

Caribbean Studies Association goes to Haiti in 2016

The Caribbean Studies Association will hold its next conference in Haiti from June 5-11, 2016, under the leadership of newly elected president from Trinidad and Tobago, Cornell Professor, Carole Boyce Davies. Following its 40th anniversary meeting this year in New Orleans, the connections to Haiti are historically resonant since the Haitian Revolution is identified as creating the conditions for the Louisiana Purchase.

CSA Conferences have been held all over the Caribbean but will go to Haiti for the first time. The conferences promises to be an exciting meeting of scholars from all disciplines and will also highlight film, visual arts and performance tracks. Art exhibitions, fashion expos, plenaries by noted scholars on topics from Reparations to the internationalization of Caribbean culture will be highlighted under the theme: Caribbean Global Movements: People, Ideas, Culture and Arts for Economic Sustainability.

For more information, see the CSA website: www.caribbeanstudiesassociation.org. Contact its Newsletter Editor, Meagan Sylvester at <newseditor@caribbeanstudiesassociation.org> and President, Carole Boyce Davies at <president@caribbeanstudiesassociation.org>.

Dominican dance declared “cultural heritage”

Bachata is a dance and genre of music that originated in the countryside and rural neighborhoods of the Dominican Republic in the early 20th century and has now spread to Europe and the United States. Its worldwide popularity is a great achievement for the Dominican Republic and the government took the next step to honor *bachata* by passing a law that declares it part of their cultural heritage. Under the new law, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for promoting, disseminating, and expanding *bachata*. The law requires Dominican embassies, consulates and missions all over the world to take action and promote *bachata* abroad.

Caribbean leads world in reducing the number of new HIV/AIDS infections

The United Nations is reporting major progress by the Caribbean in battling HIV/AIDS, with the region recording the biggest drop in new infections compared to all regions in the world. According to a report from the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), “How AIDS changed everything - MDG6: 15 years, 15 lessons of hope from the AIDS response”, which indicates that the world has met and exceeded the sixth

millennium development goal of halting and reversing the AIDS epidemic, it is estimated that the number of people newly infected with HIV in the Caribbean in 2014 had been cut in half since 2000. The decrease in new infections was most pronounced in the 2000 to 2004 period, when they fell by almost 32 per cent. In the 2005 to 2009 and 2010 to 2014 periods, more modest declines in new infections of about 10 per cent occurred. Haiti accounted for roughly half of all new HIV infections in 2014 in the Caribbean, with the Dominican Republic contributing the second largest number of new infections. AIDS-related deaths in the region have also fallen by 59 per cent since 2005. Worldwide, new HIV infections have fallen by 35 per cent and AIDS-related deaths by 41 per cent, and UNAIDS said the world is on track to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.

Trinidad and Tobago outlines \$2 billion climate plan

Trinidad and Tobago has become the first Caribbean nation to outline its contribution to a UN climate deal, proposing limited greenhouse gas cuts across three main sectors by 2030. The government says it will target 15% carbon reductions in power generation, heavy industry and transport over the next 15 years, modelled on a business as usual baseline. The proposal means over 50 national plans have now been lodged with the UN, covering nearly 60% of GHG emissions that can be linked with individual countries. All 195 national parties to the global climate talks have been asked to release their plans by 1 October, to allow the UN to assess if they are sufficient to prevent dangerous levels of warming. Trinidad and Tobago's submission took three years to compile, write officials, and involved 175 representatives from various government departments, business and civil society. The country is the largest oil and gas producer among Caribbean islands, with the industry accounting for 40% of GDP and 80% of exports. Temperature increases, sea level rise, changes in precipitation and increased risks of tropical storms are all cited as potential dangers the country could face due to climate change.

Grenada rebuilds barrier reefs

The Eastern Caribbean nation of Grenada is following the example of its bigger neighbors Belize and Jamaica in taking action to restore coral reefs, which serve as frontline barriers against storm waves. Coral reefs also play an extremely important role in the Caribbean tourism economy, as well as in food production and food security, but they have been adversely affected by rising sea temperatures and pollution. An assessment of the vulnerability of Grenada, conducted between

September and October 2014, identified several areas that are particularly vulnerable that did not already have interventions. Two such areas were Grand Anse on mainland Grenada and the Windward community on the sister island Carriacou. The reef restoration is being done jointly by the Government of Grenada and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) under the Coastal Eco-system Based Adaptation in Small Island Developing States (Coastal EBA Project).

Photography exhibition in Puerto Rico: “Colonial Comfort”

Puerto Rico’s Museum of Contemporary Art (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico, MAC) presents “Colonial Comfort”, a photography exhibition featuring the work of nine artists from Puerto Rico, and another nine from the United States Virgin Islands. The exhibition was first on view at The Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts in Frederiksted, St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Curated by Lisa Ladner, “Colonial Comfort” features work by the following artists: ADÁL (Puerto Rico), ae.i.ou (Puerto Rico), Rebecca Zilengizer (Puerto Rico), Marta Mabel Pérez (Puerto Rico), Liza Morales (Puerto Rico), Herminio Rodríguez (Puerto Rico), Mónica Félix (Puerto Rico and New York, USA), Lionel Cruet (San Juan, PR and New York, USA), Denise Bennerson (St. Croix), David Berg (St. Croix), Diane M. Butler (St. Croix), Nicole Canegata (St. Croix), Janet Cook-Rutnik (St. John), Tina Henle (St. Croix), Erik Miles (St. Thomas), Ray Miles (St. Thomas), Herminio Rodríguez (Puerto Rico), Steve Simonsen (St. John), and William Stelzer (St. John). For more information call: (787) 977-4030, extension 228. The MAC is located in Rafael María de Labra Historical Building at the corner of Ponce de León and Roberto H. Todd Avenues (Stop 18) in Santurce, Puerto Rico.

New Book: Our Caribbean Kin: Race and Nation in the Neoliberal Antilles

Rutgers University Press has announced the publication of *Our Caribbean Kin: Race and Nation in the Neoliberal Antilles* by Alaí Reyes-Santos. The book considers three key moments in the region’s history: the nineteenth century, when the antillanismo movement sought to throw off the yoke of colonial occupation; the 1930s, at the height of the region’s struggles with US imperialism; and the past thirty years, as neo-liberal economic and social policies have encroached upon the islands. At each moment, the book demonstrates, specific tropes of brotherhood, marriage, and lineage have been mobilized to construct political kinship among Antilleans, while racist and xenophobic discourses have made

it difficult for them to imagine themselves as part of one big family. Recognizing the wide array of contexts in which Antilleans learn to affirm or deny kinship, Reyes-Santos draws from a vast archive of media, including everything from canonical novels to political tracts, historical newspapers to online forums, sociological texts to local jokes. Along the way, she uncovers the conflict, secrets, and internal hierarchies that characterize kin relations among Antilleans, but she also discovers how they have used notions of kinship to create across differences.

Alaí Reyes-Santos is assistant professor of ethnic studies at the University of Oregon. She is the former codirector of the journal *Revista Estudios Sociales*, published by Centro Bonó in the Dominican Republic.

Film: “Reinventing Cuba”

The new documentary film “Reinventing Cuba” by Humberto Durán profiles a unique collection of people who are pushing local boundaries and, as the title states, “Reinventing Cuba.” The one hour documentary goes beyond the stereotypes—beyond cigars and salsa, beyond mojitos and Malecón, beyond antique American cars and decaying architecture to reveal an extraordinary nation eager to embrace change. Host Gerry Hadden takes viewers on a personal journey. He meets little league slugers defying the odds and dreaming of the majors; doctors and medical researchers saving lives; hustlers finding ways around limited internet connections; artists and designers at the height of creativity; and black marketeers selling a vital entertainment and information device called “the package.” Hadden portrays vibrant, hopeful, and resourceful characters facing enormous challenges in today’s Cuba. He reveals an often overlooked, burgeoning, middle class that is at the forefront of what will likely be Cuba’s future as it moves into a new era. The documentary is directed by Humberto Durán, and filmed by Amando Guerra and Josep Alfero.

All information courtesy of *Repeating Islands* blog: <<http://repeatingislands.com>>.