

## Kasfir Delivers C.L.R. James Lecture At St. Lawrence

By Tanya R. Parrott

"Although the British colonized both Kenya and Nigeria at about the same time, their understanding of warriors and warriorhood in the two places was markedly different," Sidney Kasfir said at the fourth annual C.L.R. James lecture on Monday, Nov. 15, entitled "Sensuality and Violence: Representations of Warriorhood in Colonial Africa."

Kasfir said: "West Africa was popularly described in early 20th century British newspapers as the 'White Man's Grave' due to its unhealthy climate and the prevalence of malaria and blackwater fever. Warriorhood there was closely associated with the view of Africa as bloody, savage and dangerous. This representation [of warriors] focused on head-hunting in particular, the very word itself suggesting a bizarre kind of sport."

The British believed, she said, that East Africa had a better climate. "Kenya, especially the central highlands, was depicted as a kind of paradise... Europeans greatly admired

the Maasai warriors and saw them as the epitome of the 'noble savage,'" she said.

The British viewed the Maasai of East Africa differently than other ethnic groups because they felt a connection with the Maasai, Kasfir said.

"The upper white classes in colonial Africa saw the Maasai as... more like themselves than other Africans were." This was not only because of similar attitudes, she said, but also because of a physical similarity.

"Slender and often delicately boned, frequently straight-nosed and thin-lipped, they exhibited the languid grace and physical features which Europeans associated with their own aristocracy and contrasted with the short and sturdy peasantry on both continents," Kasfir said.

Kasfir then contrasted the British views of the Maasai with their views of a West African society: the Idoma of Nigeria. She said: "Until a warrior brought home an enemy head, he was not considered ready for marriage. Head-winning then was the main rite

of passage to social manhood" for the Idoma.

Kasfir said that this practice, as well as the ritual masquerades performed by the Idoma, greatly upset the British and affected their perception of the Idoma. "There is no way they could look in the mirror and see themselves in anything Idoma," she said.

As she spoke, Kasfir projected slides showing recent pictures taken of Africa and its inhabitants. She also played a video of an Idoma masquerade.

After the lecture, Kasfir entertained questions from the audience.

About 45 students and faculty members attended the C.L.R. James lecture. As she introduced Kasfir, Patricia Alden, Professor of English, said the lecture "is one of the high points in the academic year for faculty and students in African studies."

According to Alden, who is a member of the African Studies Board, Kasfir was chosen by the Board to give the C.L.R. James lecture be-

cause of her recognized achievements in the field of African studies.

"We try to seek distinguished African scholars," Alden said. "African studies at St. Lawrence is very identified with history and government and we're trying to make sure that culture" is also stressed.

Kasfir is a professor of Art History at Emory University in Atlanta. She received her Ph.D. from SOAS, the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Kasfir is originally from Maine. She has taught at Dartmouth College and lived in New Hampshire. She spent the last six months researching in Kenya.

Though this was the fourth official C.L.R. James lecture, according to Alden, the series began in the 1980s. It was named in honor of C.L.R. James, noted cultural historian and author just four years ago.

Past C.L.R. James lecturers have included George Lamming, Martin Bernal, and Gregson Davis.

## Navia Concludes Dramatic Career At SLU Successfully

### "The Nature Of My Game," Receives Rave Reviews From SLU Community

By Heather Wright

The completion and deliverance of Larry Navia's ('94) production, *The Nature of My Game* earned a standing ovation before he even left the stage at the Edson Miles Black Box Theatre of St. Lawrence University Thursday night, November 18.

Many people in the audience were laughing and crying at the same time as they applauded Navia's triumph at

expressing his experiences and reflecting on his years at St. Lawrence college life.

Sun Park ('95) said he attended the performance both Wednesday and Thursday nights. "The message [Navia] had in the play, I've talked about a lot with my friends, and I think he has incredible integrity for being able to put that message into playwriting form," Park said.

In his performance notes, Navia said he had spent about eight months forming the piece, but had the idea since his first year at St. Lawrence. "A one man show is really the only way I feel pulls together some aspects of what I have learned in my time" at school, Navia explained. "Writing and performing a reflection on my journey through Larry Land helps give me a sense of closure that I need as I move closer to the realities of the working world after my graduation in December."

Corrin Cramer ('96), who acted as light master for the performance, said "It was amazing to see the growth the show went through in the short time that I was involved with it. In the space of a week, the show had matured so much."

Robyn Munn ('94) said "I think what I liked most was that he said things other students always thought but never had the guts to say. He actually put himself on the line and I could tell that it was a personal triumph for him."

Aside from giving his own message to the audience about things such as drinking, dating and depression and college life, Navia juxtaposed additional text by William Shakespeare in hopes to "dispel the myths and anxieties that surround his work" and also because he "found Shakespeare's words to be the best vehicle through which one can express" one's self.

"I thought the Shakespeare was exquisite because it flowed well," said Sun Park. "It seemed like an extension of his own thoughts."

"He was very honest," said Tegan Hamilton ('94). "I believe he ex-

pressed feelings that a lot of people at this school have. It takes a lot to open up like that with so much confidence. The way he would walk up to people in the audience and look them in the eye was powerful."

"There was no buffer between the audience and Larry," said Daniel Notkin ('95). "He was the audience... a mirror and recording of our lives."

Navia said he was relieved and triumphant about his performance and is glad that it was so well received. Now, he says he has a lot more work to get done in order to complete his project. In his performance notes, Navia said "I have had many conversations with other students who are either struggling with many of these issues, now or have struggled with them in the past. At the very least I hope this performance will shed some light on these issues and put them on a level that they can be talked about."

Sure enough, Navia said, after going out after his performances several people have wanted to confide in him

## Campbell College Creates Gallery Installation on Autobiography

First-year students in Campbell College are creating a variety of works, including artist books, installations, altars, sculptures and videos for an exhibition entitled "Memory and Imagination: The Art of Autobiography" that will be in the Richard F. Brush Art Gallery from December 8 through 17. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, December 8, at 5 p.m.; the event is open to the public.

The exhibition is a project of Campbell College's course in which students investigate the self in relation to nature and spirituality, community and family. Questions the students are exploring through the course, and the exhibition, include: What is autobiography? What role do invention, imagination and memory play in telling the stories of ourselves? Who is the "I" playing "eye" witness to the events of your life?

Works included in the exhibition are varied, according to Campbell College faculty member and Brush Gallery Director, Cathy Tipton. In progress at the time of writing were several pieces by students in the program. The exhibition will be held in the Brush Art Gallery, located in the building on the east side of campus. The gallery is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. For more information, contact Cathy Tipton at (704) 738-2222.

Campbell College's other faculty members are Assistant Professor and Dana Fellow of Speech and Theatre, Randy Hill and Assistant Professor of English, Natalie Singer.

about their problems in life at college. He said that sometimes, if you go through college the way he did and many other Larrys do, you end up feeling like you missed something.

After closing night, Navia graced the stage three times for a lengthy standing ovation. His message had a powerful effect on the audience and community of SLU... and one that finally got the voice it deserved.



Larry Navia ('94) has recently completed performance of his one-man show. Photo by Carol Barclay



Larry Navia's ('94) previous credits at SLU include "Our Country's Good," and many other plays. File Photos

