in hell each and every day.

Protecting their dignity through their silence, the Haitian braceros and their families live in subhuman conditions, crushed by an unbearable burden. **WE MUST REVEAL THE TRUTH OF THE BATEYS**. Coming out to see and “hear” this exhibition is an act of commitment and solidarity. Together, let us find concrete solutions through a movement of international solidarity the likes of which has never been seen before. It’s time to make the voices of those who cannot speak for themselves heard. It’s time to understand, to take a stance and to take action...

...through resistance, courage, endurance, and the hope that one day, maybe, their voices will finally be heard and echoed throughout the world, desperate yet dignified, like a call for help but with no anger, a vision of a bitter reality that calls to us. Each of us must try to understand and to ask the following questions: Why and how can the First Free Black Nation of the world still be producing slaves in the 21st century? What is the cost of manufacturing the sugar we eat today? Is it not made of blood and sweat?

Of all the mediums of communication out there, photography is the most poignant way to show injustices, to denounce their causes and to touch hearts. The work of Céline Anaya Gautier deserves our full support because, beyond the subject, she combines the three components of activism in photography: the point of view, the heart and, especially, the will to act.

Through the “Slaves in Paradise” exhibition and with the generous **sponsorship of Rights & Democracy**, the **Fabienne Colas Foundation** hopes to be able to help create, if not find, these same components in all Canadians, in order to respond to the call of the Haitian braceros and their families in the Dominican Republic.

Nancy Roc

Commissioner of the “Slaves in Paradise” exhibition

Coordinator of the international “Blood, Sugar and Sweat” symposium

514-577-6897

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Each year, thousands of Haitians flee to the Dominican Republic in the hope of finding a better life. They are trying to escape the misery of life in their own country. The great majority of them do not have papers and cannot enter the Dominican Republic legally. Very organized networks of smugglers and buscones (Haitian and Dominican traffickers) dangle fictitious jobs in front of their eyes and ask for exorbitant amounts of money to get them across the border. The buscones bribe the officials so that migrant workers with no papers can pass the military checkpoints set up to catch them.

After crossing the border, a great many of these workers are taken away to bateys (shacks for the sugar cane plantation workers). They become part of the 30,000 seasonal workers employed each year in the sugar cane industry. Those who do not manage to find a job in the agricultural sector try their luck elsewhere, in construction, for example.

Even though they have a job, many Haitian immigrants are deported because the immigration laws are poorly applied. Haitians are stopped on a regular basis by the police, the immigration department and the army, and are sent back to Haiti en masse without having their papers examined or their situations considered in the eyes of these immigration laws.

Discrimination based on nationality or race makes this phenomenon even worse. The authorities use racial profiling to stop immigrants with no papers. Young black men are the main victims of these expeditious methods. Even when they have a valid visa, a permanent resident card or Dominican nationality, they are forced back to Haiti because the authorities automatically consider their papers to be false. Expelled individuals are not authorized to contact their families to tell them about the situation, or allowed to get their belongings or any salary still owing them. Sometimes, their belongings and their papers are confiscated by the immigration authorities.

Haitians are often wrongly accused of being responsible for increased crime and unemployment in the Dominican Republic. They are frequently the victims of sometimes extremely violent acts of xenophobia. On March 7, 2006, in the town of Yabonico (San Juan province), two Haitians, Edison Odio and Jak Medina, were very seriously burned by a crowd of people looking to avenge the murder of a Dominican mayor. After that, hundreds of Haitians fled the region, afraid for their lives.

Slaves in the Dominican Republic

An estimated 500,000 women, children and men are prisoners in the bateys*. The Haitian braceros** cross the border clandestinely, facilitated by the offices des migrations (migration offices), Dominican and Haitian authorities, as well as by the three families of plantation owners: the Vicinis, the Campollos and the Fanjuls.

Many of these migrants get stuck in this system and will spend the rest of their lives in health-endangering bateys that are unfit for human habitation. The braceros work fifteen hours a day, without a guaranteed salary; the most experienced ones manage to cut a ton and a half of sugar cane, but are only paid 1 euro in ration coupons. The women try to ensure the survival of the batey, while the children of Haitians who are born in the Dominican Republic are not recognized by either of the two governments. There are approximately 250,000 stateless children in the Dominican Republic.

Céline Anaya Gautier and Esteban Colomar were able to get into these plantations with the help of two priests, Christopher Hartley and Pedro Ruquoy, who worked on site every day to support and advocate for these men reduced to slavery.

* Bateys: Camps originally set up for the sugar cane cutters.

** Braceros: Sugar cane cutters

EVENT AGENDA

August 23, 2007: **Launch of “Slaves in Paradise” media campaign**

September 11: “Slaves in Paradise” press conference,
NFB Cinema, 1564 St. Denis St., Montreal

September 18: (by invitation only) Vernissage of Céline Anaya Gautier’s photo exhibition
at Galerie MosaikArt. 4897 Saint-Laurent Blvd. Telephone: 514-849-3399.
Contact: Myrtille Chery: myrtille@mosaikart.ca

**September 19 (Day): (reservations required) “Blood, Sugar and Sweat” symposium
sponsored by Rights & Democracy at the CBC building**

Tickets: \$35 - Places are limited. Please reserve at: projets@fondationfabiennecolas.org or
514-577-6897

September 19 (Evening): Official opening of the 3^d MIHFF:

Opening ceremony, opening film and cocktail party, Mirella and Lino Saputo Theatre at the
Leonardo Da Vinci Centre, 8350 Lacordaire Blvd., Montreal.

September 18 to October 2: “Slaves in Paradise” Exhibition at Galerie Mosaikart, 4897 Saint-Laurent Blvd.
Telephone: 514-849-3399; Contact: Myrtille Chery: myrtille@mosaikart.ca

“Slaves in Paradise” photo exhibition, accompanied by the songs of the braceros and the background sounds recorded
by Esteban Colomar in the bateys.



A ONE-OF-A KIND EXHIBITION

Céline Anaya Gautier and Esteban Colomar were able to get into the work camps—the bateys—, not without risk to themselves, with the help of two priests, Christopher Hartley and Pedro Ruquoy, who are in these camps to help, to advocate for these men, women and children reduced to slavery. The photos and sound archives tell it like it is. A raw testimony, full of humanity, to what was for so long considered to be inconceivable and not real.

Photographer Céline Anaya Gautier first met Father Christopher Hartley when she was doing her first photo report of the Mamey batey for a humanitarian organization from December 2004 to January 2005. Thanks to Father Hartley, she got a first-hand look at the living conditions in the braceros, and decided to come back again with a soundman who could tape the songs and the sounds of the bateys.

Céline Anaya Gautier and Esteban Colomar stayed in the bateys near the Dominican-Haitian border and in the San Pedro de Macoris region from March to May 2005. They shared the lives of the Haitian sugar cane cutters and the people of the bateys. For their own safety, and in order to not get caught, they accompanied the two Catholic priests, Hartley and Ruquoy, as “missionaries.” Their report is a cry of alarm. It shows men, women and children resigned, terrified, reduced to the state of work animals, considered and destined to finish their lives as such, with no recourse for many generations past and perhaps for many a generation still to come.

Some of the photos in this groundbreaking exhibition have already been published in Match du Monde, Courrier International... The “Slaves in Paradise” exhibition, organized by Collectif images 2004 (www.collectif2004images.org), debuted in Paris last May. Montreal is the first city on its international tour. The soundscapes complete this work: sugar cane cutting, sugar cane burning, symbols of exploitation. With these sounds and voices playing in the background as visitors walk through the exhibition, it feels as if the people of the bateys are actually here with us.



Céline Anaya Gautier

Céline Anaya Gautier lived in Peru, her native country, from the age of 9 to 18. Back in France, she worked as an airline stewardess. During her layovers in different countries, she came face to face with a lot of

misery and decided to get involved in humanitarian work, mainly in Peru, where she worked with HIV-positive children. These children were rejected by

society and often orphans. She also took care of street children who were being exploited by the brick factories.

In 2003, she embarked on her first photographic work: “Cœur de Femmes” (hearts of women). For two years, she accompanied street women, passing through “La Halte” in Paris. She received many awards for this project, including the Talent reportage Kodak bursary, a Défi jeune bursary from the ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports and was a Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet bursary winner. In March 2005, she published the book *Cœur de Femmes*. In 2004, she created a photography group with two other photographers called “Le Carton,” of which she is still a member.

For her recent project “Slaves in Paradise,” she was a finalist in Care’s 2006 international humanitarian photography awards and the winner of the Enquête du festival du scoop d’Angers award. Many articles have already been written about this subject in magazines. “Slaves in Paradise” will be incorporated into a future book that will be accompanied by a CD of traditional Haitian songs sung by the sugar cane cutters. At age 30, Céline lives in Paris and is starting up a new project about the difficulties of living with autism in France.

THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

The international “Blood, Sugar and Sweat” symposium on **September 19, 2007**, coordinated by Nancy Roc, will bring together specialists from Quebec, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the U.S. and Belgium to discuss the following themes:

- The present-day enslavement of the braceros: perspectives for international solidarity
- The history of the interdependence and antagonism between the Haitian and Dominican peoples
- The situation of Haitian immigrants and descendents in the Dominican Republic

Participants:

- Danielle Magloire, Activist and Rights & Democracy Coordinator in Haiti
- Father Pierre Ruquoy, Activist Priest, originally from Zambia, deported from the Dominican Republic
- Gérard Ducos, Amnesty International (London), author of the Amnesty International report on the bateys
- Sonia Pierre (Dominican Republic), Coordinator of MUDHA – Human Rights Activist, Amnesty International and Kennedy Foundation award
- Lisane André (Haiti), Manager, Communications/Plea section, Groupe d’Appui aux Réfugiés et Rapatriés (GARR)
- Ariel Francisco Mota (Dominican Republic), Activist Film Director
- Thor Halvorssen (United States), Producer and member of the Human Rights Foundation
- Amy Serrano (United States), Producer and Director of “The Sugar Babies”

The symposium will be held at the CBC building. Tickets: \$35, places limited. For reservations, please e-mail us at: projets@fondationfabiennecolas.org

The biographies of the above panelists are available at www.festivalfilmhaitien.com.

FILM SCREENINGS

While encouraging quality independent cinema, the MIHFF wants to help raise public awareness by tackling important social issues that provoke debate. This year, therefore, the MIHFF will be featuring the following films about the batey issue in the Dominican Republic:

- **The Price of Sugar**, by American director Bill Haney
- **The Sugar Babies**, by Cuban-American director Amy Serrano
- **Big Sugar**, by Canadian director Brian McKenna
- **Batey Zero**, by French director Gérard Maximin
- **Sucre Noir**, by Canadian director Michel Régnier

The synopses of these films are available at <http://www.festivalfilmhaitien.com>.

Five groundbreaking documentaries will make it possible to go into the bateys and witness the situation of the Haitian braceros—the sugar cane workers—in the Dominican Republic. Five approaches to defining a subject whose complexity is matched only by its magnitude. Today, more than 500,000 individuals—men, women and children—are the silent victims of one of the great aberrations of modern history. These five documentaries challenge us, make us question ourselves, and confront us with our paradoxes and our responsibilities as citizens of the world.

The 3rd MIHFF will also be screening 35 other films, dealing with a variety of subjects, during the festival*. (N.B.: Schedule subject to change. Please visit www.festivalfilmhaitien.com for the latest information.)

OUR PARTNERS



Droits et Démocratie
Rights & Democracy

Centre international des droits de la personne et du développement démocratique
International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development

Presentation of Rights & Democracy

Rights & Democracy (International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development) is a non-partisan organization with an international mandate. It was created by Canada's Parliament in 1988 to encourage and support the universal values of human rights and to promote democratic institutions and practices around the world.

Rights & Democracy works with individuals, organizations and governments in Canada and abroad to promote the human and democratic rights defined in the United Nations' International Bill of Human Rights. Although its mandate is wideranging, Rights & Democracy currently focuses on four themes: democratic development, women's human rights, globalization and human rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples. It also has Special Initiatives such as Urgent Action/Important Opportunities, which responds to human rights crises and seizes important opportunities as they arise, and International Human Rights Advocacy, to enhance the work of human rights advocates, in Canada and internationally, in the effective use of regional and international human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and regional human rights systems.

Rights & Democracy enjoys partnerships with human rights, indigenous peoples' and women's rights groups, as well as democratic movements and governments around the world with whom it cooperates to promote human rights and democracy. It is therefore uniquely placed to facilitate dialogue between government officials and non-governmental organizations in Canada and abroad. It is one of the very few organizations with the necessary credibility on both sides to play this bridge-building role.

Contact: http://www.dd-rd.ca/site/contact_us/index.php



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Haitian migrants denied their rights

“If you are black, with identity card or without it, with birth certificate or without, it is the same, it has no value.... In the streets, with migration officials, you don’t have any rights.”

T. G., a Dominican of Haitian descent

An eight-year-old girl was seized by officials in the streets of the Dominican capital, Santo Domingo, on the evening of January 4, 2006. She was slapped across the face twice, hard enough to make her mouth bleed. Then she was taken to a detention centre for irregular migrants, without being allowed to contact her parents, and held overnight. She was only saved from being expelled to neighbouring Haiti when a local human rights organization proved she was a Dominican national – because she was black, officials had assumed she was Haitian and in the country without legal permission. At least half a million Haitians live in the Dominican Republic where they work principally in agriculture and construction. Fleeing the poverty of their homeland, they undertake poorly paid and arduous jobs that most Dominicans are unwilling to do. They face the constant risk of expulsion and systematic discrimination because of their race, skin colour, language and nationality. Some 20,000 – 30,000 Haitians are expelled every year. Many of these expulsions breach international human rights law.

Haitians and Dominico-Haitians are often rounded up and expelled with no chance to appeal, purely on the basis of their skin colour. Many have valid work permits and visas and some are in fact Dominicans, with no family ties in Haiti.

As well as the risk of expulsion, Dominican children of Haitian descent face barriers when they try to obtain a birth certificate from the Civil Registrar Office. They are unable to study beyond primary level, which, in turn, bars them from the formal job market and from voting. Thousands of people are effectively stateless, which perpetuates the cycle of deprivation of rights.

TAKE ACTION NOW! Please write to the Dominican authorities:

S.E. Leonel Fernández,
Presidente de la República,
Palacio Nacional,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Fax: 00 1 809 682 0827

and ask them to:

- - stop collective expulsions and ensure that the human rights of all migrant workers are respected in any deportation process.
- put an end to discriminatory policies that prevent Dominicans of Haitian descent from obtaining Dominican nationality.
- implement migration policies that protect human rights, including ratifying and implementing the Migrant Workers Convention.

We need as much support as we can get.

For further information, visit www.amnesty.ca or www.amnistie.ca.



ORGANIZING TEAM

An initiative of the Fabienne Colas Foundation
Wholly organized by the Fabienne Colas Foundation

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