

# DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

*I'll just tell you what I remember because memory is as close as I've gotten to building my own time machine.*

SAMANTHA HUNT, *The Invention of Everything Else*

DAYS OF FUTURE PAST is a historical and science fiction experiment that happened in *Vermilionville*, living history museum and folklife park in Lafayette, the heart of the Cajun & Creole culture in Louisiana. The performance explored the connections between the first Louisiana settlers and the *Ragin' Cajuns* (branding of the sport teams of the University of Louisiana in Lafayette) to create new narratives. The public was guided by local traditional healers and played an active role in the fictions that were developed during the journeys. The performance used constant time shifts to explore historical narratives, memory and science fiction through the paradoxes of time travelling.

The 3 different performances happened on May 21st and May 22nd 2016





# CHAPTER 1

## The ritual

The audience is invited to enter the lobby of *Vermilionville*, where Becca Begnaud, traiteur (local Cajun healer) performs an energy ritual on the model of the living history museum while an ambient cover of the *Jurrassic Park* theme plays on the back.





Eric Giraudet de Boudemange reads a post-apocalyptic text about the Vermilion river.

"I recall descending the Vermilion river at a time when the oily blood of the floating carcasses slowed down the progression of my raft. Instead of electronic cigarettes, I inhaled the rusty-fog crawling on the river. I'm usually high quite fast, depending on the toxins and the time of the day. Sometimes, it just make me dizzy and I puke in the Vermilion. Most of the time: blood, pale ashes colored by my energy drinks and a part of my Twix bar diet.

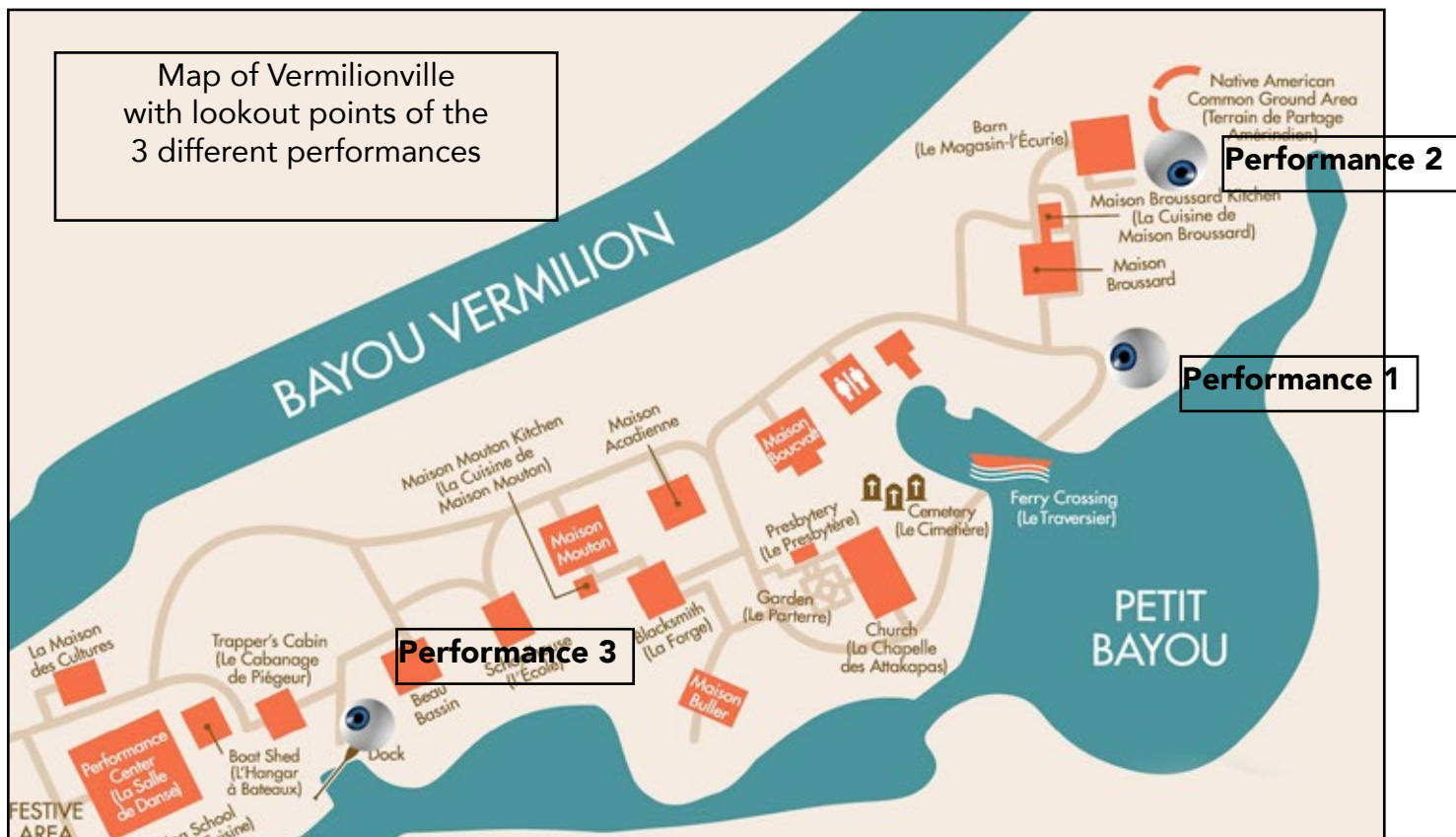
I made a few encounters. An old Cajun Creole with a talking tumor told me one day about the languages that the indigenous people used to speak. He knew a few words that he mumbled at my ear. Teenagers covered in acné often swam in the Vermilion, reminding me of ancient paintings I had once seen on *Instagram*. Deer, possums and drunk snakes were often seen as the green sun rose. In these days, time was slower than today. Some say that the earth was reluctant to spin: a day could spread in two, three even four days. Other reported that the indigenous people were simply bored and days felt longer, but nobody really knows. Radioactivity softened the brains of all the travelers. Even the most erudite ethnographers didn't escape the rule despite all the layers of sunscreen that they used.

In a whorehouse I once heard: *Time doesn't belong here.*  
I asked: *Who does it belong to? Speculators?*  
He said: *Shut up and take another puff...*

Of course, we had very little knowledge of quantum physics and time travelling was a speculation that nobody had seriously considered. The future had yet not reached the past."



The visitors are taken to a specific spot of Vermilionville, guided by the rythm of Becca Begnaud's percussions on her ti-fer (Cajun triangle). A different location was chosen for each of three venues during the weekend.





## CHAPTER 2

### The observation exercise

*Eric Giraudet de Boudemange reads a text and introduces a new healer: Packmother.*



"My heart bleeds.

I learned many prayers and touched many crystals.

My body was crossed by a few hungry ghosts. I felt their kisses in my guts.

I met healers, chamans, monks & traiteurs.

Some had travelled to foreign countries to deepen their knowledge,  
Some were funeral masters who chopped body into pieces to offer them to Himalayan vultures.

Others were travelling in a Cosmic / Christ / quest.

One was a Jungian analyst.

I met a woman from native american descent called Packmother. Mother of wolves, squirrels and mice. Every morning horse fly, her guide, telepathically leads her in a yet uncompleted inner journey. She can bi-locate, tele transport and knows that one day she will be able to shape sift like her master. She also has a knowledge of a plant called Mamou, that helps me breathe, relax and clears my rotting lungs."



*Packmother talking about the Mamou plant, and gives a potion that she prepared to the audience.*

We make a relaxation exercise.

"Breathe. Feel the moment. Close your eyes and open your ears to your surrounding. Here is your present, your past and your future.

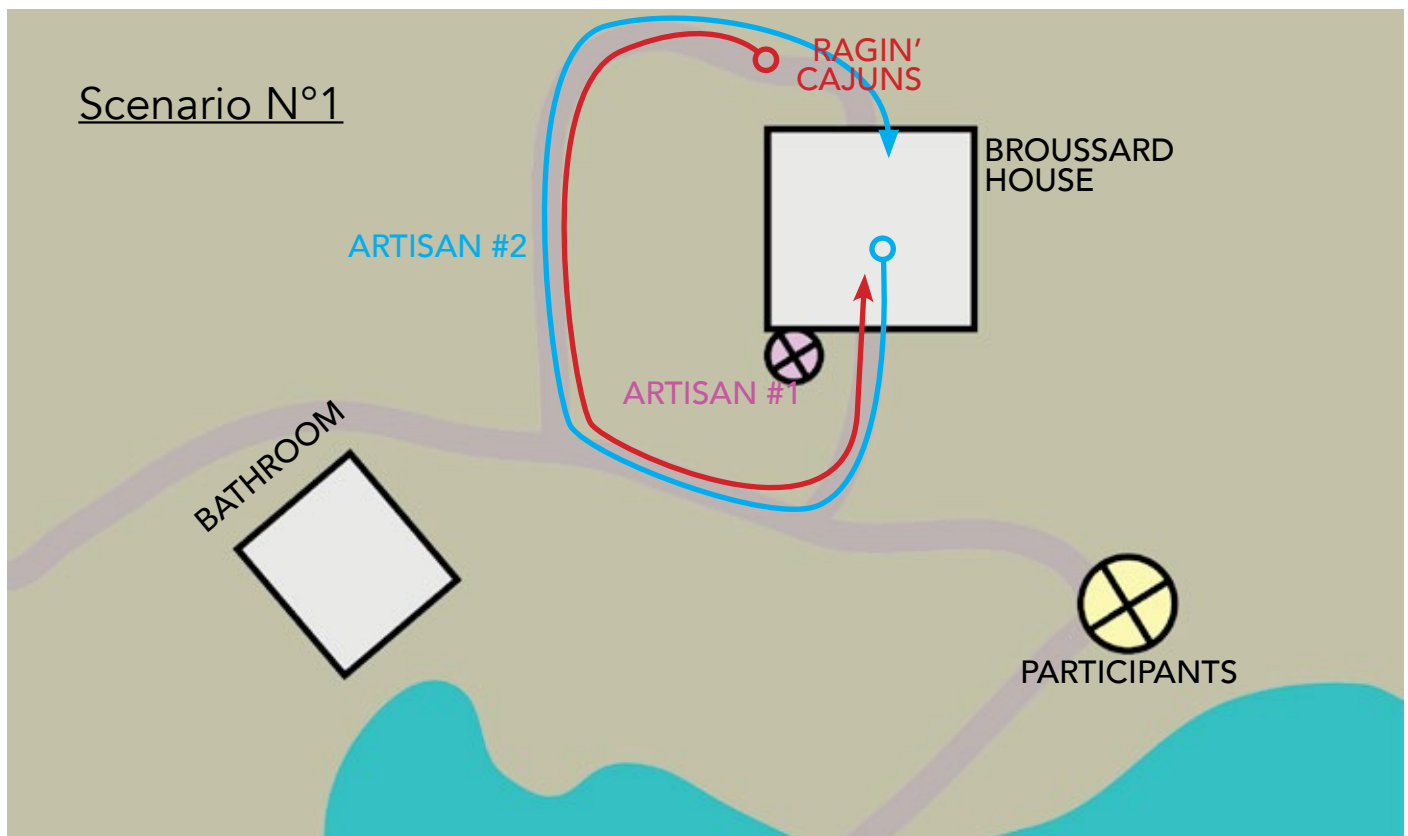
Think of time as a line. The mobile image of eternal immobility. What happens when nothing happens: sequences, simultaneity, duration, change, period and expectation, attrition, aging, speed, death.

Think of time and space as a single line.

Bend the line."



The participants were asked to write down their observations on notebooks during two 10 mn observation sessions. The participants were not informed that a setup scenario was happening in front of their eyes. After each observation session displaying the same scenario (creating an impression of "déjà vu"), the notes were read.



*Scenario N°1 was played twice in front of one participative audience.*

- Artisan #1 is spinning cotton on the back porch of the Broussard house.
- Artisan #2 exits the house and joins her on the porch.
- Artisan #2 hands a piece of paper to Artisan #1.
- Artisan #1 reads it and put it inside her basket.
- Artisan #2 exits the porch of the house.
- Meanwhile, a group of actors dressed in Ragin' Cajuns fan gear fool around on a bench.
- Artisan #2 crosses the Ragin' Cajuns, on their way to the Broussard house.
- Artisan #2 continues walking and dissapears
- The Ragin Cajuns look at the explanation board of the Broussard house
- Cajun #2 lets her drink fall on the floor.
- The Ragin Cajuns enter the Broussard house.



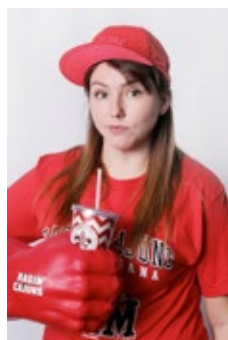
ARTISAN #1



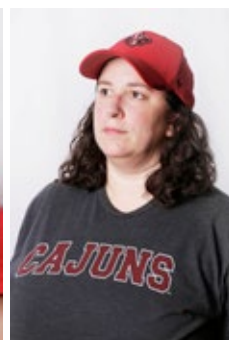
ARTISAN #2



CAJUN #1



CAJUN #2



CAJUN #3



CAJUN #4





*ARTISANS #1 & 2 on the porch of the Broussard House*



*The public taking notes during the observation exercises*





*ARTISAN #2 crosses the RAGIN' CAJUNS*



*The RAGIN' CAJUNS check out the explanation pannel of the Broussard House*

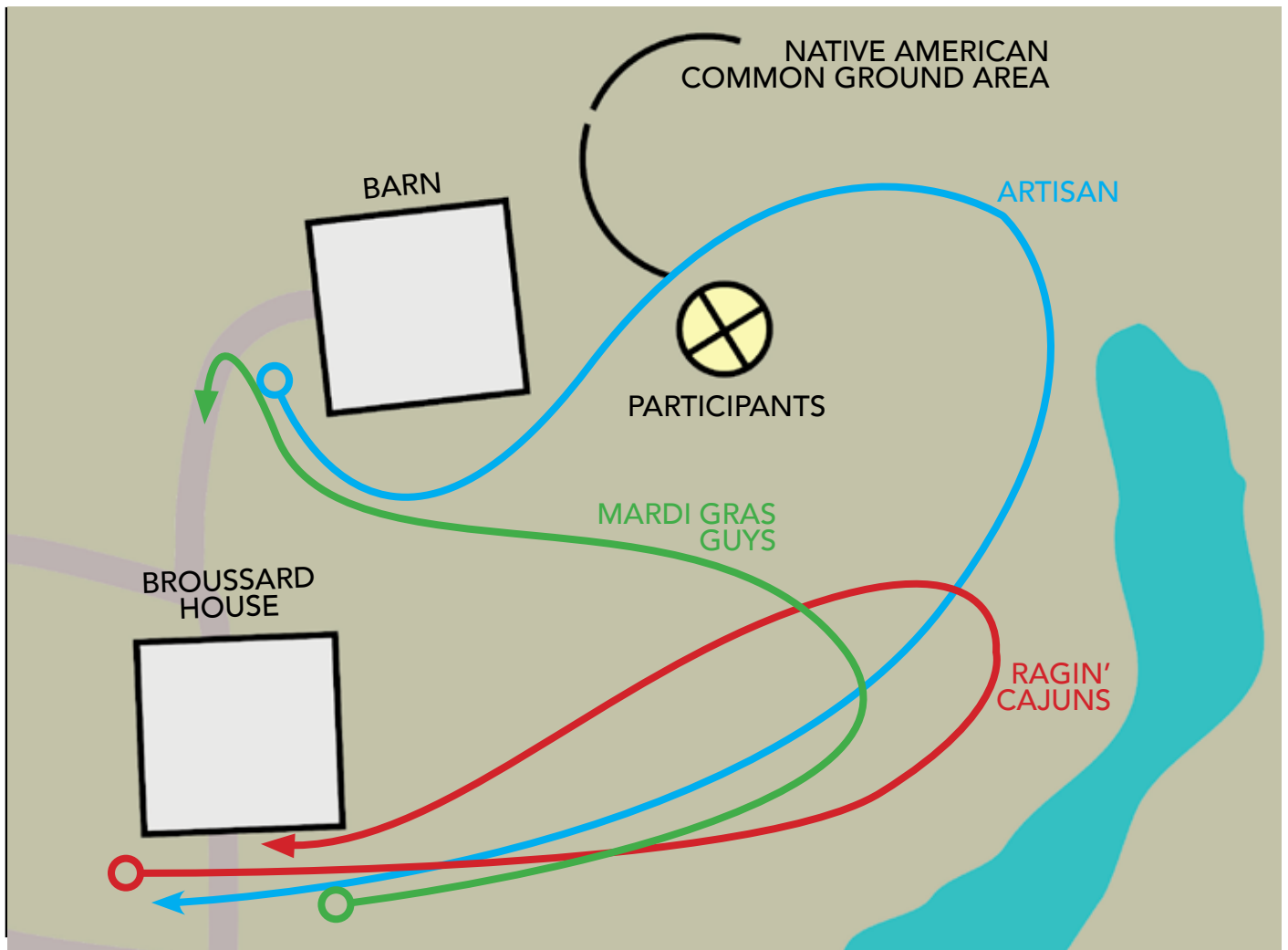




*The public reading their notes after each observation session*



## Scenario N°2



Scenario N°2 was played twice in front of one participative audience. The participants were asked to write down their observations on notebooks during two 10 mn observation sessions. The participants were not informed that a setup scenario was happening in front of their eyes. After each observation session displaying the same scenario (creating an impression of "déjà vu"), the notes were read.

- Artisan #1 crosses the field.
- 2 visitors in Ragin' Cajuns fan gear walk towards the lake taking selfies.
- 2 people in Courrir de Mardi Gras costumes enter the field.
- The two Ragin' Cajuns fans ask them to take a selfies together. They take the pictures.
- The Ragin' Cajuns fan walk away behind the Broussard house
- The Mardi Gras guys dissappear behind the Barn.



ARTISAN #1



MARDI GRAS  
#1



MARDI GRAS  
#2



CAJUN #1



CAJUN #2





*ARTISANS #1 crosses the field*



*Ragin' Cajuns enter the field*





*The two Ragin' Cajuns fans ask the Mardi Gras guys to take a selfie with them.*



*The public taking notes during the observation exercises*





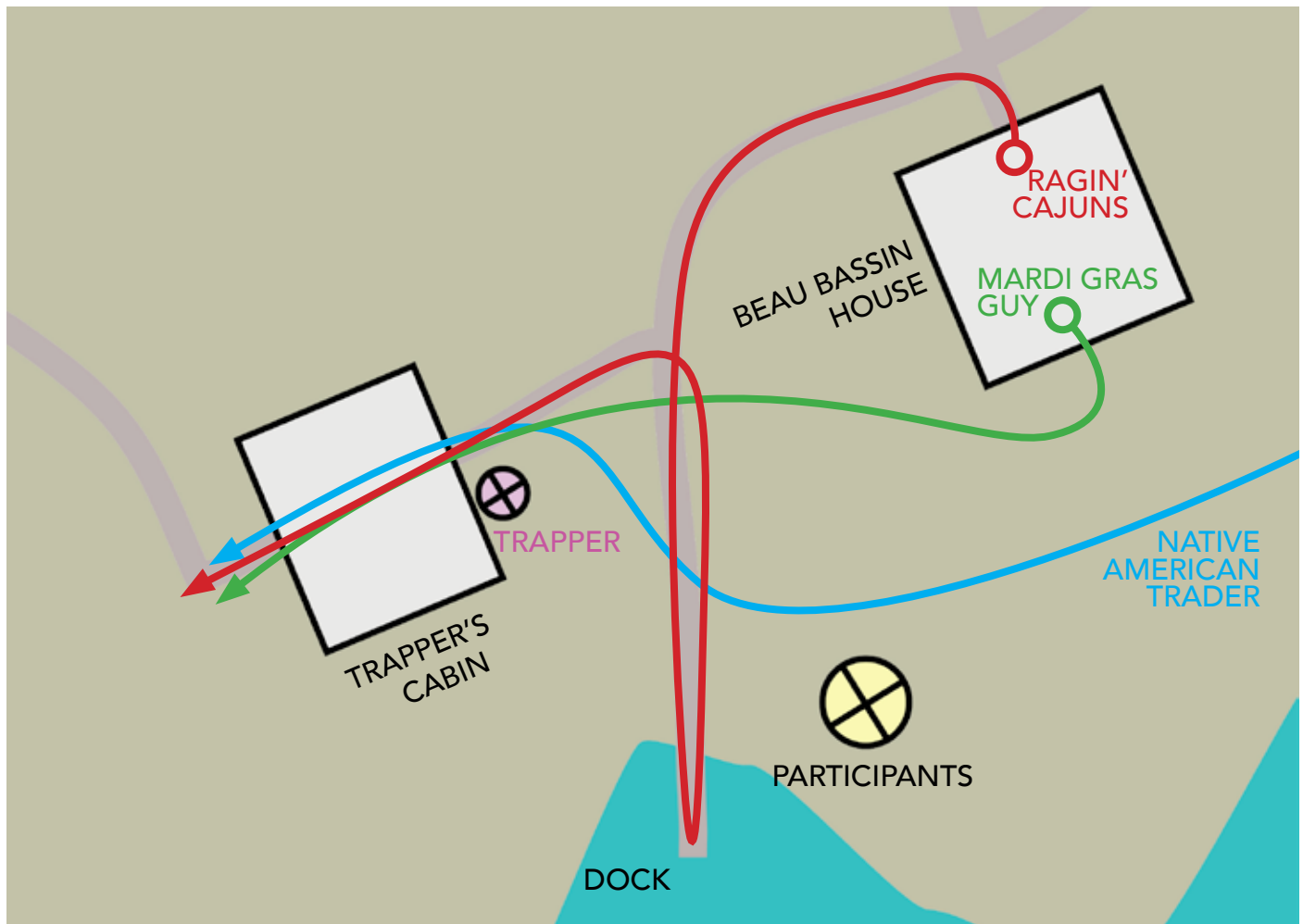
*The selfie*



*The Mardi Gras guys exit the scene*



## Scenario N°3



Scenario N°2 was played twice in front of one participative audience. The participants were asked to write down their observations on notebooks during two 10 mn observation sessions. The participants were not informed that a setup scenario was happening in front of their eyes. After each observation session displaying the same scenario (creating an impression of "déjà vu"), the notes were read.

- The Trapper is making a fire near the Trappers cabin.
- A Native American Trader walks towards the Trapper.
- They exchange goods and talk.
- A man in a Courrir le Mardi Gras costume, jumps off the back porch of the Beau Bassin house and runs through the Trapper's cabin.
- 3 visitors in Ragin' Cajuns fan gear walk towards the lake and take selfies on the dock. They shout "Laissez les bons temps rouler"
- They walk towards the Trappers Cabin and look at the Trapper working on his fire.
- Cajun #2 kisses the Trapper and follows Cajun #1 and Cajun #3 in the Trapper's cabin.



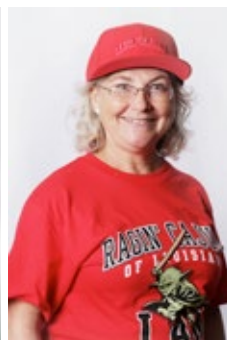
TRAPPER



NATIVE  
AMERICAN



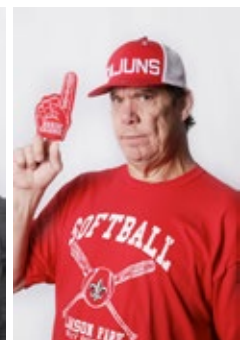
MARDI GRAS



CAJUN #1



CAJUN #2



CAJUN #3





*Eric Giraudet de Boudemange reads a text*



*A Native American Trader walks towards the Trapper.*





*The public taking notes during the observation exercises*



*The Trapper making fire*





*A man in a Courrir le Mardi Gras costume, jumps off the back porch of the Beau Bassin house*



*Cajun #2 kisses the Trapper*



## CONCLUSION

When the observation exercise finishes, we walk to the School house where a Cajun Creole musician (Djalma Garnier) performs a fiddle cover of *Radioactive* by *Imagine Dragons*. The pop song concludes the time traveling experience in a humorous manner, linking the traditional musician to ecological concerns as if they were one in Vermilionville.

« Welcome to the new age, to the new age »



Djalma Garnier performs a fiddle cover of *Radioactive* by *Imagine Dragons*.