

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Wendy C. Ortiz & Kristina Wong are Awesome

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, January 8th, 2014

And just like that, it's already nearing the end of the *second* week of 2014. How do I know? Because there will be a bunch of drunk bridge-and-tunnel folk (yes, every major city has a bridge and tunnel crowd, no actual bridge and tunnel required) stumbling around the neighborhood for ArtWalk, talking too loud and making life miserable for all my bartender friends by ordering Long Island Iced Tea and leaving shit tip. Without this, I would actually not know that we were nearing the start of the *third* week of the new year.

I am just starting to go through a month of unanswered emails from writers whose books we are supposed to put out and publishers we owe checks to from DT•LAB and friends who were just checking in. My head feels so much clearer this week than it has in a while, but there's still a lot of catching up to do.

In the meantime, it's been really good to spend some quiet personal time with some of my favorite people.

[Wendy C. Ortiz](#) and Sandy Lee (and their amazing daughter Octavia) invited us over for dinner. They are such great people and I felt such joy hanging out with them, eating the delicious food they made, and talking about dinosaurs and literary shenanigans and everything in between. In case you don't know, Wendy is about to win 2014. She has two books scheduled to be published, one by Writ Large Press and another by [Future Tense](#), has a column on [McSweeney's](#), and is celebrating 10 years of her reading series, [Rhapsodomancy](#).

I love Wendy. I love Sandy. And Octavia—I'm still blown away by her dinosaur expertise. Mindblowing. Oh, and Wendy will be reading at [Bluebird!](#) With other brown writers! (Seriously, it's fucking depressing how *rare* this is. We writers and artists don't want to admit the role we play in segregating and gentrifying. As long as we get our time on stage, I guess, we'll just keep our mouths shut and play along. Fuck this shit. End of mini-rant.)

Her book, *Hollywood Notebook*, will be published by Writ Large Press toward the end of 2014. Her other book, *Excavation: A Memoir*, will be published by Future Tense this summer.

Another writer/performer/artist that I got to meet with was [Kristina Wong](#). Yes, the [superstar rapper](#) (in Uganda). The person who gave the greatest TV interview of all time.

[embedvideo id="rmH0XaG4deA" website="youtube"]

I met her when she hosted [Tuesday Night Cafe](#) last year. We were just about to open DT•LAB and it got us talking about space. And when she started looking for a place to present some of her experience in Uganda, we jumped in.

Basically, all of us at Writ Large Press have decided we'll work with Kristina in any capacity on any project. We are HUGE fans. *HUGE!*

So toward the end of February, DT•LAB will work with Kristina in producing a presentation. It will be at the FKA loft at the Santa Fe Lofts. It will be a fundraiser, with everyone who donates and attends will get a free download of Kristina's debut rap album, with all proceeds benefit Nerio Badman's music studio in Gulu, Uganda.

There you have it for this week. It was a good week, a good way to try and get my head back into things, finding camaraderie and inspiration among ridiculously talented artists.

Next week: how our 2nd Annual [Grand Park BookFest](#) planning is going.

photo of Wendy C. Ortiz by Sandy Lee

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