

ART AND SOCIAL ACTION

Music and Mobilization

Kombit Pou Haiti 2010

Chuck D and Gaye Theresa Johnson

The only way we'll get freedom for ourselves is to [remember that we are] blood brothers to the people of Brazil, Venezuela, Haiti and Cuba.

—MALCOLM X

The crises facing aggrieved communities all around the world are generating not only new works of expressive culture, but also new social relations guiding their production, distribution and reception. Our work with *Kombit Pou Haiti 2010* exemplifies this process.

Kombit Pou Haiti 2010 was a project born of three acknowledgments:

First was that the earthquake in Haiti, one of a long line of tragedies affecting this nation and its people, also constitutes an opportunity, a window, to lay bare the history of abuse and neglect of the well-being of Haiti and its people. This opportunity has been presented to us many times in the past, and while some artists, activists, and scholars have labored to maintain a clear view through this window into the problems attendant on the region, not nearly enough action has resulted to impact Haiti meaningfully in a sustained way.

Second was that the future of Haiti, if it is to be a positive and productive and meaningful future, is reliant on the compassion and purpose that individuals and groups bring to collective endeavors.

Third was that much of the “help for Haiti” initiated in the weeks after the earthquake, both in its nature and its implementation, duplicated some of the

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Kalfou, Volume 1, Issue 1 (Spring 2014). © 2014 by the Regents of the University of California. ISSN 2151-4712 (print). ISSN 2372-0751 (online). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15367/kf.v1i1.15>. All rights reserved.

