

# CULTURE LAB DETROIT

## **CULTURE LAB DETROIT ANNOUNCES NEW PANEL DISCUSSION: “ART AND THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE”**

*Featuring Migguel Anggelo, Kia Arriaga, Rola Nashef, Chido Johnson, and Gracie Xavier*

*Saturday, November 12, 2016 – 1:00 to 3:00PM  
1301 Broadway, Gary Simmons Installation*

**DETROIT (October 27, 2016)** — Culture Lab Detroit, an organization that fosters conversations and collaborations between Detroit and the international art, architecture, and design communities, will hold a special panel discussion on the immigrant experience as part of its 2016 program focused on the theme, “Walls” to take place from **1-3 p.m., November 12, 2016**. The panel also anticipates Culture Lab Detroit’s upcoming performance, in collaboration with the Detroit Institute of Arts, ***Migguel Anggelo and The Immigrants: Another Son of Venezuela***, November 18. “Culture Lab Detroit began with a mission to enrich our community through art, conversation, and collaboration that would explore issues relevant to today’s society,” said CLD Founder Jane Schulak. “Both the panel discussion and the performance strongly resonate with the conversations happening in Detroit and beyond.”

The immigrant experience is embedded within the cultural history of America and remains the focus of global contemporary politics. At a moment when the world contends with a devastating refugee crisis, and the 2016 U.S. presidential election hinges on border policies, the social, political, and economic complexities of immigration have never been more pronounced. This panel discussion was developed as part of Culture Lab Detroit’s 2016 program focused on the theme, “Walls,” which commenced in September with a two night discussion and installation unveiling by world-renowned artist, Gary Simmons. Whether architectural or theoretical, historical or speculative, Culture Lab Detroit brings creative minds together to reconsider the structures which define our lives.

*This panel is free and open to the public.*

### **ABOUT THE PANELISTS**

**Migguel Anggelo** is breaking barriers on the American stage, creating unique works that are reflective of the multicultural, multi-lingual, changing demographics of our country and times. The Brooklyn-based, Venezuelan born artist began his career at 13 as Pinocchio in a South American touring production of the Broadway musical. He trained for a dozen years in classical ballet, studied voice at the Conservatory of Music in Cologne, Germany, has written music throughout all of his journeys as an immigrant in several countries, and has released two

albums, the most recent being, *La Casa Azul* (co-written/produced by musical director, Mau Quiros and mixed by Grammy Award-winner Felipe Tichauer). The collaborative trio of Anggelo, Quiros and Drake are currently at work on a new music-theater work entitled: *The Suitcase Project*, developed in part during a BRICLAB Residency at BRIC (Brooklyn, NY).

**Kia Arriaga** was born in Cuernavaca Morelos, México. She is a blacksmith, designer and object maker. She's also an Aztek dancer, a member of the Aztek group Kalpulli Tlahuikayotl; where she fills a role as an active participant of rescuing the traditional ways of the original people of Mexico. Her main artistic influences are drawn from Aztek culture, religious art, decorative arts and goth subculture and fashion. She has a fascination with making installations, and she has been particularly in love with the Day of the dead Ofrendas from a very young age.

**Chido Johnson** is a Detroit-based artist, the co-founder for the Zimbabwe Cultural Centre in Detroit and a recent Knight Foundation grantee. He is a 2009 Kresge Arts in Detroit Fellow and a 2009 MacDowell Colony Fellow. Johnson was born in Nyadiri, Zimbabwe. He received Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in sculpture in 1996 and painting, with a minor in drawing, in 1997 from the University of Georgia, Athens. He obtained his Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture from the University of Notre Dame, IN in 2000. Currently, he is the Section Chair of Sculpture at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. He has exhibited his work both nationally and internationally.

**Rola Nashef** was born in Lebanon and raised in Michigan, she is a writer, director, producer and multi-media artist who draws upon her experience in the arts and involvement in Detroit's diverse communities as a catalyst for creative expression and social movement. Nashef's debut, award-winning feature, *Detroit Unleaded*, holds its place as the first Arab-American rom-com portraying second generation Arab characters specific to Detroit and Dearborn. Named *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 New Faces of Independent Cinema" (2011), Nashef has received the *Kresge Arts in Detroit Award* (2014) for her long-standing work, and has been awarded the *Adrienne Shelley Director's Award* (2014) for her sophomore feature film, *Nadia's House*, currently in development.

**Gracie Xavier** (moderator) is the Director of Corporate and Economic Development Strategy at Global Detroit, where she works to connect Global Detroit programs and the immigrant talent they serve to Detroit's corporate community and economic development infrastructure. This includes helping to lead the organization's international student retention (GTRI) and skilled immigrant integration initiatives. Gracie received dual degrees in psychology and social work from Florida State University, and a MFA in Community Art from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Recently, Gracie debuted her solo art exhibition at Gallery CA in Baltimore, MD featuring her project, *Cutz: Black Men in Focus*, which seeks to promote positive images of men of color through the lens of the barbershop. Gracie is currently a Detroit Revitalization Fellow, a program of Wayne State University.

## **ABOUT THE CONCERT**

*Miguel Anggelo and The Immigrants: Another Son of Venezuela*

Friday, November 18 | 7:00 pm

The Detroit Institute of Arts

## **ABOUT CULTURE LAB DETROIT**

Culture Lab Detroit fosters conversations and collaborations between Detroit and the international design community. Through public discussions, exhibitions, public art projects, and creative partnerships, Culture Lab Detroit explores and promotes the vital role of culture in the mindful regeneration of the city. The organization was founded by Jane Schulak founded Culture Lab Detroit in 2013, in partnership with the Detroit Creative Corridor Center and the College for Creative Studies.

Culture Lab Detroit's 2016 edition was organized around the theme of WALLS—whether architectural or theoretical, historical or speculative. This year's participants are joined by their interest in reconsidering the structures which define our lives. These artists, architects, and theorists provide groundbreaking alternatives to some of the most entrenched issues of recent times, suggesting new ways to move through a city, to visit a museum, to catalyze social change through art, or to consider the shifting divide between public and private space. Their varied practices will be in conversation against the backdrop of Detroit, addressing issues of empty space, population shifts, urban blight and renewal, and the struggle to define a new environment of collaboration and respect.

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