

DÉJÀ VIEWED

The Haitian Film Festival does the voodoo that they do so well

review Melora Koepke

Though the voodoo priestess with the come-hither stare pictured on the flyer for the fourth annual Haitian Film Festival might turn off as many people as it turns on, there's still lots of allure in this year's program. The festival started yesterday with invites-only gala screenings of two films: **Comment apprendre à dire bonjour en dix étapes**, about a Haitian immigrant named Dieudonné and his de souche neighbour Pierre, and of **Minuit**, a film by actress Fabienne Colas, about voodoo happening right here in Montreal. That's right! The undead apparently walk the streets of our city all week as the festival focuses on the theme of voodoo (or the religion of Vodoun, or Vaudou, as it is sometimes called) in various filmic events, at an exhibition at Galerie Mosaikart, and even during a panel discussion

starring voodoo specialists from Haiti and Quebec.

There's a lively program of films being shown at the NFB St-Denis, the Cinéma du Parc and the Guzzo theatre on Lacordaire Blvd., many but not all of which are voodoo-themed. These include a serious documentary about child murder and sacrifice by Thanassos Papacostas called **Zombie**; **Brooklyn Racine**, about a revival of djarara music on the streets of Brooklyn; and **Coup de foudre**, a Montreal-made drama about an anti-government sociologist and an uneducated seamstress, both from Haiti, who fall in love in Montreal. Another voodoo-centric doc is **Memoire Voodoo**, about a 70-year-old Swiss woman who emigrates to Port-au-Prince and ends up with the largest collection of voodoo



DEAD MEN WALKING: GHOSTS OF CITÉ SOLEIL

objects in the world.

Saints and spirits aside, the real force of evil in modern-day Haiti was the gangs of President Aristide's henchmen who ruled the streets, as documented in *Ghosts of Cité Soleil* the slickster doc by Asger Leth that stars Wyclef Jean and his brother, and came out in 2006. (C)

Montreal International Haitian Film Festival

At various venues, Sept. 17–21

For more info:

www.festivalfilmhaitien.com