

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) Reopens Dec. 3 with new exhibition *Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*

Reopening activities include the new exhibition *Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*
Dec. 3, 2014 – Jan. 4, 2015

The [Museum of the African Diaspora](#) (MoAD), a San Francisco-based arts and cultural institution dedicated to preserving and sharing stories of a common African heritage, reopens Dec. 3, 2014 following a six-month makeover. Among the new exhibitions on display is *Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*.

Renovations to the building, which first opened in 2005, refreshed the museum’s overall look and feel and also created more exhibition space. The remodel is the first major step in an effort to transition the facility from a museum that houses temporary exhibits into a fine arts museum with a national presence that showcases both permanent and rotating collections. Designed by Gensler, the refreshed look and expanded exhibition space also will give MoAD the capacity needed to grow its community, as well as educational and outreach programs.

Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba

MoAD’s reopening features a new exhibit titled *Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*. This exhibition showcases works by artists who belonged to Grupo Antillano as well as contemporary artists. *Drapetomanía* offers a revisionist understanding of the “new art of Cuba.” The exhibition focuses on the work of artists who have dealt with issues of race, history, the centrality of Africa and the Caribbean-to-Cuban national identity. *Drapetomanía* runs through January 4, 2015.



Manuel Couceiro
Sin título (“Untitled”), 1977 Oil on canvas, Courtesy of the Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection

“*Drapetomanía* is a fascinating exhibition that demonstrates the influence and impact that the African Diaspora has had on contemporary Cuban art,” said Linda Harrison, executive director of MoAD. “We’re proud to present these distinctive works at MoAD and look forward to having our members and general public come view them.”



Rogelio Rodríguez Cobas, *Satelite 10, [“Satellite 10”]* 2004, Wood sculpture, Courtesy of Alejandro de la Fuente

Grupo Antillano was a visual arts group that briefly thrived in Cuba during the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, it has been overlooked by art historians. The collective consisted of 17 prominent artists from Cuba and Latin America who articulated a vision of Cuban culture that emphasized the importance of African people and influences in the development of Cuba as a nation.

The name of the exhibit— *Drapetomanía* — was a term coined by a 19th century Louisiana medical doctor who described slavery with this derogatory term. The main symptom of the “so-called disease” was the irresistible urge of a slave to run away and to escape.

Alejandro de la Fuente, *Drapetomanía's* curator, is a scholar, author and Harvard professor. He published the seminal work on the Cuban art movement titled *Drapetomanía: Grupo Antillano and the Art of Afro-Cuba*.

Grupo Antillano considered Africa to be a vibrant, ongoing and dynamic influence on Cuba and the surrounding Caribbean region; and the collective sought to define what it means to be Afro-Cuban. As a result of their influence, many Afro-Cuban artists and intellectuals were inspired by them and triumphantly declared that a new and more authentic Cuban art had been born.

This exhibit seeks to recover the history of this group and its important contributions to the art of Cuba, the Caribbean and the African Diaspora. Several members of Grupo Antillano attended the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria in 1977 and saw their work as part of a diasporic conversation on art, race and colonialism.

The art of Grupo Antillano belongs to a long tradition of Caribbean resistance and cultural assertion. It is part of what Haitian poet René Depestre has described as the African slaves' "prodigious effort at legitimate defense" and "ideological cimarronaje ("Self-liberation")" by which they managed to recreate their pasts and cultures in the new world.

About Museum of African Diaspora (MoAD)

Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) is an arts and cultural institution dedicated to preserving the stories of our common African heritage and sharing those stories with audiences from around the world. Situated in the heart of the Yerba Buena Arts District in San Francisco, MoAD is actively engaged in building a community that inspires, educates and connects people of all ages and backgrounds.

MoAD seeks to build a deeper understanding of the African Diaspora through art, programs and events that cultivate wonder and excitement about the ways in which our personal histories are connected. As a nonprofit organization, the museum's operations and programs are supported by grants and contributions from public and private sources.

As a Smithsonian Institution affiliate, MoAD has access to the Smithsonian Institution's 136 million artifact collection for research, exhibits and programming. MoAD joins a network of more than 190 organizations in 45 states, Puerto Rico and Panama with a shared goal of creating lasting experiences that educate, inspire and broaden perspectives on science, history, world culture and the arts. To learn more and to support MoAD, visit www.moadsf.org.



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