

THE WRIGHT TIMES

CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY
MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Letter from the President

July 2013

Brazil... the name alone conjures images of the Amazon rain forest, Corcovado towering over Rio de Janeiro, and Carnival. But, our preconceptions don't do justice to this immense country, which is the fifth largest in the world, both in terms of geographical area and by population.

Which brings us to our newest exhibition. Opening its U.S. tour on August 15, 2013, the evening before African World Festival, is *Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil*. We at The Wright are thrilled to partner with Con/Vida – Popular Arts of the Americas, the organizer of this exhibit. Through nearly 200 works of art, visitors will learn about slavery in Brazil, the plantation economy, popular heroes and heroic acts of resistance in the face of adversity, and the raucous escapades of legendary outlaws and bandits of Brazil's "Wild West" – a history that inspires us to think of parallels to our own in the United States.

As the singer, songwriter, and activist Caetano Veloso, a native of the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia, wrote in his 2002 memoir, *Tropical truth: a story of music and revolution in Brazil*:

"The parallel with the United States is inevitable. If all the countries in the world today must measure themselves against 'America,' position themselves in relation to the American Empire, and if the other

countries in America have to do so in an even more direct way – comparing their respective histories to that of their stronger and more fortunate brother – Brazil's case is even more acute, since the mirror image is more evident and the alienation more radical. Brazil is America's other giant, the other melting pot of races and cultures, the other promised land to European and Asian immigrants, the Other. The double, the shadow, the negative image of the great adventure of the New World. The sobriquet 'sleeping giant,' which was applied to the United States by Admiral Yamamoto, will be taken by any Brazilian as a reference to Brazil..."

The parallels don't end there. When one thinks of the enormous cultural and societal impact that 500,000 enslaved Africans have had on the evolution of the United States of America, just imagine an influx of 5,000,000 – the number of enslaved Africans brought to Brazil during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. A recent headline in the *Guardian* declared, "Brazil comes to terms with its slave trading past." It was the last country in the Western hemisphere to abolish slavery, on May 13, 1888. Brazil's last census, in 2011, showed that *brancos* (whites) accounted for less than half the population for the first time since the 19th century.

This "sleeping giant" is waking up; the Brazilian economy is the world's sixth largest, and one of its fastest growing major economies. The eyes of the world will be on this great nation as it hosts two of the most prestigious international athletic events – the World Cup in 2014, and the Summer Olympics in 2016.

"From the depths of the dark solar heart of the southern hemisphere," we can learn much about this parallel society, with its rich amalgamation of humanity, a cultural stew that has created its own sophisticated artistic traditions, rhythms, and history. How will you explore Brazil? We hope you'll join us to find out, because it will be a fascinating journey. *Um beijo!*

*Juanita Moore,
President & CEO*



RECENT EVENTS

Photos by Annistique Photography
annistiquephotography.com

* Ford Freedom Award photos by Andrea Stinson Oliver & Varnhagen Photo

Black Women Rock: The Diaspora - March 16 & 17



Pairing Great Brands Wine Tasting Experience - May 3



15th Annual Ford Freedom Award - May 10



Malcolm X Day - May 19



Serve and Be Served: The Wright Museum Culture Corps

By Gregory Lucas-Myers



In 2009, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History partnered with JPMorgan Chase & Co. to create the *Culture Corps* internship program. The goal: to provide college students and recent graduates an opportunity for working world experience. Working as part-time interns, those accepted become integral to the museum's day-to-day operations. Through the same everyday and extraordinary efforts full-time employees put into their work, *Culture Corps* interns gain real world experience that can be put toward pursuing any career. In addition, they receive guidance from a pool of professionals in the non-profit sector.



Now in its 4th year, the program has seen its share of shining stars come and go. Leah Johnson and Tai Brown are just two. Both young women joined the museum in July 2011. Among their favorite memories, Leah cherishes having helped the Marketing & Communications department take part in the planning stages (not to mention being able to dress up for the event) of the successful *Dance Theatre of Harlem: 40 Years of Firsts Gala*, held in September 2011. Tai most enjoyed working with the children in workshops and the *Inspiring Minds* exhibit. Both *Culture Corps* alums felt a sense of growth from the program. "I came into *Culture Corps* as a communicator and enjoying people, in general," says Leah, "And now, I feel more confident in working with anybody." Tai quickly highlighted the importance of confidence. "When you're able to feel like you can take the lead, and have less doubt in general, you can not only get more done, but are willing to ask more questions to learn what you don't know."



Tai, who moved on to an internship at Rock Connections in January 2013, is now working full-time at Quicken Loans. Since leaving in June 2013, Leah and her friends have finalized the launch of their online-based *Color Blind Magazine*. She is also gearing up for a summer position at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Culture Corps recently welcomed a number of new interns, including Elysse Dowden, an Eastern Michigan University graduate with a degree in African American Studies; Lauren Hollier, a graduate from the School of Art & Design of the University of Michigan; Kenyatta Jones, a third year Elementary Education student from Wayne State University; and Eva McClenney, going into her senior year at the University of Michigan-Dearborn as a double major in Communications and English. Approximately six months prior to this group, Callan "Callie" Hoskins, a fine arts student from Wayne State, and Jessica Bickmann,

an English and History graduate of Central Michigan University, joined the program.

Their goals are as varied as their backgrounds. Jessica plans to return to school. "Working with Kevin Davidson [Director of Design & Fabrication] is great because I get so much insight from a veteran designer," says Lauren. Eva works in Communications, which fits perfectly with her goals of improving her public relations and technical skills.

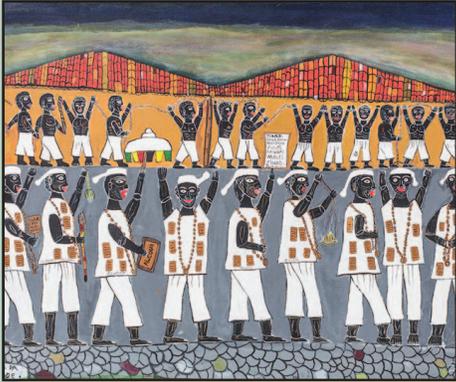
Each of these interns (including the writer), and those not profiled, but not forgotten, are united in their aspirations to better themselves, their community, and the world. To do so, they must be sure of their goals and equipped with the tools to reach them. As museum President & CEO Juanita Moore once said to Leah:

"If you have an idea, go for it... stay focused, be strong about it."

Culture Corps aims to empower its young people to do just that.

Culture Corps interns, past & present (L to R):
Top: Carolyn Chambers, Tai Brown, Jessica Bickmann
Middle: Lauren Hollier, Elysse Dowden, Kenyatta Jones,
Jessica Bickman, Callie Hoskins
Bottom: Leah Johnson, Gregory Lucas-Myers

BANDITS & HEROES, POETS & SAINTS: POPULAR ART OF THE NORTHEAST OF BRAZIL



The first major traveling exhibition of popular art from northeastern Brazil will open its national tour at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History on August 15, 2013. *Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil*, organized by Con/Vida – Popular Arts of the Americas, in partnership with The Wright Museum, tells the story of how African, European, and indigenous cultural traditions have interacted over a period of more than 500 years to form the distinctive culture of this fascinating area of the largest country in South America.

Sol Bahia, *Revolta dos Malês* (Revolt of the Malês)

Brazil is home to one of the largest populations of African descendents in the world, with more than 75 million people. During the 16th through 19th centuries, an estimated 5 million Africans were brought over to Brazil into slavery, ten times the estimated 500,000 Africans that were brought to the United States. Currently, most of Brazil's African population live in the Northeast of Brazil where centuries of African, European, and Amerindian cultures have mingled to create a mixture of conventions that help in shaping Latin American heritage. African Americans and Afro-Brazilians share the harrowing history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and also the determination to escape the horrendous nightmare of slavery. Through the exhibit, visitors will learn about the history of the slave trade in Brazil, and also the culture and traditions that have birthed from this traumatic event in Brazil's history.



Sol Bahia, *Os Sem Terra*
(The Movement of the Landless)



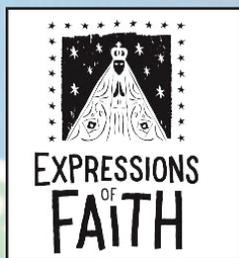
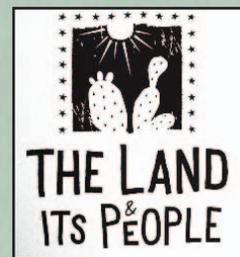
J. Borges, *Cavalo Marinho* (Carnival Figure)

Exhibition curators Marion Jackson, Professor Emerita of Art History at Wayne State University, and Barbara Cervenka, O.P. Professor Emerita of Art at Siena Heights University, have traveled to the Northeast of Brazil during the past 20 years, working directly with popular artists and scholars to organize this exhibit. Cervenka observes, "While the Northeast is materially poor compared to Rio and São Paulo and the cities of the South of Brazil, the culture is vibrant and rich and filled with good humor. The Northeast is considered the historic and cultural 'heart' of Brazil."

There is a strong African influence in Northeast Brazil's percussive rhythms and music. "Soundtracks and amazing video clips accompany the art and will linger in the minds and imaginations of visitors long after they leave this unusual and engaging exhibition" says Jackson. "All cities have their rhythms, but not all cities have such dramatic and percussive rhythms as Salvador and Detroit."

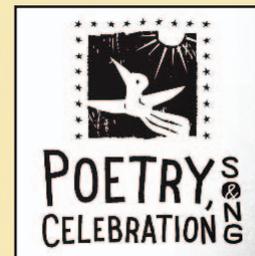
NEW EXHIBIT OPENS AUGUST 15; IS CELEBRATED BY GALA EVENT SEPTEMBER 28, 2013

Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints includes nearly 200 works of art by more than 50 artists. Two eminent photographers, Adenor Gondim and Antônio Neto, have helped work on the exhibition, providing photos and video footage showing festivals, ceremonies, and pilgrimages. The exhibition is comprised of three segments that present the history and culture of Northeast Brazil through popular art. The first segment, *The Land and its People*, reflects on the history of slavery in Brazil, from the rich plantations that produced a wealthy amount of agricultural produce along the coast to the rugged landscape of the inhospitable dry backlands of the fugitive slave communities.



The second segment, *Expressions of Faith*, explores the African-Brazilian religion of Candomblé which combines traditional African roots and Roman Catholicism, while also exploring the evangelical faith of the Northeast. In the exhibition, life-size mannequins of *orixás* (forged iron symbols of African deities) wearing colorful vestments of Candomblé can be viewed along with actual footage of the Candomblé ceremony in Bahia.

The third segment, *Poetry, Celebration, and Song*, focuses on folk legends and popular festivals of the Nordestinos (People of the Northeast). Also featured in this segment is *Literatura de Cordel* (Literature on a String), which is a popular form of poetry, retelling stories and legends. These poems are produced by itinerant singing poets who sell their songs in small, inexpensive chapbooks in rural markets and fairs.



In conjunction with this riveting exhibition, The Wright Gala annual benefit takes place Saturday, September 28, 2013 and will provide an experience unlike any other, featuring Brazilian cuisine and entertainment, a four-course seated dinner in the Amazon, and a Brazilian dance party and celebration that gives new meaning to "Carnival." Tickets for this black-tie event start at \$300 and are available online at TheWrightGala.com or by phone at (800) 838-3006. Proceeds from The Wright Gala support the museum and its educational programming.

Adenor Gondim, *Scene from Carnival*

Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil opens at The Wright Museum on August 15 in conjunction with African World Festival. The exhibition will remain on display until January 5, 2014, after which it will travel to the DuSable Museum, Chicago, Illinois; the Robert W. Woodruff Library at the Atlanta University Center, Atlanta, Georgia; and the International Civil Rights Center and Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Funding for *Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints* has been provided by the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities and the Michigan Humanities Council, with additional support from Wayne State University, TechTown, and the Adrian Dominican sisters.



SUMMER 2013



Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Sunday at 5 pm: Hustle for History Weekly Dance Lessons (\$) [NOTE: no class 9/1]

Every Tuesday at 7:30 pm: 30 Days to Lose It Weekly Workout (\$) [NOTE: beginning in September]

Every Second Sunday from 1 - 5 pm: Charter One Free Family Second Sunday

Every Second Sunday at 2 pm: Don Barden Foundation Interactive Storytime

Every Third Wednesday at 6 pm: Association for the Study of African American Life & History Monthly Meeting

Every Third Friday at 8 pm: The Secret Society of Twisted Storytellers hosted by Satori Shakoor (\$)

July 4 at 6 pm: 21st Concert of Colors Opening Night - Stepping into Destiny

Mike Ellison and friends explore the transformative influence of jazz, spiritual, world, doo wop, and hip hop!

7/5 at 7 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/6 at 5 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/7 at 3 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/10 at 7 pm: Lecture by Dr. Kirkland w/performance by jessica Care moore

July 12 - 14: Summer Theater Festival featuring *Passing* & *I'mma Do Me*

7/12 at 7 pm: Double feature performances of *Passing* & *I'mma Do Me* (\$)

7/12 at 7 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/13 at 1 pm: Meet the Scientist Saturday featuring David Head and Dr. Terrance Dillard

7/13 at 2 & 7 pm: Double feature performances of *Passing* & *I'mma Do Me* (\$)

7/13 at 5 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/14 at 2 & 7 pm: Double feature performances of *Passing* & *I'mma Do Me* (\$)

7/14 at 3 pm: Complex Movements' *Beware of the Dandelions*

7/20 at 1 & 4 pm: *Fatherhood 101* film screening and discussion with director

7/25 at 6 pm: Opening Reception for *Inspiration Through Art: Works by Darold Gholston & Henry Heading*

7/27: **African Canadian Heritage Tour** sponsored by the Friends Committee of The Wright Museum

August: Summer Celebrity Book Fair

8/3 at 1 pm: 2nd Annual Black Mothers Breastfeeding Summit

8/10 at 1 pm: Meet the Scientist Saturday featuring David Head and Dr. Terrance Dillard

8/11 at 3 pm: *Emmett Till's Secret Witness: FBI Confidential Source Speaks* book signing with author Bonnie Blue

8/15 at 6 pm: Opening Reception for *Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil*

August 16 - 18, 11 am - 11 pm daily: African World Festival on the grounds of The Wright Museum

8/29 at 6 pm: *Call Me Kuchu* film screening & discussion w/Freedom House & KICK (\$)

September 3 at 6 pm: 30 Days To Lose It! Season 4 Kickoff

September 8 from 1 - 5 pm: Grandparents Day

9/8 at 3 pm: *A Moment of Grace* book signing and lecture featuring author Patrice Gaines

9/14 at 1 pm: Meet the Scientist Saturday featuring David Head and Dr. Terrance Dillard

September 28: The Wright Gala Annual Benefit - BRASIL! (\$)

Museum Donors During the Period of March 16 - June 15, 2013

The museum would like to extend its sincere appreciation to those donors who have made gifts to support our exhibits, programming and special events. Listed here are the names of contributors who made gifts of \$500 or more. Every attempt has been made to list donors accurately; if there are errors or omissions, please call (313) 494-5872 to have them corrected. *Thank you!*

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The museum would like to thank Hope United Methodist Church and Delta Sigma Theta, Detroit Alumni Chapter for hosting membership drives that raised more than \$2,000 each.



This newsletter and museum programming are made possible by the generous support of our community partners. Thank you!
JOIN US! To become a member, make a donation or volunteer, please call (313) 494-5800 or visit TheWright.org.



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CURRENT & UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

And Still We Rise: Our Journey Through African American History and Culture
 Ongoing

Inspiring Minds: African Americans in Science and Technology
 Ongoing

Visions of Our 44th President
 Now - August 4, 2013

Bandits & Heroes, Poets & Saints: Popular Art of the Northeast of Brazil
 August 15, 2013 - January 5, 2014

*Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Celebrating a Century of Sisterhood,
 Scholarship & Service Presented by the Detroit Alumnae Chapter*
 Now - March 31, 2014

The Chris Webber Collection: Exceptional People During Extraordinary Times
 Now - July 31, 2013

Ingrid Saunders Jones: A Retrospective Exhibition
 August 8, 2013 - March 31, 2014

Complex Movements' Beware of the Dandelions
 Performances through July 14, 2013

Inspiration Through Art featuring Works by Darold Gholston & Henry Heading
 July 25 - October 17, 2013

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 2013 WRIGHT MUSEUM BENEFIT GALA

For more information please call (313) 494-5800 or visit TheWright.org

Museum Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm | Sunday 1 - 5 pm | Closed Mondays

Museum Admission: Adults (13 - 61) \$8 | Seniors (62+) \$5 | Youth (3 - 12) \$5 | Members and children under 3 are admitted free

