

Vejigante—Puerto Rican Carnival Masks: An Exploration of Caribbean Culture in a Two-day Professional Development Workshop

4130 Wesley W. Posvar Hall

April 1 and 2, 2009

Workshop Description:

The Center for Latin American Studies would like to invite middle school teachers to participate in an exciting exploration of Caribbean culture through the *vejigante* (bay-he-GAHYNTay) tradition of carnival in Puerto Rico.

Vejigante is a fantastic, colorful character that was introduced into carnival celebrations in Puerto Rico hundreds of years ago. He is a classic example of blending of the Indigenous, Spanish, and African influences in Caribbean culture. We will explore the different traditions of *Vejigante* as celebrated in the cities of Ponce and Loiza, Puerto Rico and in the Dominican Republic.

The name *Vejigante* comes from the Spanish word for bladder, *vejiga*. The *Vejigante* inflates a dried cow's bladder and paints it to resemble a balloon. The *Vejigante's* costume is made from scraps of fabric and looks like a clown suit with a cape and bat wings under the arms.



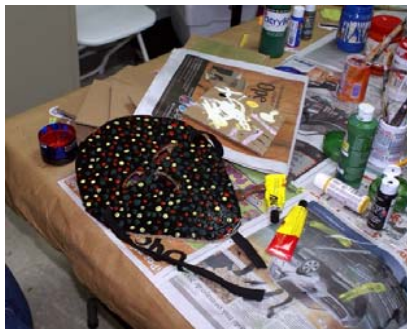
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We invite each teacher to bring **one** of their students with them for the two-day workshop.

Dinner will be provided both evenings.

This two-day workshop will be a hands-on program. Please wear comfortable, working clothes. We will be designing, cutting, pasting and painting masks; creating costumes; and writing short dramas to be acted out. The goal is not to copy the traditional masks but rather to use them as an inspiration to create original versions – with your own story.



Process of making a mask

Because we are limiting the number of participants, pre-registration is required.

To register, please email your name, school, subject, and email address to:

Luz Amanda Hank at lavst12@pitt.edu.

The workshop is approved for six (6) Act 48 credit hours. **In order to receive the credit hours attendance both days is obligatory.**

Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS)

CLAS was established at the University of Pittsburgh in 1964 and is now one of six UCIS area studies centers. CLAS develops and coordinates resources on Latin America and the Caribbean that contribute to training experts on the region through high quality programs of graduate and undergraduate education. CLAS is one of the most outstanding programs of its kind in the nation, designated as a National Resource Center (NRC) on Latin America by the U.S. Department of Education.

As an NRC on Latin America, CLAS provides opportunities for cultural and educational experiences that realistically reflect Latin America and the Caribbean to the K-12 educational community, colleges and universities, business and professional communities as well as the general public as part of its Educational Public Service (Outreach) mission.

Visit us at www.ucis.pitt.edu/clas.



Biography of Dr. Lowell Fiet



The workshop will be conducted by Dr. Lowell Fiet, Department of English, University of Puerto Rico. In addition to teaching, Dr. Fiet is a playwright, author, theater director, and theater critic for the weekly newspaper *Claridad*. He wrote *El teatro puertorriqueño reimaginado: notas críticas sobre la creación dramática y el performance* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2004). He is currently writing a book on the poetics of "cultural performance" in the Caribbean. As if not busy enough, he directs the **MásTaller** (Mas [k] Workshop) in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. As director of **MásTaller**, he works with children and young adults in San Juan as well as Vieques using art and drama to teach about the cultures of the Caribbean Region.



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University of Pittsburgh Center for Latin American Studies (CLAS)



A Professional Development Workshop for Middle School Teachers

Vejigante Puerto Rican Carnival Masks: An Exploration of Caribbean Culture

Wednesday, April 1, 2009
and
Thursday, April 2, 2009
5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

4130 Wesley W. Posvar Hall