

# *Cultural Evolution?*

## *Migration, Hybridity, & Multiculturalism*

curated by Cecilia L. Vargas



Larry Lee

*(Un)Timely Death of Multiculturalism*, 2011

Performance documentation



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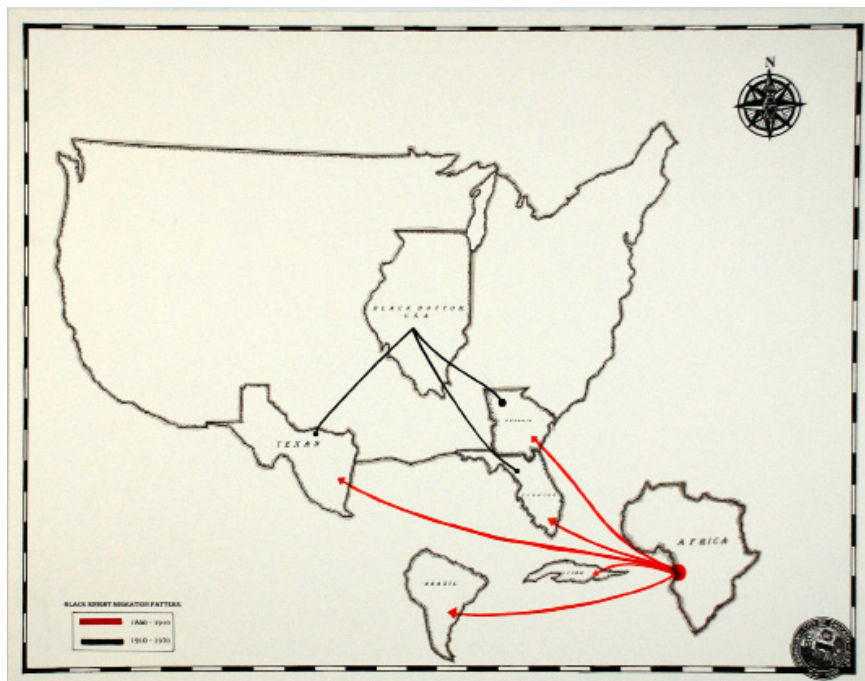
## *Migration, Hybridity, & Multiculturalism*

Waubonsee Community College presents *Cultural Evolution? Migration, Hybridity, & Multiculturalism*, a group exhibition curated by Cecilia L. Vargas featuring artists Ian Weaver, Gwenn-Aëli Lynn and Larry Lee. This exhibition seeks to encourage critical thinking about history, cultural inheritance and terms/ideas that have been used to talk about/categorize/approach multiple cultural identities.

**Ian Weaver's** current project centers on the Near West Side of Chicago, a large multi-ethnic community, specifically the "Black Bottom" area where black residents once lived. The various parts of the Near West Side and the Bottom were destroyed to construct an expressway and a university; as a result, the community lost much of its history. Weaver constructed a fictive history for this community, including a fictional group – the Black Knights, who apparently lived within the "Black Bottom" community, circa 1940s. The Black Knights (part medieval knight, part Black Nationalist) used political, social, and guerrilla tactics to fight for the survival of the community.

Weaver is interested in the concept of how we, as individuals, communities and societies construct our own narratives, identities, and memories through our commemorations. His works use the idea that individual and collective memory, and identity unfold within a non-linear fractured narrative. Various formal approaches including purposefully missing information are used to emphasize this concept of fracture. These histories tell stories that occupy specific time periods, but (because of the subjective nature of memory and history) also travel backward and forward into and out of our own time.

**Gwenn-Aëli Lynn's** work focuses on sound and smell to critically respond to notions of creolization (mixed culture, gender, language). This is the first showing of Lynn's interactive sound and smell installation, *Audiolfactory Creolization*. This piece was created over the past four years and includes numerous collaborations with perfumers, musicians/sound engineers and interviewees. Participants who self-identified as 'hybrid' (cultural, gender, etc.) were interviewed about



Ian Weaver

*The Black Knight Migration, 2010*

Acrylic ink and transfer on paper

22" x 28"

smell-memories that they have associated with their identity. Lynn's work also includes sculptural elements; shells made of rice paper mache (hariko). The exteriors display reproductions of noses and ears of the participants, and the interiors emit sounds and smells.

Lynn, dissatisfied with the term hybrid, prefers creolization as a word expressing the 'mixed' experience.' The word 'hybrid' originates from the biological sciences and is typically understood as

the cross breeding of different species or plants, often through human manipulation. Lynn's reference of the term hybrid comes from Homi Bhabha's definition established in the 1990s. Rather than agreeing with a binary system (the offspring of two entities), Lynn argues for a creolization (the way that Edouard Glissant defined it, more of an intercultural process).

Lynn uses the term creolization, especially because it allows for a "multiplicity, a mixture where the different parts remain autonomous, a place of endless permutation. It speaks of a process, of something in constant flux, instead of just two parts synthesized into one."\*

Ian Weaver  
*Black Power Helmet*, 2009  
Aluminum  
18" x 9" x 12"  
Edition of 3



Ian Weaver  
*Black Knight Gauntlets*, 2010  
Aluminum with Gold  
Leaf  
6" x 6 ½" x 12" (approx.)  
Edition of 5





Gwenn-Aël Lynn

*Audiolfactory Creolization*, 2009-13

Interactive installation

Dimensions variable



Photo Credit: Sarah Baranski, Photo Coordinator @ WCC



\* For further reading:  
<http://badatsports.com/2011/accents-on-the-hyphen-gwenn-ael-lynn-on-hybridity/>



Photo Credit: Sarah Baranski, Photo Coordinator @ WCC

**Larry Lee's** work the *(Un)Timely Death of Multiculturalism* is represented here through the video documentation and a prop from a previous performance. The video provides a glimpse of the funeral created commemorating the passing of the term Multiculturalism. In the video we see the term referenced through the prop (large scale text that spells Multiculturalism), the ghost of multiculturalism that appears here and there in the video (including inside the coffin), a buffet of various kinds of food, and a panel of interpreters. Lee orchestrates a funeral complete with eulogy and funerary procession.

He defines the term and identifies its criticisms. The concept allows us to respect and accept each other with our differences instead of presume assimilation to a dominant Anglo culture

Larry Lee

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(a salad bowl rather than a melting pot approach to cultural harmony). Lee's piece raises the criticisms of Multiculturalism, as this utopian experiment failed. His gesture raises many questions including – now what?

**Cecilia L. Vargas** brought these artists together to include the audience as we analyze where we have been and where we are going within the scope of cultural identity. Vargas seeks to ask questions about how we function together within multiplicity in a continuously more globalized world. Certainly assimilation into a homogenous culture (where all of our unique qualities, languages and traditions are erased) is not the answer. Simultaneously, much of our cultural history contains gaps, blurs, and misinformation. This exhibition asks us to engage with the ideas presented here and to contemplate how we are to fruitfully function together within cultural multiplicity.





## Artists Bios

**Ian Weaver** currently lives and works in Chicago. He received his M.F.A. from Washington University in St. Louis and his B.A. in liberal arts from Columbia College Chicago. Weaver's artwork has been featured at venues including the Kennesaw State University (Atlanta, GA), Art Miami (Miami, FL), Cue Art Foundation (New York, NY) and Illinois State Museum (Springfield, IL). His work has also been widely shown in Chicago at venues including Packer Schopf, University of Illinois at Chicago, Hyde Park Art Center, North Park University, ArtExpo Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University. Additionally, his work has been featured in St. Louis at the Saint Louis Art Museum, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum and White Flag Projects. Notably, Weaver's work has been included in the public collections at The Block Museum at Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and The South Bend Museum of Art (South Bend, IN). You can find Weaver's solo exhibition "Migration" at the Chicago Cultural Center in the fall of 2014.

**Gwenn-Aël Lynn** frequently travels and participates in artist residencies around the world while maintaining his tie to the U.S. He currently lives and works in Chicago. Lynn received his M.F.A. from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, his D.E.A. (master's degree) in fine arts from the Sorbonne University (Paris, France) and his B.F.A. from University of Southern California. His work has been exhibited at a number of venues including Klaipedia Culture Communication Centre (Klaipedia, Lithuania), SERDE (Aizpute, Latvia), Stiftung-kunstlerdorf (Schöppingen, Germany), National Galleries of Indonesia (Jakarta, Indonesia), Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris (Paris, France), De Overslag (Eindhoven, Holland), The Hatch Gallery (Venice, CA) and University of Southern California (Los Angeles, CA). Lynn's work has also been featured at numerous local Chicago venues and on the Web via interactive online art.

[gwennaellynn.com](http://gwennaellynn.com)

**Michel Roudnitska:** [art-et-parfum.com](http://art-et-parfum.com)

**Benjamin F. Carney:** [benfcarney.com](http://benfcarney.com)

**Christophe Gilmore AKA Fluid:** [alrealon.co.uk/fluid.html](http://alrealon.co.uk/fluid.html)

**Travis:** [travistravis.com](http://travistravis.com)

**Larry Lee** currently lives and works in Chicago. He received his M.F.A. in sculpture from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and his B.F.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Lee's artwork has been featured in Chicago at venues such as Charnel House, Columbia College Chicago, mn gallery, Joymore, Korean Cultural Center of Chicago, Slow, University of Illinois at Chicago, Heaven Gallery, Gallery 312, South Shore Cultural Center, Chicago Cultural Center, and in Evanston at the Evanston Arts Center and the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. Additional venues include the SPACELab (Cleveland, OH), Asian Arts Initiative (Philadelphia, PA), Chinese Culture Center (San Francisco, CA), SUNY (Old Westbury, NY), Number 35 (New York, NY), University of Texas at Dallas (Dallas, TX), artSPACE (New Haven, CT), Diverseworks (Houston, TX), Free Gallery (Glasgow, Scotland) and University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI).

[larryleechicago.com](http://larryleechicago.com)

#### **Curator Bio**

**Cecilia Leonora Vargas** currently lives in Chicago and works as Art Coordinator at Waubensee Community College's Sugar Grove Campus. Vargas received a dual M.A. in art history, theory and criticism as well as in arts administration and policy from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She also holds a B.F.A. in painting and printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has curated a number of exhibitions at various venues including Dominican University (River Forest, IL), Los Caminos (St. Louis, MO), and venues in Chicago such as the Built Festival, What It Is and the Boomerang Space at SAIC. Furthermore, Vargas co-organized the MDW Fair within the Version 11 Festival and co-curated exhibitions at Pointbridge Projects, Sullivan Galleries at SAIC, Allrise Gallery and Monkey Business Gallery.

## Gwenn-Aël Lynn thanks all of the people who helped make his project possible!

### Collaborators:

Scents: Christophe Laudamiel and Michel Roudnitska.  
Sound engineering: Benjamin F. Carney.  
Audio tracks: Christophe Gilmore AKA FluiD, Rebecca Pavlatos, Travis.

### Interviewees:

Adrienne Dawes, Kelsang Drago, Amanda Gutierrez, Tanzin Jemyang, K-Joe, Shalaka Kulkarni, Diego Leclery, Luis Nasser, Evan Plummer, J. Frank Santana, Hui-Min Tsen, Dion Walton.

### Olfactory Workshop participants:

Sebastian Alvarez, Evan Plummer, Samantha Hill.

### Participants in nose and ear casting:

Sebastian Alvarez, James Britt Jr., César Condé, Samantha Hill, Nadia Hotait, Paul Hopkin, Bryant Koger, James Earl Lynn, Shirin Mozaffari, Evan Plummer, Patrick “Q” Quilao, J. Frank Santana, Eric Winfield.



“This project is partially supported by a Community Arts Assistance Program grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.”

Lynn extends a special thanks to his father for supporting his project all along in *oh so many ways*, Gabriel Akagawa for pointing him towards hariko (japanese paper mache technique), and all the folks at Waubonsee Community College, especially Cecilia L. Vargas.

**We all extend a big *THANK YOU* to Waubonsee Community College departments and individuals including but not limited to:**

### Art Department:

Sarah Baranski, Esther Espino, Cynthia Sparr, Martine Stuckey, Virginia Roldan.

### Campus Operations Department:

Dave McKinney, Derek Winkler, Jeff Zedonis, Barry Zokan.

### Information Technology Department:

Timm Gyoerkoes, Tim Kjaer, and an extra special thanks to John La Maide.

### Marketing and Communications Department:

Neil Ruffolo, Todd Schanbacher, Ann Smith, Stephanie Wennmacher.

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## *Migration, Hybridity, & Multiculturalism*

June 7 – July 26, 2013

### Featured Artists:

Ian Weaver  
Gwenn-Aël Lynn  
Larry Lee

Arrowhead Gallery,  
Dickson Center,  
Waubonsee Community College  
Rt. 47 at Waubonsee Drive  
Sugar Grove, IL 60554

Gallery hours:  
Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 9 p.m.  
Saturday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[www.waubonsee.edu/art](http://www.waubonsee.edu/art)



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