

Chapter

## Georges René & Marilyn Houlberg

## My DOUBLE MYSTIC MARRIAGES to TWO GODDESSES of LOVE An Interview

I first met Georges in Port-au-Prince near the Musée d'Art in 1985, and followed bis religious journey and family life over the years. For several months, Georges contemplated where and when to do this interview that would chronicle his most important personal involvement as a Vodouist — bis marriages to Ezili Freda and Ezili Dantò. At first, he wanted to record it in the badji (part of an ounfo) where he was initiated and where he actually married the two Ezilis. We went to see the manbo who initiated him, and who had played the parts of the two Ezilis in the marriages, but she was getting ready to go to New York and Montreal for ceremonies and consultations.

So Georges had to make other plans. At first he wanted to do the interview on a Tuesday, Ezili Danto's Day, because she was the first goddess he married. But he finally decided on Thursday, Freda's Day. We started out in a taxi at 9 A.M., on April 1st, 1993, tape recorder in hand, and he announced, "Let's go to the sea — I need the inspiration of the sea." As we drove along the coast line, leaving Portau-Prince and heading towards Carrefour, Georges had an impromptu idea. We screeched to a halt in front of the Caribeño Club, a Dominican open-air club near the sea. Even at 10 A.M., tables of men and women ringed the dance floor. A super sound system played plaintive Dominican love songs. Georges and I sat over to the side and I turned on the tape recorder.

- Marilyn Houlberg: So here we are at the Club Caribeño it's a club by the sea. Lots of "working women" here.
- Georges René: This is why I decided to make my interview here about my double marriage to Ezili Freda and Ezili Dantò. I know Ezili Freda is a spirit of the light girls, for this kind of business. She is very "hot peppers."
- MH: So this is a good place for her.
- GR: She would like this, because it is a good inspiration down by the sea and people come here to find love. All these spirits like where it is cool, where there is water. I hope the interview will go for the intregality of the sexes.
- MH: What do you mean by that ... "intregality of the sexes"? Meaning men and women?
- GR: Well, yes, it's love I'm talking about. Love. Yes. First of all,...my marriage to my wife, who died, who was named Paula Racine. Then...my double marriage to Freda and Dantò. The reason I have become engaged with these spirits is because I have been persecuted since I was a little child in school. And I dreamed such a thing and refused to believe this kind of thing exists. It's only one way they can really prove to me that they exist — they have to do something bad to me, not because they hate

**11.1.** Georges René with bis altar for the two Ezilis: Dantò (top) and Freda (bottom). It is next to bis bed in bis sleeping room. A small mirror is propped up on each shelf so that each spirit can admire ber own beauty. Photograph, Joan Hackett, Port-au-Prince, June 1995.



**11.2.** 'Spirit Marriage' by Gérard Valcin. Oil on masonite. Waterloo Museum of Art, Waterloo, Iowa. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. F. Harold Reuling to the Waterloo Museum of Art Haitian Collection. 86.7. me,...but [because] they love me. But...I have a very hard head to believe that such a thing exists in nature. So it was for me an experience.

This is my story.... Since I was a little boy, I always had money in my pocket. I even find money in the street and in the car. So one time I had a problem. I am walking in the street and...a man loses a watch. Someone else stole the watch. The person misunderstands, they confuse things, and catch me instead of Ti-Georges, who actually stole the watch. So all this persecution, this part is from Dantò. I am telling the truth — I'm walking, you know, and someone just calls me, and that person takes me for the person that stole the watch.

- MH: Did you get arrested?
- GR: They get me arrested. They don't beat me. I don't have no record. Because when I was in the jail, I dream of a black woman, this black person says, "this is me, [this happened] for you to know I exist."
- MH: So Dantò made herself known to you in this way?
- GR: That's right. But I still didn't take it seriously you know how it is when you're young. I know my mother had these things before. I recognize that. My mother died when I was seven...But I do not have enough power to really understand, to control this thing, because you have to know how to serve [the spirits]. Just like a country has a constitution, they have law. Civilized countries, serious countries have the law



-- you respect the constitution, you respect the law.

This is the way I see the spirit. Especially when they like you. In fact, I wasn't looking to get them, to be engaged, to buying some lwa, some spirits. I was trying to stay away. But I find out they said "I am good for you because you are not looking to buy me. You belong to me since you were a child in the belly of your mother." So one time, just as I am talking now, I met a girl named Eliane. So I talked to her and I was 16. I talked to her, and I explained to her what kind of problems I have in my life. And that Eliane, she just looked at me, she was good, she know my mother. And she tell me, "Georges, something has to be done. Seems like what your mother in her lifetime did not do — the lwa she did not serve — they come to you. You had better take it seriously. Otherwise they will take you like they took your mother."

And I do not know that person, and that person Eliane, she takes my hand, "I am not going to let that happen to you. Let me take you someplace where they can read for you, can fortune tell." Now, this time I was very happy, I think this was a very great privilege to go to that place. I'm not a hot head now in this time. She took me to a manbo called Mama Luce and then when I get to Mama Luce she started talking to me. She opened the cards.

MH: Playing cards?

GR: Yes, playing cards. She tells everything. When she plays the cards, I see two girls

11.3, 11.4. Verna Esperanza bolds dolls representing Ezili Dantd (left), and Ezili Freda (right), in front of their respective altars. Temple of oungan Jean François Innocent in Port-au-Prince. Photograph, Joan Hackett, June 1995.



11.5. The morning after a twin ceremony beld on Epiphany in Carrefour, Port-au-Prince. Ezili's beart is framed by the serpent couple, Danbala-Ayida Wedo. Photograph, Marilyn Houlberg, January 6th, 1982. coming and two men. She says "my friend, there is your trouble, right there. You have two spirit girls who love you. Each of them has a husband. There is Freda with her husband Sen Jak, and Dantò with Ogou Feray."

I said, "Turn the cards again," and she says to me "Don't you think that sometimes you are like a person who is a little bit crazy? That you can't control yourself?"

I said "That is true."

She said, "You don't see that many things happen to your life — that you are very innocent, but you are also lucky. Don't you see that you find money all the time? Don't you see that you are beautiful? People after you, jewelry and everything."

I used to go around with the tourists. I was very charmed by the white women, I have to tell you. This was a part of the Ezili Freda side. My first girlfriend was a French girl, her father was Haitian. They were in exile during the Duvalier time, in 1969.

She was a French girl, Evelyn Carrié. When I went to the primary school, she was at the Primer Certificate Test. That girl was from the upper class I think, from the rich class. She looked at me, and she said, "I love your eyes." That was the girl. Everything I'm telling you is a part of my story.

- MH: She was light-skinned?
- GR: No, she was white.
- MH: Even though she had a Haitian father?
- GR: Yes, she had a French mother. They used to live on the Champs-de-Mars, near the Pharmacy, because the father was a doctor. The father used to go to the Casino every



Friday night. There was a nightclub there too. And I was supposed to sneak in the window. And the police detective, it turns out, is waiting to shoot me. He has been watching me. He was in civilian clothes. He was a private detective waiting to shoot me.

The day I was going to die, that Friday, we always have an appointment, between 9 and 10 o'clock. She opens the window. We were just playing at making love, we were not touching very much. We were both virgins. I didn't start going with women until I was 18. So I had kind of a respect for her. But my complexion, you know — at the time we had class problems, some prejudice.... She loves me. But I don't have enough experience. Because I'm black.

But the time I was going to die is the time I

**11.6.** Tap-tap seen in Port-au-Prince. Photograph, Marilyn Houlberg, 1993. came out from her window, and the man says, "I've been waiting for you for five Fridays. This is the fifth one, and I was going to kill you, [until I saw] this girl, and she is a hot pepper" (the white girl). "She loves you. I thought you were a *voleur*, a thief, a crook."

MH: How come he didn't shoot you? Because he understood it was love?

GR: It was love. But I went to double check with the manbo, Mama Luce. She said, "You are very lucky. Don't forget, that white girl you see, she comes in the face of Ezili Freda. Freda was present. That's why the man didn't kill you." And so I say, "What is Freda, what is this Freda, what is Dantò?"

The manbo said, "If you have a hard head like your mother, you are going to be in trouble. They are not going to kill you yet, but they are going to be after you. " But again I don't take it seriously. Well, they make me drunk, I drink *kleren*, I lose things, people beat me. This was all when I was 16, after my consultation.

When I became 18, I went to the manbo Luce, and said, "Now you're going to call Dantò for me in your head...I say I want to know who is that spirit who bothers me, who loves me so much...."

She comes like this, "hmrrrmm, hmrrrmm," eating her teeth. [GR grinds his teeth.] Someone in the room says, "Put your spirit down, say grace."

Then Dantò took water and put it on my head. This is Dantò now. She is blessing me with grace now, because I come, because I greet her. And she greets me like this [gesture] because she doesn't talk. She has to translate through a different spirit who will give me the message. She talks in some African dialect. "Ganga de ganga...Kede ezeke..." Very African.

Then when she takes my face with her hands, and someone who is there, an ounsi, says, "She loves you to marry."

And I said, "How come I am going to marry a spirit - I'm just human!"

Now the thing has become so good for me, I'm becoming crazy! Everywhere I go, I talk about her, just like I'm talking right now. I love [her]. This is one of the good experiences.

And so I say, Vodou is nothing wrong. Just because you don't understand it. I say, thank God, I have something for which I'm not looking — I get it naturally. It's *rasin* — *roots.* It was a Saturday, because it is a Dantò Day (Saturday and Tuesday...you can choose). So when I talked with Dantò, I told her, "It seems like I'm engaged with you." She listened but she didn't talk. I said to her, "I'm engaged with you, you want me as your husband to marry?" Dantò said, "My son, do that." She said, "I will give you money." [GR rubs his thumb and fingers.]

Then, after that, I know I am really engaged now, but....

MH: Not married yet.



**11.7.** Rara banner emblazoned with the beart of Ezili. Carrefour-du-Nord. Photograph, Marilyn Houlberg, 1995.

GR: Not married yet, but at least I have an idea who I belong to. Should I be scared to live it or not? Dantò, she says to me, "You have a choice: Be with me, mon amour, or like we say [in Creole], mwen amou, engage with me," then she shrugs her shoulders [GR imitates her], "or I'm not responsible what will happen to you." I could die, you know, anything could happen.

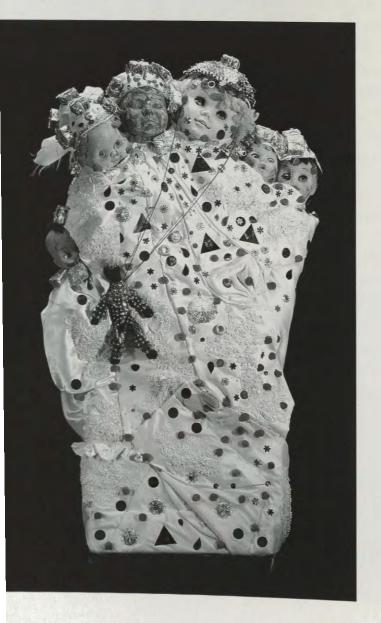
Well, I stopped telling my friends that I'm going to be married with the spirit because they say, "What the hell? What you crazy, what is this, married with the lwa?"

In Duvalier's time, under Papa Doc, Vodou was a big thing. But for my age, it does something with your reputation.... You know, sometimes they make you think...

MH: That it's not good?

GR: It's not good. And I said to my friends, "I don't care, as long as it's going to be good for me." When I finished talking with Dantò, I'm going to use a special day to call Freda...because they say if you got one, my friend, you have to get the other one. If you're married with the black one and you don't got the white one, the white one going to go like this [he makes the motion of slitting his throat]. You going to be in trouble. Because both of them go together.... They understand, they communicate, they will be jealous.

**11.8.** Ezili and Her Sisters,' by Pierrot Barra, 1994. Multimedia assemblage: Wood, satin, plastic, sequins, beads, pins, ribbon, lace. Height, 95 cm. FMCH X94.76.2.



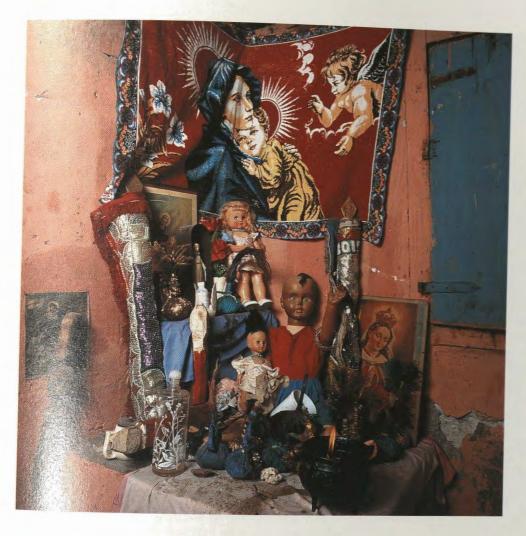
So when I get the black one, you know — just like you have a contract — I'm engaged, I want to find out what I should do. I have to buy two rings. Then, when she come, she says "But don't you worry, when I meet my man, I'm going to make you get the money."

And, of course, that's Dantò who tells me, "I'm going to make you get the money, and you just listen to me now." And she said she do something they call the "mesh" with the cotton to make 21 wicks, to make a gras [blessing] for me — in the family of my aunt. And then she said, "Say what you want from these 21 things."

- MH: Are they on separate white plates, or all in one bowl with oil in it?
- GR: No, they are all on one plate, a white plate. It's just like the *minokan*, the announcement to all the nations; all the spirits to open the gate, to give me the road. To open the road for me, to open the gate. At that time, I do not know how to communicate with the spirit, what to say to the spirit. Then some family of my aunt, they say, "I'm going to help you. I have water, I have kleren, I have this, I have that."

And I start to pour water three times, I start to say what I want. They say, "Say what you want. For all the persecution you have, what you would like to be in your life, do it with the faith."

I do it exactly and she said, "If you ask something, then when you sleep you will dream me, you will see what I will get for you." And I do the rhing, on Saturday, and she say, "do that on Thursday."



11.9. Corner altar for Ezili Dantò, represented by the Virgin and child on a rug. Note rolled flags, dolls, Kongo packets, and a chodyè (warmer) with flames, a sign of ongoing work. Ounfò of manbo Celanie Constant Nerva in Jacmel. Photograph, Phyllis Galembo, June 1993.

- MH: So Dantò told you to do this on Freda's day?
- GR: She said, "You do it in my name and you call her too. To be participating for the deliverance." So I do it.

I call Freda first. In fact, I first talk with Legba, to open the gate for me. They tell me everything to do. I do it exactly.

This was just the first step I get, to open the gate, to know where I'm coming from, to know what to do, just the beginning, to have an idea for myself, to know what things are serious and can hurt me. Now, it's my life — that's what's important for me!

- MH: You mean whether you're dead or alive? Really that much?
- GR: Yes, really that much. Just to show you how jealous they are, spirits are much more jealous than human persons. Because I come from something special for them. I belong to them. Myself Georges is me, but I don't know who is with me. I'm double, just like you. People see Marilyn, and they don't know what is Marilyn, where your roots are from. It's the roots, the soul, the spirit.

One time I just come from school, I walk to my house, I find a white man, I try to talk to him, to show him around. And this man, he was a business man. He lived in St. Croix, in the Virgin Islands. This is his first time in Haiti, and he comes to buy lots of mahogany wood to sell in St. Croix.



11.10. Mural of Ezili Danto on a small ounfo on the road in Carrefour, Port-au-Prince. Photograph, Marilyn Houlberg, March 18, 1995.

11.11. Altar painting of Ezili Danto and child. Artist unknown. Paint on masonite, tinsel. 59 x 59 cm. FMCH X94.70.30.

So when I met that man that was a tourist, I talk with him and I see that the man has a hat and a big red scarf. Which is what Mama Luce said when she turned the cards and said there is two men and two women coming so I dreamed that man with a red scarf and I ask somebody, "It's a white man, Ogou?" Ogou is white.

MH: Ogou is white?

GR: Oh yes.

MH: So he is white because he is Sen Jak?

GR: Yes, whenever you dream Ogou he is white. Mulatto, it's the color you dream him. You never dream Ogou as black. So then, I go to the Plaza Hotel. I see the man and the man

loves me. This was Ogou and this was the person I see in the dream and then after that this is the man that Danto tells me I'm going to meet when she says, "I'm going to make you find money to marry me."

And then I find the man. I find him alone, and I say, "Hello."

So he said, "Let's just take a little walk here. If I need you, maybe I'll contact you." He offers me a cigarette. We walk by the palace, we sit.

And the man says to me, "Do you think you can help me?"

I say, "Oh yes, what do you want, girls?" This was one of the easy things at the time.

"No, I'm here on business - to buy things," he says.



So I take him to some mahogany factories, and he buys things. He pays me twenty percent. When I come back, I see he's given me \$100. That was a lot of money in those times. This is all part of my mystic thing. Then I go to show my sister the money, and she asks me where I get this money. I tell her I didn't steal it - I just met somebody and took them around. "He's buying things," I told her. And the next day I come and we go somewhere else, and he gives me \$200 ....

- MH: There were still tourists at that time.
- GR: Yes, there must have been \$1,000 I made with that man. If it were now, I don't know what that \$1,000 would be. I don't know how to count it. I see the bill --- the \$100 bill. So I was like this [excited motions], more like this ---[screams] - money - oohhhh! I make so much problems. Because the Ezilis...they see...they are watching my heart. They see I'm ready to do the thing, and they give me the money.

Then I went to my sister's husband, he's working, and you know, I'm young, I have no responsibilities, so I lend him the money to fix the house. For my money, what do I need anyway, just my clothes, just to go on picnics, nightclubs, like this. But I like to go to Vodou, to the Vodou service, that was before my marriage. I always love it, the drums, you know, because the roots was there, but I don't understand it. I used to go there when the drums played, I drank, and went into a trance, and some people say, "Be careful, they want to get you!"

And then when I had the money I went to my aunt, I don't know if she expected me, but you know, it's the money, I explain. I went there to make the deal about what it's going to cost me for the two spirits. Well, she says, give me so

and so. And the marriage is where my sister lives, on Rue St. Honoré. It was [in] somebody's room.

And I give [the proprietor] money for the two weddings. The first marriage is with Dantò. I prepared the fried *kofa*, fried bananas, black beans and rice, peanuts, and a special big cake for Dantò.

- MH: What color is the cake for Danto?
- GR: The cake is very brown, it's about this color [GR points to his arm]. It's a special cake. It's a peasant cake, very rough. But with good savour, good flavor, a special cake, I remember what she said was black beans, and rice, and fried bananas, and very hot sauce. Because she's hot, very *picklés*, very hot sauce.

Then I made some sandwiches. Oh, she was so happy. She was very glad she came. Green scarf, green, and I have two gold chains. And I don't know at the start, but I decide to put two...my sister was there. So was my godfather, my godmother, and my paper certificate, my wedding certificate...very serious.... With the witness testimonial, people all sign, the assistants sign. The priest says: "Are you ready to be received, to be married to the Madam Ezili Dantò from l'Afrique Ginen?"

"Yes, I accept [her] to be my wife."

"Are you ready to respect her day?"

"Yes, I am ready."

"So you know, Madam Ezili Dantò, are you ready to get your engagement with Mr. Georges René as your husband? So what day please you give with him?"

The priest says "I don't know." [GR laughs] He says that it's dangerous if you don't respect the day, mister, Umph. [GR makes the gesture of a knife cutting off his head.]

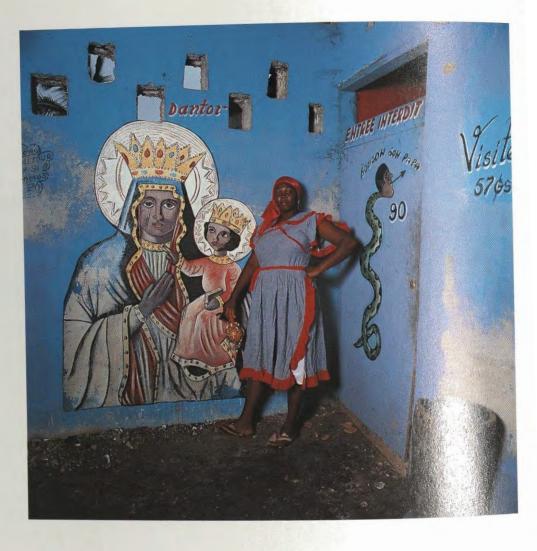
And that was on Tuesday, my first marriage. That's the day she choose, because they tell me the day. She says, "Tuesday for me. All the rest is for you." [GR puts on a high, other-wordly sort of voice.] When I talk like this, she didn't talk like that. That's been when she goes, another spirit comes to tell me the message.

MH: Who is the messenger?

GR: The messenger was Charles Ogou. Ogou comes in the head of my aunt after the wedding, to tell me that [Danto] is very happy. She kiss me all over. She said, tomorrow morning, to take all the food [on the table for the service] back because she leaves her soul in all this. She has blessed all the food. Take it in a big *kivet*, a big



**11.12.** Painting of Ezili Freda by unknown artist, probably used as altar decoration. Oil on masonite. 61.4 x 50.6 cm. FMCH X94.53.29.



**11.13.** Manbo by a large-scale Dantor [Danto] and child. Port-au-Prince. Photograph, Phyllis Galembo, June 1993.

porcelain pan, each thing from the wedding...And she says to everybody, "The husband first." She put the food in my mouth, I put it in her mouth. That was beautiful (emphatically). This is *amour*. This is love.

It is very *ro-man-tique*, and this is part of my Ezili, it is very sentimental...and when people see me they say, "Georges, be careful you don't turn out to be a faggot, to be gay." Well, listen, the way I act sometimes, I'm very fast. The spirits have me, they make me beautiful, they say they love me. And this is good luck. And now, well, let me finish to tell you then Dantò spit in the water and that's part of her blessing. And she distribute all the food to all the persons she invite. Just like a wedding.

MH: So how many people were there; maybe twenty?

GR: Oh, twenty people? There were about one hundred people! Because I'm very fresh. I have money. And I do something and she likes what she has (she was very deep, very thirsty for me). She says, yes, she's very happy, she's very proud. Give them the food, give them, yes, but if someone tries to cross her, if someone is not clean, you know...

When a girl comes to talk to me, Dantò was like this [angry, imperious look]: "Finish with me, and then when I go, you talk to them. You belong to me now. Today is my day. You have just married with me."

Now...the messenger Ogou tell me, "Don't you see all these things she do?" And asks me to be careful. And tells me already that she's dangerous, very jealous.

MH: So this is which Ogou who comes to do this?

GR: This is called St. Charles. You don't know, it's called Charles Ogou. He's from O Caye La Caye. A very good Ogou. He loves children. He helps people very good. She says she has to meet in her kingdom in her *royaume*. Dantò says I'm going to my kingdom, you know, where she's coming from — the bush, the rich forest — she has to be with her kids. That's what the messenger tell me.

And then Ogou comes and says, "Well, my friend, Georges, my son, the *bagay* [thing] was beautiful. Madam very happy. She said she's going to work with you together, she's going to protect you. After that, she said, do not bother nobody. If anybody try to bother you, they will be in trouble with her. She says, as long as you're innocent, you're going to have money, you're going to have success, you're going to have love, but you must always respect the spirits, until you die. Now, what you're going to do is you're going to buy your things, my altar, *rogatoire*, and buy the image, and then I'll bring the thing." My aunt prepares the lamp for me. That was after the marriage.... (Now I'm going to establish myself in my place, but I'm going to have some tribulation....)

After this, that was Freda, the same month. I make offerings for Freda, too. Because I bring them both money. I make Dantò on Tuesday, and on Thursday I make Freda.

- MH: In the same month?
- GR: Yes, in the same month. It's very fast. It took one week. So, for example, I do one on Tuesday, and a week later on Wednesday I bring everything for Freda.

And, the morning after the wedding, I take it back, with all the fruit. Because Danto's blessing the water, she puts some champagne in the water, some beer, because there was a lot to drink. Only run she didn't put. She cut all the fruit she put and she spit on it, she bless it, and as I'm saying she says, the next morning, early, when it's cool, and I say my prayer to the candle, and she says, "I'm with you." So this is my Dantò thing....

- MH: What about the ring, did you buy the ring?
- GR: Yes, well, I buy the ring. Everything was bought. I bought the ring.
- MH: And this was the gold ring?
- GR: No, that was the silver ring for her. And the gold one it was for Freda. And she put my ring on, like any woman would, you know....
- MH: And this is your aunt who did the ceremony?
- GR: Yes. And Dantò, well Dantò-Onadi. So then I say to her, "I am very intelligent," and I told her, "There is no contract. Your spirit, if I can be forever with you, if I can be in your kingdom."

But I become a sickness of that spirit. I would really like to become invisible, me, to see how much good she do for me. But sometimes, you know, when I drink too much, they don't like that, because they need me. These were the days of love. It's too **11.14.** Libation bottle for Ezili Dantò. Glass, fabric, sequins, cork, faux pearls, metallic cord, tbread. Height, 52.5 cm. FMCH X94.76.19.



"spirit" for me. When I went to Freda in the next week, it was not as beautiful. And Freda was more jealous — Freda very fresh, you know, like nobody cross her.

I ask her, well how come you married me, [since] I'm black, you white? [Since] you so prejudiced?

She said "No, I'm not prejudiced, I don't like people who smells bad. You smell good." This is Freda. And she kiss all the men.

**11.15.** Libation bottles for Ezili. Left: silk, cotton thread, ribbon, paper. Height, 26 cm. Right: glass, cotton fabric, sequins, beads, thread. Height, 28.6 cm. FMCH X94.55.11A,B. MH: Oh really?

GR: Oh yes, when she comes, she kiss all the men. And all the women say, they are sisters, they say, "You are *bousen*, hot pepper, prostitute, *bousen*, hot girl," this is Freda.

And I said to Freda, "Listen, Dantò is not like you, she's a working girl."

She say, "I don't care for her." Freda talk Creole, like I am talking (not like Dantò). She say, "I love men."

I say "But I am just married with you here — you kiss all these men!" Yes, I said that.

She goes like this (in high voice), "Don't be so jealous! You know I love all these men. I love to be around them."

Yeah, that's Freda, believe it or not! Then I pretend to show her my corrected face. I say, "I jealous. I'm very jealous."

She wants to make my spirit happy, she takes me seriously now. She say, "Excuse me darling, *chéri*, don't be jealous. I will take care of you, I will do everything you want, I love you, don't be jealous." And she says, "I know them before you." She said that.

The assistant there said "Don't be so jealous!" But I have to be jealous of her. You see?

- MH: So she likes men?
- GR: Oh yes. Dantò, she's kind of ....
- MH: Like you said, more working woman. She has children that she takes care of in the forest....
- GR: And in business, she was pig [seller]. She sells pig. She's a machann griyo. But Freda is a jewelry seller, perfume.
- MH: Ahh, a jewelry seller, and perfume seller. She does her nails? Did you have perfume at the marriage to Freda?
- GR: That was "Pompeii." And Dantò was the Florida water.
- MH: So what foods did you have for Freda. She had a cake?
- GR: Freda? No, for Freda I have fruit. I have apple, orange, banana you know, I do this for Dantò too to make the preparation. And the rice and milk, called *du riz au lait*, just like cafe au lait. You know, rice and milk.
- MH: About Dantò --- she never speaks when she comes, she just does sign language? You

know, she makes motions and gestures?

- GR: And she's talking, in a dialect, you know, the African dialect.
- MH: One other thing I wanted to ask you was about the people that wear one ring soldered inside the other when they're married to both of them (the Ezilis). And I think one time you told me that that was because they didn't want everyone to know that they were married to both.
- GR: Yes, these people they are very complex.
- MH: Which hand do you wear which one on, because I see you are always switching...
- GR: My right hand. Both of them (the rings). But sometimes they want to be separate. I think Dantò is more left. And that Freda is more right.
- MH: O.K., so you wear the gold most of the time on the right hand. And Dantò most of the time on the left. But sometimes if you wear them together you wear them just on the right?
- GR: Yes, but the best way is to separate them.
- MH: So that's the way they're happiest, with one ring on each hand?
- GR: They are very opposite. Dantò is so tough.... And there's one thing you should know. Dantò, she's a lesbian.
- MH: Dantô's a lesbian? Well then how come you have an affection for her? She loves men too, doesn't she?
- GR: She loves men, yeah, but she's lesbian.... She's marrying me, but she sleeps with women.
- MH: Both? She sleeps with men and she sleeps with women? Well then she's bisexual. But then,...a woman won't marry Danto unless she's a lesbian...?
- GR: No. She might like you, she'll protect you, but she's not going to marry you.

There's two systems. One is power, the other is love. Power is Dantò, Freda is love.

Thursday, April 1, 1993, Carrefour, Port-au-Prince.



11.16. Ezili Dantò on the wall of oungan César's temple in Bizonton. Photograph, Donald Cosentino, November 1994.