



The Power of Books to Revolutionize Hearts and Minds

Conversations on Activism and Current Events at The Bay Area Book Festival

Roxane Gay, Masha Gessen, Cleve Jones, Rev. Dr. William Barber II, Micah White, Becky Bond, Michael Chabon, Ayelet Waldman, and more

June 3-4, 2017

In response to the rise of intolerance and injustice in this country and worldwide, [The Bay Area Book Festival](#)'s focus this year is on **literary activism**. Courageous, insightful, intelligent literary work is an essential tool for resisting these forces. As founder **Cherilyn Parsons** said in a statement on the festival's website, "Literature shapes the most potent and elusive power that humankind has: hearts and minds."

All sessions will take place in venues in downtown Berkeley. Highlights of this year's conversations on **activism, current events, and politics** include:

- **Race and Resistance in the Trump Era: Fighting Words and Wisdom from *The Nation* and Black Lives Matter** — Some of *The Nation*'s finest current contributors offer a fierce, free-ranging discussion of how to advance racial justice in today's America. Panelists include **Rev. Dr. William Barber II**, the founder of the "Moral Mondays" movement; **Walter Mosley**, the essayist and novelist; **Joan Walsh**, *The Nation*'s national political correspondent; and moderator **Mark Hertsgaard**, author and investigative editor for *The Nation*. (Sunday, June 4, 1:30pm, *San Francisco Chronicle* Stage in the Park, sponsored by *The Nation*)
- **Activism at a Crossroads** — Activism is undergoing a re-evaluation. Is protest still effective? What can work today? **Micah White** (co-creator of Occupy Wall Street and named by *Esquire* as one of the most influential young thinkers alive today), and **Becky Bond** (former senior advisor to Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign) will offer guidance and action for a new era of social change and activism. If you've ever thought of joining a march or demonstration, White and Bond will make you smarter about it. *Mother Jones*' **Monika Bauerlein** moderates. (Saturday, June 3, 11:45am, the Alta Stage at Freight and Salvage, sponsored by *Mother Jones*)

- **Understanding the Other: How Emotion Shapes Politics and Can Heal our Divides** — UC Berkeley sociologist **Arlie Hochschild's** recent *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, a National Book Award finalist, was one of the six books recommended by the *New York Times* to help understand Trump's win. Here she describes "the deep story" she discovered among Louisiana supporters of the Tea Party and shares suggestions on addressing the current political, social, and (always) emotional situations in which we find ourselves. Moderated by *Mother Jones'* **Clara Jeffery**. (Saturday, June 3, 11:45am, the David Brower Center, sponsored by *Mother Jones*)
- **Roxane Gay Takes the Stage** — What makes a person "difficult"? Fiction writer, essayist, and activist Roxane Gay has been called "the brilliant girl-next-door: your best friend and your sharpest critic" by *People* magazine. She has authored the stunning novel *An Untamed State*, the powerhouse essay collection *Bad Feminist*, and now a new collection of stories, *Difficult Women*, where she casts her incisive gaze at issues of race, class and gender. Famed for both fearlessness and vulnerability on the page, she tackles issues that lie at the heart of body, identity, relationship and society. In conversation with Rafia Zakaria of *The New Republic*. (Saturday, June 3, 3:15pm, the Alta Stage at Freight & Salvage, sponsored by *The New Republic*)
- **Radical Hope: Staying Sane, Awake, and Engaged in Dangerous Times** — A special Saturday evening event will feature ten contributors to a new anthology, *Radical Hope*, including **Jeff Chang, Aya de Leon, Parnaz Foroutan, Karen Joy Fowler, Francisco Goldman, Katie Kitamura, Cherrie Moraga, Achy Obejas, and Meredith Russo**, and the book's editor **Carolina De Robertis**. Conceived by Oakland writer de Robertis shortly after the latest Presidential election, she asked award-winning novelists, poets, political thinkers, and activists to create letters—love letters—in response to our times to any and all who feel weary and discouraged. (Saturday, June 3, 3pm, the Alta Stage at Freight & Salvage)

Other acclaimed authors speaking on current events are celebrated LGBT rights pioneer **Cleve Jones** with his memoir, which tells how to *make* history, not just watch it happen; environmentalist **Paul Hawken** on *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*; commentator **Masha Gessen** on "truth, lies, and totalitarianism" in Russia and the United States; and renowned film critic and historian **David Thomson** offering "a lecture, a warning, and a lamentation" in his session titled "Trump, Our Television, Our Bad Luck."

Pulitzer winner **Michael Chabon**, **Ayelet Waldman**, two-time National Book Award finalist **Rachel Kushner**, and writer **Fida Jiryis** (traveling to the festival from Ramallah), among others, launch a new anthology on Palestine, *Kingdom of Olives and Ash*.

A discussion on Native activism and history (including Standing Rock) includes Native American poet **Layli Long Soldier**, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner **T.J. Stiles**, and historians **William Bauer** and **Louis Warren**, and is moderated by writer **Greg Sarris**. “Feminist Activism Through Popular Fiction” brings together **Aya de Leon**, **Meg Elison**, and others on how women writers use popular fiction genres to share visions of feminist social change. Finally, a session titled “Publishing’s Roles and Responsibilities in a Post-Truth Era” brings together publishing insiders and is sponsored by literary innovator **Zoetic Press**.

What about sessions for young activists? A **Youth Speaks** poetry workshop and performance will teach teens how to speak their truth to power. And in “How to Speak Up: A Story of Courage,” **Laura Atkins** and **Stan Yogi** share **Fred Korematsu’s** story on resisting the Japanese internment camps in World War II, a case study for how young people today can resist injustice.

For other sessions focusing on current events, politics, and activism, [see the full schedule](#).

Festival speakers are available for interviews by credentialed members of the press via email or Skype in advance of the festival, or in person over the weekend event. Outlet must be identified and assignment secured before the interview.

The festival logo and other images are [available here](#), and author photos are available by request. Please contact Anna Pulley, anna@bayboofest.org.