



## The Future Is Female

### Conversations about Women and Gender at The Bay Area Book Festival

**Roxane Gay, Lindy West, Susan Griffin, Joanna Macy, Ayelet Waldman, Aya de Leon,  
Rafia Zakaria, Sylvia Brownrigg, and more**

**June 3-4, 2017**

While 78% of publishing industry staff are women (according to a [study by Lee & Low Books](#)), and 77% of book readers are women ([Pew Research Center](#)), analyses have shown that male authors, especially those writing about male characters, win by far the larger percentage of prestigious prizes such as the Pulitzer and the Booker Award ([The Guardian](#)). Is there something inherent in the Y chromosome that makes for better writing? Or could the fact that most reviewers and critics are men, as the [VIDA study](#) has repeatedly demonstrated, have something to do with it?

From its inception three years ago, [The Bay Area Book Festival](#) has paid special attention to promoting female writers and highlighting issues of special concern to women and girls. The Festival was founded by a woman and is largely led by women. This year we have an especially strong slate of women writing about women. Highlights of these sessions, which all take place in venues in downtown Berkeley, include:

- **Roxane Gay** — 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*)
- **Forces of Nature: Susan Griffin and Joanna Macy** — Poet **Adrienne Rich** called **Susan Griffin**’s proto-feminist classic *Woman and Nature* “perhaps the most extraordinary nonfiction work to have merged from the matrix of contemporary female consciousness.” Four decades after its initial publication (and with the release of a 40th anniversary paperback edition) Griffin celebrates her seminal, feminist text in conversation with acclaimed author and Buddhist scholar **Joanna Macy** (*World as Lover, World as Self*). (Sunday, June 4, 4pm at the Magnes Collection)

- **Lindy West** — It's not a pretty place, the Internet. Especially for an outspoken woman. Two years ago, **Lindy West's** confrontation with a nasty troll showed the world how to fight back via technology. With her debut memoir, *Shrill*, Lindy tells that tale and more, sharing her truths about #ShoutYourAbortion!, being a large woman, being loud, being a feminist, and being funny. (Saturday, June 3, 4:45pm at the San Francisco Chronicle Stage in the Park)
- "Feminist Activism Through Popular Fiction" with **Aya de Leon, Meg Elison, Kate Raphael, and Claire Light** — How are women writers using popular fiction genres (mystery, sci-fi/fantasy, street lit, women's fiction) to go beyond the "strong female lead" and even "strong but unlikable" protagonists to share visions of feminist activism and social change? What role do race, class, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity and ability play in the intersectional feminist landscapes of their stories? (Sunday, June 4, 12pm at Cornerstone)
- "A Paintbrush of Her Own: The Lesser-Known History of Woman Artists" with **Bridget Quinn** — Have you ever read an art book or sat in an art history class and wondered: Where are the women artists? Art historian Bridget Quinn tackles the mainstream art world's tendency to ignore women artists. (Sunday, June 4, 1:30pm at the David Brower Center)
- "From Every Angle: Women Writing About the Body" with **Roxane Gay, Sonya Renee Taylor, and Sarai Walker, and Aya de Leon** — This panel brings together women authors across genres of memoir, fiction, and poetry with a range of experiences and perspectives. In an era where body positivity and fat liberation increasingly push back against body shaming and fatphobia, what do they hope to achieve through the complex and nuanced stories they tell? (Saturday, June 3, 11:45am at Berkeley City College)

While women feature throughout the festival, they dominate the following sessions, which cover a gamut of topics. **Ayelet Waldman** illuminates how microdosing LSD improved her mood *and* her marriage. **Samin Nosrat**, who taught Michael Pollan how to cook, comes out with her own cookbook, illustrated by **Wendy MacNaughton**; Alice Waters called Nosrat "America's next great cooking teacher." Gripping novelists **Sylvia Brownrigg, Edan Lepucki, and Shanthi Sekaran** contemplate the "Ferocity of Love." **Cathryn Jakobson Ramin** gives us an exposé on the literal, emotional, and monetary pains of the back pain industry. And New York Times bestselling author (and *Gutsy Girl*) **Caroline Paul** introduces a special screening of *The Secret Garden*, part of our film fest "Auteur, Author" at BAMPFA.

For other sessions with women authors, [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](mailto:anna@bayboofest.org).