



Festival Programs for Young Adults 2018

Saturday, April 28

11:45 - 1:00 Life as We Know It: Realistic Young Adult Fiction

Jesse Andrews, Alexandra Ballard, Annie Barrows, Maurene Goo, Krystal Sutherland

Readers of all ages can see themselves in YA characters who face real-life questions about budding love, friendships, powerlessness, and the process of finding one's place in the world. What do these YA characters have to teach readers about themselves? Join Jesse Andrews, author of "Me, Earl, and the Dying Girl"; Alexandra Ballard, who masterfully depicts one girl's struggle with an eating disorder in her new book "What I Lost"; Annie Barrows, author of the new novel "Nothing," which proves that every life is a story worth telling; Maurene Goo, who presents a "richly-drawn portrait of multicultural LA" in her new novel "The Way You Make Me Feel"; and Krystal Sutherland, whose "bewitching" new book addresses mental illness in a fresh, honest way.

1:30 - 2:45 Nina LaCour Up Close and Personal

Nina LaCour, interviewed by Regan McMahon

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.

3:15 - 4:30 Melissa de la Cruz Writes It All: History, Fantasy, Modern Life

Melissa de la Cruz, interviewed by Jessica Lee

Melissa de la Cruz never met a genre she didn't like. The versatile author (with a penchant for villains) has written more than 45 chart-topping books—from the historical love story of Alex and Eliza (Hamilton, that is) to the fantastical prequel to the Disney Channel movie "The Descendants." Her books have graced the charts of The New York Times, Publishers Weekly, USA Today, Wall Street Journal, and Los Angeles Times, and now she graces our stage. Come learn from this Jack of all Trades as she talks the challenges of risky writing and how she finds her groove.

4:15 - 5:30 Jabberwalking with Juan Felipe Herrera

Can you walk and talk at the same time? How about Jabberwalk? Can you write and draw and walk and journal all at the same time? If not, you're in luck: Festival favorite and marvelous speaker Juan Felipe Herrera, former Poet Laureate of the United States, is here to teach you everything he knows about being a real-life, bonafide, Jabberwalking poet! While his new book is technically for kids, anyone can learn to jabberwalk—parents, older siblings, and grandparents who have some pep in their step! Jabberwalkers write and speak for themselves and others no matter where their feet may take them—to Jabberwalk is to be a poet on the move. And there's no stopping once you're a Jabberwalker, writing fast, fast, fast, scribble-poem-burbles-on-the-run. Scribble what you see! Scribble what you hear! It's all out there — vámonos!

Sunday, April 29

11:45 - 1:00 What Makes a Family?

Nidhi Chanani, Chris Crutcher, Abdi Nazemian, Mitali Perkins

There are those with whom we share blood and childhoods, and those with whom we grow as adults: these are the beautiful, complex, sometimes ill-fitting puzzle pieces that make up a family. Join our panelists as they discuss what makes a family (and what makes a family difficult to write): Nidhi Chanani, a graphic novelist who delves into the immigrant experience; Chris Crutcher, an enduring novelist and family therapist; Abdi Nazemian, whose newest novel raises the question of personal identity and unknown heritage; and Mitali Perkins, who tells multigenerational stories of family and the Indian-American identity.

1:30 - 2:45 A Free Trip to Another World: Fantasy in Young Adult Literature

Shea Ernshaw, Lexa Hillyer, Anna-Marie McLemore, Laura Sebastian, Leslye Walton

It's a popular sentiment, wanting to escape the drudgery of everyday life in favor of new worlds—worlds where fairy tales take on new life, where gardens and witches have the power to enchant people, where young princesses and budding witches seek to find their place. You won't want to miss these authors as they discuss the intricate worlds they've built and where they find the inspiration for the fantastical in this world. Hear from bewitching novelist Shea Ernshaw, Founder and President of Publishing at Glasstown Entertainment Lexa Hillyer, magical realist author Anna-Marie McLemore (who incorporates multicultural magic into her literary worlds), debut fantasy writer Laura Sebastian, and best-selling author Leslye Walton.

1:30 - 2:45 **Writing the Truth: Fiction and Non-Fiction**

Dashka Slater, Anne Nesbet, Sara Saedi, moderated by Dan Brekke

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!)

3:30 - 4:45 **The Empire and the Resistance of Sabaa Tahir**

Here's one reason why young adults today are so outspoken: They've been exposed to powerful political heroes since a young age—via their fiction. Pakistani-American young adult fiction writer Sabaa Tahir's characters, no older than their teen readers, face despotism, oppression, and daily threats to their lives. In the face of the ruthless Martial Empire, our heroes risk everything to resist. These young heroes show us what's right, what's possible, and what sorts of governance need not be tolerated.