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2018 BAY AREA BOOK FESTIVAL LAUNCHES "WOMEN LIT" PROGRAM AND SHARPENS FOCUS ON WOMEN AND GENDER THROUGH DOZENS OF LITERARY SESSIONS APRIL 28 & 29 IN BERKELEY

PRE-FESTIVAL EVENT WITH *THE PERFECT NANNY* AUTHOR LEILA SLIMANI APRIL 8

Berkeley, CA, March 29, 2018 – The Future is Female at the fourth annual Bay Area Book Festival (BABF) as the popular, internationally recognized two-day celebration of writers, readers and the written word in downtown Berkeley expands its longstanding commitment to the power of women in print with special thematic programming and adds a pre-Festival conversation. BABF has established a new membership group called Women Lit to support programs at the April 28-29 Festival (including a special Women Lit members' salon at the Festival with leading women authors), present year-round public events and private salons, foster networking and community among Bay Area women, and engage the public around female authors and woman-focused issues and topics.

Women Lit's first public event is a conversation with writer **Leila Slimani**, winner of France's Prix Goncourt and author of *The Perfect Nanny*, on Sunday, April 8, 7 pm at Berkeley Repertory Theater. Tickets are \$20 at www.baybookfest.org/women-lit-events/, where the public may also find a complete list of women and gender-themed programs featured at the 2018 Festival (also see below). Audiences may find more information about Women Lit at www.baybookfest.org/women-lit-overview/ and www.baybookfest.org/women-lit-about/.

"The Bay Area Book Festival was founded by a woman and is largely led by women," says BABF founder and Director **Cherilyn Parsons**. "From our inception in 2015 we have prioritized female voices, and with Women Lit we have formalized this commitment—even as the #metoo movement has swept the world. We're part of this zeitgeist. Many women, especially women of color, have been kept from publishing or, when published, have not received the same attention as their white male counterparts. Great literature is a powerful force changing hearts, minds, and the course of history, and we need to hear women! The Festival has brought renowned writers such as **Judy Blume**, **Rebecca Solnit**, and **Roxane Gay** and also, very importantly, less-recognized authors the public needs to hear. At this year's Festival, members of Women Lit have helped bring numerous writers, such as novelist **Winnie M. Li**, activist and author of *Dark Chapter* on violence against women, and masculinity expert **Michael Kimmel**, author of *Angry White Men: Masculinity at the End of an Era*."

Women Lit invites the public to become charter members by joining through April 25 and enjoying benefits such as the special Festival salon and tickets to year-round events.

The Future is Female: Conversations about Women and Gender at the Bay Area Book Festival

Saturday, April 28

Murder She Writes: Catherine Coulter Talks with Laurie R. King
Catherine Coulter interviewed by Laurie R. King
Saturday, April 28, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Catherine Coulter, No.1 New York Times best-selling suspense writer and author of 82 novels (almost all of them New York Times bestsellers!), is interviewed by Mystery Writers of America NorCal president Laurie R. King, herself a bestselling author of 25 novels. These two remarkable writers will talk about Coulter's journey from Regency romances to FBI thrillers, the research she does for her widely varied stories, and her craft, art, and life of writing.

Translating Trauma
Katherena Vermette, Winnie M. Li, moderated by Natasha Singh
Saturday, April 28, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Much great literature focuses on the darkest parts of being human, and writers need exceptional courage to write about trauma. Katherena Vermette, who comes from the Métis nation in Canada, writes about violence and power struggles between women in her harrowing novel "The Break," praised by Margaret Atwood as "universal." Of Winnie Li's debut novel "Dark Chapter," inspired by her own experience as a survivor of assault, Kirkus reviews said: "That Li was able to write

this novel, as both personal catharsis and public service, speaks volumes about her inner strength. Li's novel is both a valuable social document and a riveting page-turner." This pair of acclaimed female writers will explore the question of how we process and communicate trauma.

Geneen Roth's Messy Magnificent Life
Saturday, April 28, 11:00 AM– 12:15 PM

Geneen Roth (author of the massively popular memoir "Women Food and God") has simple advice for those trying to improve themselves: Do not try to fix your flaws. In fact, she takes issue with the idea of flaws at all. After years struggling with body issues, Geneen Roth made peace with herself and embarked on the journey to find meaning beyond self-image. Her new book, "This Messy Magnificent Life," does not aim to show readers how to correct their path—it aims to help them see the beauty of the path they are on.

The Art of Science Fiction: Interview with Sylvie Denis, France's Queen of Sci-Fi
Sylvie Denis interviewed by Marie Brennan
Saturday, April 28, 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

For this special event, one of France's leading science fiction writers, Sylvie Denis, travels to the Bay Area Book Festival to discuss her work and the genre of science fiction. A novelist, short story writer, critic, editor, and translator, Denis has often focused her writing on new technologies and their impact on societies. She also will explore themes of climate change and migration (her current focus) and will share her experience as a woman writing (French critical theory has had much to say, controversially, about the female literary voice). Finally, how does translation affect the presentation of literary work and science fiction especially? She will be interviewed by fantasy writer Marie Brennan, whose work Denis has translated.

Beyond Jane and Hermione: New Smart Women in Literature
Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, Jana Casale, Martha Batalha, Adrienne Sharp
Saturday, April 28, 12:15 PM - 1:30 PM

Now is a time for brilliant women to be heard, seen, and read about. This panel of women has taken up the mantle, adding to the chorus of female voices through their strong characters—from whip-smart anarchist teen rebels to restless and explosive women seeking to defy expectations. Powerhouse authors Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi, Jana Casale, Martha Batalha, and Adrienne Sharp make up this strong female panel.

Men and Boys 2018: Cultural and Personal Masculinities
Michael Kimmel, Dacher Keltner

Saturday, April 28, 12:45 PM - 2:00 PM

As women across the world make their painful experiences visible, men have begun to grapple with how the masculine identity shapes the power imbalance. The cultural positioning of manhood starts early ("Boys don't cry!") and continues to influence these boys' identities as they grow ("Man up!"). Hear "Sopranos" star turned novelist Michael Imperioli and masculinity expert Michael Kimmel, in discussion with author and gender critic Peggy Orenstein.

Fierce Originality: Eimear McBride interviewed by Sylvia Brownrigg

Eimear McBride interviewed by Sylvia Brownrigg

Saturday, April 28, 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

With her first published novel, "A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing," Eimear McBride was compared to a feminist James Joyce in how she broke language to capture fleeting consciousness itself, in this case in the mind of a young girl struggling to remain intact amidst trauma. The New York Times called it "a future classic." NPR said, "Shattering...Be prepared to be blown away by this raw, visceral, brutally intense neomodernist first novel." In her second, even more sophisticated novel, "The Lesser Bohemians," she also aimed "to write truthfully about female experience," this time about a consuming love affair with an older man. "Writing is painful," she told the Guardian, "but it's the closest you can get to joy." McBride comes to us from Ireland to talk about writing, life, feminism and more with novelist Sylvia Brownrigg.

Women Plot the Crime

Sara Blaedel, Anne Holt, and Yrsa Sigurdardóttir, moderated by Cara Black

Saturday, April 28, 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

The plot for the perfect crime may very well reside in the minds of these three cunning women. This panel of authors will discuss what it takes—and what it takes out of you—to write a complex, compelling, and believable (but un-guessable) crime story. Come plumb the minds of Sara Blaedel (Denmark's "queen of crime"), Anne Holt (Norway's best-selling female crime writer), and Icelandic best-selling author Yrsa Sigurdardóttir, as they talk with fellow crime writer Cara Black.

Nina LaCour Up Close and Personal

Saturday, April 28, 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Nina LaCour's characters look a lot like her readers. The characters are easy for readers to relate to: living in worlds readers recognize, suffering the same kinds of uncertainties, experiencing the same sorts of tiny life-changing moments. LaCour has devoted her life to young adults: first as a teacher, then as a writer. Her new novel, "We Are Okay," follows a college-aged girl as she deals with trauma,

isolation, coping, and change. It was called "a moving portrait of a girl struggling to rebound after everything she's known has been thrown into disarray" by Publisher's Weekly and was named the best book of the year written for teens, winning the Michael L. Printz Award from the American Library Association, a leading award for teen fiction. (Remember, anyone under age 18 is let in free—no wristbands necessary!)

Joyce Maynard: The Power of Heartfelt Story
Saturday, April 28, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Joyce Maynard has been prominent in the literary community since her teen years as a contributor to *Seventeen* magazine. Over the course of her career, she has written 16 books including the novels "To Die For" and "Labor Day" (both adapted for film) and the bestselling memoir "At Home in the World," translated into 17 languages. Maynard will discuss her newest memoir, "The Best of Us," which Booklist says is a "haunting story, penned by a master wordsmith...a reminder to savor every loved one and every day."

Lidia Yuknavitch in Person: On Fearlessness, Truth, and Misfits
Saturday, April 28, 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

There is no other literary voice like Lidia Yuknavitch's. She is a "bold and ecstatic writer" (NPR), a writer's writer, "a trailblazing literary voice that spans genres and dives deep" (Lenny Letter). The author of the award-winning speculative feminist novel "The Book of Joan" and the hypnotic memoir "The Chronology of Water" has experienced domestic violence, struggles with substance abuse, bouts of homelessness, and the loss of a child. In a raw, fearless voice she interrogates conformity, love, sex, the body, memory, and writing itself and inspires her readers with the courage to live (and write) fully. A protege of Ken Kesey and inspired by Kathy Acker, she is a self-proclaimed "misfit" and has penned a book, enhanced by interviews, called "The Misfit's Manifesto." Come hear her calls for authenticity in life and literature.

YES to Girls & Science!
Emily Calandrelli
Sunday, April 29, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

The "SpaceGal" delivers a most welcome new series about Ada Lace, a third-grade girl who has a knack for science and technology, and a nose for trouble. Emily says, "When you were a kid, what did you picture when you thought of a scientist or engineer?" You can bet the answer was "a socially awkward white dude with glasses." Not anymore! Ada inspires young readers to ask questions and lean into their curiosity, showing them that scientists and engineers can look just like them! (Remember, anyone under age 18 is let in free—no wristbands necessary!)

Women Write the World: On Equality, Justice, and Freedom

Samina Ali, Belva Davis, Camille Hayes, Michelle Mush Lee, Sara Marchant, Deborah Santana

Sunday, April 29, 10:00 AM - 11:45 AM

In our turbulent world where human rights and justice are being challenged, it's important to understand and have compassion for those whose paths we have not walked. "All the Women in My Family Sing," a collection of prose and poetry by 69 women of color, explores the realities, joys, and challenges of being a woman of color in the 21st century. Editor Deborah Santana is joined by authors Camille Hayes, Sara Marchant, Michelle "Mush" Lee, Samina Ali, and Belva Davis, all of whom share stories and insights that can help create bridges between worlds we know very well and those we may not.

Timeless: Historical Fiction

Heather O'Neill, Linda Spalding, Adrienne Sharp

Sunday, April 29, 10:00 AM - 11:15 AM

Writing great historical fiction is an enormously challenging task for writers—so much research, woven seamlessly into a story—and rewards readers with entertainment and education at the same time. No wonder historical fiction is one of the most popular literary genres. Discover how it's done through this panel. Two orphans navigate desperation in Heather O'Neill's "virtually cinematic" Depression-era Montreal. With portraits of slave owners and abolitionists, Linda Spalding captures the instability of mid-19th-century America. Through the eyes of a vulnerable young woman, Adrienne Sharp takes us inside the glamour and darkness of Hollywood and Las Vegas in the mid-20th century.

Smart Women Everywhere: Women Calling the Shots in Global Fiction

Jasmin Darznik, Therese Bohman, Shobha Rao, Gunnhild Oyehaug

Sunday, April 29, 10:30 AM - 11:45 AM

Strong women are nothing new in literature, which has inspired centuries of women to speak up. And no woman is a victim when she's the one telling the story. From Iran to Sweden, these writers and their female characters show how it's done. Jasmin Darznik's debut novel, "Song of a Captive Bird," is an homage to Forugh Farrokhzad, the poet many say brought feminism to Iran. Therese Bohman tells a familiar story of a brilliant woman surrounded by male fragility in her novel "Eventide." Shobha Rao creates a transcendent story of female friendship in "Girls Burn Brighter," which Vogue called "incandescent... a searing portrait of what feminism looks like in much of the world." Norwegian writer Gunnhild Oyehaug, lauded by the New Yorker as a short story master, comes a sensual and contemplative collection of gorgeous, female-centric short stories.

Women Changing the World: How Phoebe Hearst, Jane Stanford, and Other Women Funded Feminism, Founded Universities, and Inspire Philanthropy Today

Joan Johnson, Catherine Pyke, Alexandra Nickliss, moderated by Julie Castro Abrams, How Women Lead

Sunday, April 29, 11:15 AM- 12:30 PM

For centuries, women have been powerful philanthropists, albeit less recognized than men. Women's strategic largesse has been essential to progressive advances including feminism. Women have been especially influential in founding the two leading universities in the Bay Area. Phoebe Hearst was the eclectic mother of the University of California at Berkeley, just as Jane Stanford co-founded her namesake university through hands-on activism. What lessons do the stories of these brilliant, empowered women hold today for any woman (or man) who wants to use financial resources to shape society? Do women give differently than men do? Where do the challenges and opportunities lie? Historian Joan Johnson writes on "Funding Feminism," former Hearst Foundation director Catherine Pyke delves into Jane Stanford's legacy, and Alexandra Nickliss reveals the fascinating persona of Phoebe Hearst, whose influence shapes this very book festival.

Women & Speculative Fiction: Following the Footsteps of Atwood, Butler, and Le Guin

Åsa Avdic, Maggie Shen King, Lidia Yuknavitch, Meg Elison

Sunday, April 29, 12:15 PM- 1:30 PM

Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, and Ursula Le Guin are three titans of speculative fiction, having lit the way for a new generation of women who hold in their hands the future of the genre. Among this new generation is Asa Avdic, whose new book "The Dying Game" was called "an Orwellian debut novel that never lets up"; breakout novelist Maggie Shen King, author of "An Excess Male" (which was dubbed "'The Handmaid's Tale' of a new generation"); literary powerhouse and award-winning author of "Book of Joan" Lidia Yuknavitch; and influential feminist writer Meg Elison, who won the Philip K. Dick Award for her novel, "The Book of the Unnamed Midwife."

Aline Kominsky-Crumb: A Life in Comics

Aline Kominsky-Crumb interviewed by Peggy Orenstein

Sunday, April 29, 11:45 AM - 1:00 PM

Aline Kominsky-Crumb is an icon of cartooning and a pioneer in feminist expression through this medium. Her subversive depictions of femininity, along with her collaborations with husband Robert Crumb, have been widely featured in the underground scene. Growing up enraptured by the counter-culture movement,

Kominsky-Crumb has always sought new ways to defy and inspire, and she actively seeks to “deconstruct the myth or romanticism around being a woman.” Journalist Peggy Orenstein interviews the award-winning artist and storyteller, who comes to us from her home in France.

"Wonder Down Under": A Celebration (and Medical Explication) of the Female Anatomy

Ellen Støkken Dahl

Sunday, April 29, 1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

The female body has been a political battleground for centuries, the source of life itself and thus the focus of control, indeed obsession. Meanwhile, the actual bodies themselves—the way they work, their own intrinsic beauty and physical essence—remain largely undiscussed. To demystify female sexual health for women and those who love them, medical student Ellen Støkken Dahl and Dr. Nina Brochmann from Norway began a blog that was so popular that it quickly became a book. "The Wonder Down Under: A User's Guide to the Vagina" sold out in Norway in only three days and has now been translated into more than 30 languages. In a special presentation, Dahl will answer all of the questions you didn't know you had about the female anatomy.

#MeToo & Beyond: Continuing to Tell the Truth

Winnie Li, T. Christian Miller, Bernice Yeung, Saru Jayaraman

Sunday, April 29, 1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

Has #MeToo gone too far? (That very question will provoke strong reactions.) Not far enough? (That one too.) Who decides? What happens next? Together these writers, who have plumbed this topic deeply, will deconstruct the movement and explore its future. Winnie Li's thought-provoking novel "Dark Chapter" was inspired by her own experience of assault; she also founded and runs the consent-centered Clear Lines festival in the UK. Investigative journalist Bernice Yeung has reported on sexual assault in agricultural and janitorial work. T. Christian Miller's reporting on the story of a mishandled rape case won the Pulitzer Prize and has been developed into a book, just published.

We Can Do It: Opinionated Women

Michelle Dean

Sunday, April 29, 1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

What makes for a powerful woman? Is there a special trait, a spark that allows her to overcome institutional biases and barriers? Michelle Dean's new book, "Sharp: the Women Who Made an Art of Having an Opinion," is in equal part a polyphonic biography, a cultural criticism, and a historical analysis. Following the lives of ten women—Dorothy Parker, Rebecca West, Hannah Arendt, Mary McCarthy, Susan

Sontag, Pauline Kael, Joan Didion, Nora Ephron, Renata Adler, and Janet Malcolm—Dean explores how they positioned themselves as powerful voices in a male-dominated world. Hear Dean expertly discuss how these women took power when it was not offered to them (and how each of us is capable of doing the same).

Writing the Truth: Fiction and Non-Fiction
Dashka Slater, Anne Nesbet, Sara Saedi
Sunday, April 29, 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Young readers have an intense curiosity about the world, and sophisticated books based on real-life events can help them navigate the complexities they find. The authors on this panel will discuss how they incorporate difficult real events into their books while keeping them enjoyable for young readers. Slater, who has written several children's books, has a new nonfiction book geared toward young adults that deals with the burning of a cross-dressed teenager on an Oakland bus. Nesbet's historical fiction follows an 11-year-old orphan in 1941 America. Saedi presents her true story of her family's undocumented history (Remember, anyone under age 18 is let in free—no wristbands necessary!)

Barbara Ehrenreich on Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer
Barbara Ehrenreich interviewed by Clara Jeffery
Sunday, April 29, 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

As an author and activist, Barbara Ehrenreich has taken on the minimum wage, abortion rights, women's lives, marijuana laws, and now, in her new book, death itself. In "Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer," Ehrenreich deconstructs the mindset of living to keep living. She examines diet culture, disease screenings, and all of the other practices humans engage in to ensure a long life—but at what expense, and with what quality and meaning? She will be interviewed by Mother Jones Editor-in-Chief Clara Jeffery.

Smart Activism: History and Hope, with L.A. Kauffman and Rebecca Solnit
L.A. Kauffman, Rebecca Solnit
Sunday, April 29, 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM

How can activism be most effective today? Let's look to history. Come hear one of the Bay Area's most famous activists and writers—Rebecca Solnit—in conversation with longtime friend and movement insider L.A. Kauffman on the history and future of activism. Solnit, whose writing spans numerous books, articles, and social media, is perhaps most well-known for "Hope in the Dark," a veritable holy book for activists, as well as her more recent books on feminism and three highly creative atlases, plus many works on community, the environment, and the arts. In "Direct

Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism”—a masterwork 25 years in the making—L.A. Kauffman expertly deconstructs the origins of today’s protest movements as a means of making activism more powerful today. How have past movements used disruptive tactics to catalyze change? Is there, indeed, still hope in the dark, and how do we act on it?

Viv Albertine, formerly of The Slits, Sits Down with Greil Marcus
Viv Albertine interviewed by Greil Marcus
Sunday, April 29, 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Post punk rocker Viv Albertine (of the feminist cult band The Slits) played at the heart of the British counterculture before pursuing TV and film directing and a solo music career. Her newly released second memoir, “To Throw Away Unopened,” begins where her last left off. She confronts questions of feminism, family, and inevitable death with the raw, intimate, vulnerable style that’s her trademark. Once a reader connects with this powerful voice it’s impossible to stop reading or stay untouched. Albertine comes to us from the U.K. for this conversation with legendary rock critic Greil Marcus.

Power Up: How Smart Women Win in the New Economy
Magdalena Yesil
Sunday, April 29, 4:15 PM – 5:15 PM

Magdalena Yesil knows what it takes to get ahead. She arrived in this country as a near-penniless immigrant student. Not only did she become one of the founding board members of Salesforce, but she was among the first to note the commercial potential of the internet, founding the first Internet payment company, CyberCash. Now she's a memoirist too, having penned "Power Up: How Smart Women Win in the New Economy," weaving her own story with trenchant advice on persisting amidst setbacks, combatting gender discrimination, and generally being fearless in approaching challenges. Hear this smart, compassionate woman as she gives other smart women the tools they need to win.

About the 2018 Bay Area Book Festival April 28 & 29 in Berkeley

Now in its fourth year, the Bay Area Book Festival is one of the world’s premier celebrations of writers, readers and the written word. Nearly 500 authors and exhibitors—from the Bay Area, nation and world and from across the spectrum of genres, traditions and inspirations—will come together with tens of thousands of book enthusiasts for the fourth annual **Bay Area Book Festival April 28 and 29 in downtown Berkeley, CA**. The Festival celebrates two days of presentations, panels, keynotes, films, performances, participatory activities, exhibits and a lively outdoor fair.

The literary program will satisfy fans across many interests, from science fiction, history, mysteries, memoir, poetry, food writing, children's literature and more, with special tracks this year on women, Native storytelling and youth literature—all within the overall theme of the power of books to create a better world. Literary sessions take place in venues throughout the downtown area and on outdoor stages.

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