

Dr. Anne Lafont

Tying, publicizing, adorning: The buttons of Toussaint Louverture



The legend and reality of the 18 buttons kept at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum in New York force us to take a close look at their making in the latter part of the eighteenth century Caribbean and in the light of one of its most illustrious black personalities: Toussaint Louverture, pioneer of the Haitian revolution, emancipated slave, ally of the European powers, deposed prisoner and captured by Napoleon Bonaparte's armies, who died in exile in a French dungeon. The function, iconography, medium and biographical fortune of this series of buttons inform an exceptional history where Caribbean, French and American figures intersect over two centuries. Unfolding the panoply of buttons and following their phenomenology, on a formal and social levels, from manufacture to use, is to write a piece of the history of art of the Black Atlantic.



Wednesday, December 7, 6pm

Freeman Auditorium, Woldenberg Art Center