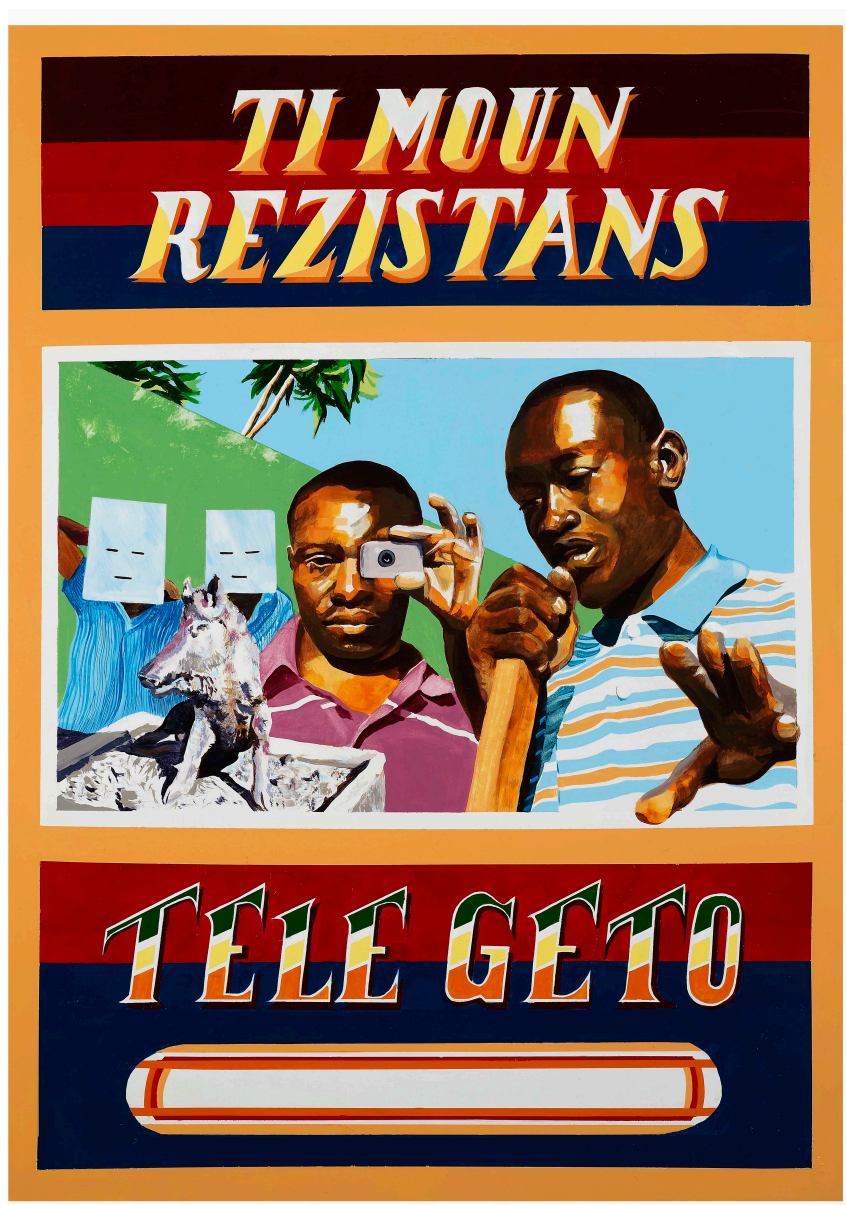


CABINET



John Cussans.
Invisible Mirrors.

Film screening & talk.

Tuesday 30th March 7-9 pm

RSVP
events@cabinetgallery.co.uk

Haitian History Lessons

In 1791 a gathering of revolutionary slaves took place at Bois Caïman (Alligator Wood) in the mountainous northern plain of Haiti. At the meeting presided over by the Vodou priest Dutty Bookman a ceremony was enacted in which a black pig was sacrificed and a blood oath sworn to the God of the African slaves and to the spirit of Liberty. This event marked the symbolic inception of the Haitian revolution which culminated in the first society in the colonial world to fully abolish slavery and the declaration of the first independent Black Republic in 1804. The legend of Bois Caïman is the source of recent accusations made by Christian Fundamentalists that the earthquake in Haiti was punishment for an historical pact with Satan.

In the late 1970's the indigenous Haitian pig was diagnosed with Asian swine flu. In order to protect the regional pork industry the Duvalier government, under pressure from the US Food and Drugs Administration, eradicated the native pig population. At great expense the peasants were then forced to buy American pigs that were vulnerable to disease, required expensive medication (only available via the US) and cost more to feed than the average Haitian human. This further decimated the already ruined Haitian rural economy and forced yet more peasants into the already overcrowded slums of Port-au-Prince in search of work in the sweatshops.

In 2004, following the second US-backed ousting of the popular President Jean Francois Aristide, the UN established MINUSTAH (the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) with responsibility for 'restoring public order' to the nation. In "Invisible Mirrors" Reginald Jean Francois recounts the story of how UN forces, shortly after arriving, enacted a ceremonial ritual on a replica of the Florentine Boar in downtown Port-au-Prince, in an attempt to magically bind the energy of the national symbol of independence, revolution and resistance.

John Cussans 2010

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