

## APT LATIN AMERICA CHAPTER

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Olsen is an engineer-architect. He is specialized in Conservation of Monuments and Cultural Properties and Construction Project management.

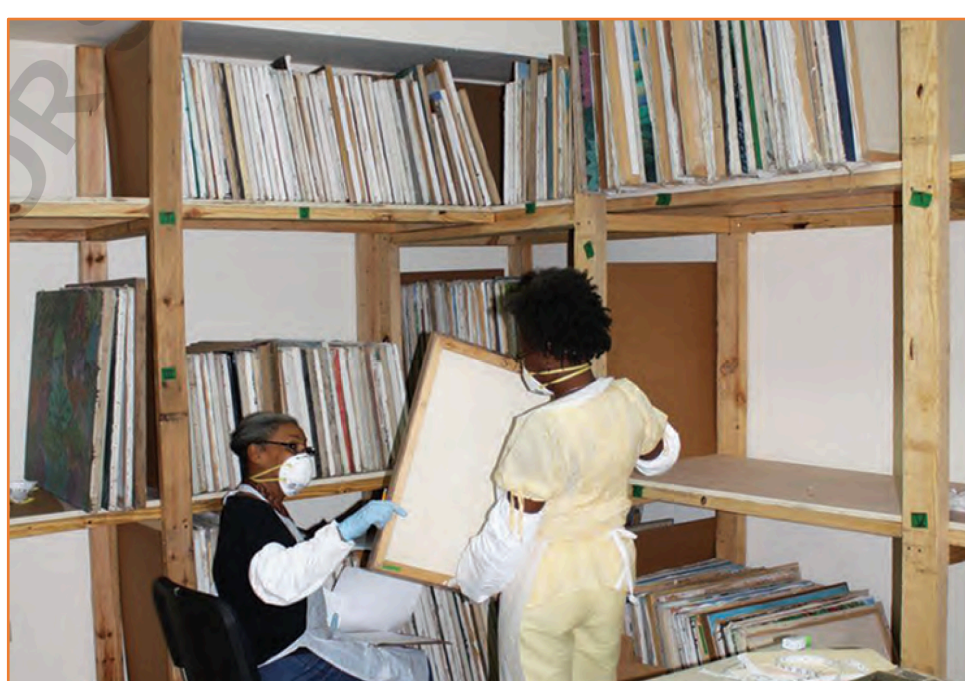
He served as Haiti's Minister of Culture and Communication (2008-2009) and also as Director of the Smithsonian-Haiti Cultural Recovery Center that helped save Haiti's cultural heritage endangered by the earthquake of January 12, 2010.

Professor at the State University of Haiti and at Quisqueya University, he has received many awards including the UNESCO Medal of the five continents (2009) for his commitment to the protection of Haiti's cultural heritage and the Smithsonian Institution Gold Medal for Exemplary Service (2011).

He is now the Director of the Quisqueya University Center for the Conservation of Cultural Properties (CCC) and Director of PHENIXIENCE, an architecture and engineering company.



## Haiti Cultural Recovery Project



A catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, killed more than 250,000 people, left over 1.5 million homeless and destroyed much of the nation's infrastructure. It also devastated Haiti's rich cultural heritage. Historic buildings, museums, libraries, archives, galleries, churches, theaters, artists' workshops and marketplaces were damaged and ruined. Thanks to many brave and concerned Haitians, some cultural collections were saved, but most were stored in poor conditions and many are still under the rubble.

Haitians rightly value their cultural heritage as a source of identity and dignity. It is a legacy of freedom and creativity that gives the Haitian people the resilience to survive and the promise of a better life. Most of Haiti's cultural heritage was endangered. The Haitian government has joined with the Smithsonian and international organizations for the Cultural Recovery Project.

The Project aimed to rescue, safeguard and preserve Haiti's important collections of art, artifacts, museum objects, architectural features, documents, film, photographs and video and sound recordings. The project equipped a Cultural Recovery Center with labs and experts to help stabilize and restore art, objects, paper and other media. Some experts helped pull cultural materials from the rubble; others helped train Haitians in conservation work. A committee of Haitian cultural leaders helped prioritize collections to be saved, with the permission of the owners or stewards of those materials.

With this methodology the project was able to save more the 35000 Haitian cultural artifacts and build a permanent cultural conservation center.