

5TH ANNIVERSARY
BAY AREA
BOOK
FESTIVAL

MAY 4 + 5, 2019
DOWNTOWN BERKELEY
225 AUTHORS • 100 SESSIONS
FREE OUTDOOR FAIR



FOR TICKETS + INFO:
BAYBOOKFEST.ORG

Who Am I? Talks on Race and Identity

Saturday, May 4

11:00 - 12:15

Facing the World Through Fantasy: An Interview with Justina Ireland (Florence Schwimmley Little Theater)

Justina Ireland interviewed by Alexandria Brown

"Zombies are a writer's best friend," said Justina Ireland, young adult fantasy fiction writer and author of the New York Times bestselling novel "Dread Nation." The novel explores an alternate Civil War where zombie-slaying biracial teenager Jane McKeene gets caught in a conspiracy and finds herself in a desperate fight for her life. In conversation with author and YA librarian Alexandria Brown, Ireland unpacks how she employs planet-hopping Star Wars characters, half-god assassins, and more to dig into complex questions about capitalism, science, racism, and inequality.

11:00 - 12:00

Notes From A Young Black Chef: Kwame Onwuachi (Chronicle Stage)

Kwame Onwuachi

Meet the all-star chef whose kitchen wizardry and unique flair for fusion were praised by food critic Bill Addison as "ignited and firing at peak level." In Onwuachi's remarkable culinary coming-of-age story, "Notes From a Young Black Chef," he navigates the unwelcoming world of fine dining as a person of color, competes on Top Chef, and quickly

bounces back from the failure of his first restaurant to become the Executive Chef of the wildly popular, D.C.-based Kith and Kin at only 28 years old.

11:45 - 1:00

Comic Consciousness: Graphic Novelists Tackle Cultural Identity And Crisis (The Marsh Theater)

Nora Krug, Edgardo Miranda Rodriguez, Juliana "Jewels" Smith

The book world can feel quite snobby at times, but comics don't care where you come from. Unintimidating and inviting, comics can open the door to tough conversations about gentrification, genocide, natural disasters, and other uncomfortable truths. Armed with with humor, wit, and vulnerability, writer-graphic novelists Nora Krug ("Belonging"), Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez ("Ricanstruction"), and Juliana "Jewels" Smith ("(H)afrocentric Comics") dive into the task of turning their most naked fears and haunting questions about survival and belonging into compelling visual storytelling. With the support of the initiative "Wunderbar Together," initiated by the German Federal Foreign Office, the Goethe Institut, and the Federation of German Industries (BDI); the Goethe-Institut San Francisco; and Goethe-Institut's translation support program "Books First."

11:45 - 1:00

Digging Up The Roots: Transracial Adoptees Seek Truth (The Marsh Cabaret)

Susan Devan Harness, Lisa Marie Rollins, Greg Sarris

Separated from their birth families and raised by white parents, these writers were left to unravel their identities on their own, nursing the ache of loss as they put the pieces of their origin stories together. They have handled their experiences in different ways, some by telling their stories, others by forming community with other adoptees. Join writer, professor, and Native leader Greg Sarris, author and American Indian transracial adoption researcher Susan Devan Harness, and poet-playwright Lisa Marie Rollins for a discussion on how they found their histories, integrated a fractured sense of self, and came to understand home and family. Sponsored by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

12:45 - 2:00

Someone Like Me: Seeing Ourselves in the Books We Read (Florence Schwimmley Little Theater)

Cindy Pon and Lee Wind

When you open a book, do you see yourself in its pages? Do the characters look or think like you? Cindy Pon fought hard to publish one of the first Young Adult fantasy novels with an Asian protagonist on the U.S. market. Lee Wind's queer history book was canceled by the publisher for being too controversial, but he found a way to publish it anyway. The

two dig into why kids (and adults) need diverse characters and how they fight against the bias and blindspots of the publishing world.

1:30 - 2:45

Let The World Move: Speculative Fiction From the Periphery (Veteran's Memorial Building Auditorium)

Lesley Nneka Arimah, Alice Sola Kim, Carmen Maria Machado, moderated by Namwali Serpell

"I stood at the border, stood at the edge and claimed it as central," Toni Morrison said, "Claimed it as central, and let the rest of the world move over to where I was." First and second-generation immigrant writers Lesley Nneka Arimah, Alice Sola Kim, Carmen Maria Machado, and Namwali Serpell tackle the mysterious, the wild, the terrifying, and the magical in their speculative fiction. With rich and enthralling work that defies convention, they are creating a cultural shift in the literary landscape.

1:30 - 2:45

Prophet of Freedom: Frederick Douglass (Chronicle Stage)

David Blight interviewed by Otis R. Taylor Jr.

Frederick Douglass was arguably the most important African American of the nineteenth century, an escaped slave who became the greatest orator of his day and one of the leading abolitionists and writers of the era. Join David Blight, American history scholar and author of the new, definitive biography "Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom," selected as a Top Ten Book of 2018 by the New York Times and numerous other outlets. San Francisco Chronicle columnist Otis R. Taylor, Jr. interviews Blight and helps uncover this towering figure that Blight calls "thoroughly and beautifully human."

3:00 - 4:15

Dear America: An Interview with Jose Antonio Vargas (Chronicle Stage)

Jose Antonio Vargas interviewed by Kate Campbell

Jose Antonio Vargas was sixteen when, signing up to take a driver's test at his local DMV, he discovered his green card was fake. Now he's a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Emmy-nominated filmmaker, and the founder of Define American, an organization that fights anti-immigrant hate through the power of storytelling. But his future still hangs in the balance. In "Dear America," Vargas divulges how he came out first as gay and then as undocumented, reflecting on the high cost of hiding from the government and himself (there's a warrant out for his arrest and deportation back to the Philippines). Illuminating the purgatory of fear people without papers are forced to live in and posing questions about passing and the true meaning of citizenship, Vargas urges us to reconsider the assumptions we make.

3:15 - 4:30

Old In Art School, Young at Heart: Interview with Nell Painter (Freight & Salvage)

Nell Painter

Who gets to be called an artist? In this frank, funny, and often surprising tale of her move from academia to art, historian Nell Painter chronicles her retirement from Princeton University and enrollment in art school at the age of 64. Surrounded by classmates a third of her age, Painter confesses how art school changed her view of what she thought she already knew and examines how women and artists are seen and judged by their age, looks, and race. Meet the multi-talented woman behind "Old In Art School" and learn more about the story that Tayari Jones calls "a cup of courage for everyone who wants to change their lives."

3:15 - 4:30

Writer to Writer: Ishmael Reed and Morgan Parker (Brower Center, Goldman Theater)

Morgan Parker and Ishmael Reed

This cross-generational conversation between two dynamic American writers and cultural critics explores the history and future of the American literary landscape. The legendary Ishmael Reed—MacArthur Genius Fellow, founder of the Before Columbus Foundation, and author of more than 30 books, including his newest "Conjugating Hindi"—sits down with rising literary star Morgan Parker, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow, Pushcart Prize winner, and author of the new poetry collection "Magical Negro."

5:00 - 6:15

A Stranger's Journey: Race, Identity, and Craft (Veteran's Memorial Building Auditorium)

Reyna Grande, Dickson Lam, Ismail Muhammad, David Mura, moderated by David Roderick

To write race and ethnicity well, we need the right tools and the right reading list. Building multidimensional worlds that don't rely on assumptions or defaults takes practice (and guts). Fortunately, master memoirist and creative writing instructor David Mura is here to help. In "A Stranger's Journey: Race, Identity, and Narrative Craft in Writing," Mura delves into how race structures our reality, shaping the way we write and how we expect to be read. He offers techniques and introduces new ways of seeing. Join four writer-teachers of color—Reyna Grande, Dickson Lam, Ismail Muhammad, and David Mura—as they unpack the questions of identity that drive their writing, mark the pitfalls of self-exotification, and weigh the rewards of a penning richer, riskier work.

Sunday, May 5

10:00 - 11:15

Resurrection: Reclaiming the Stories That Make Us Whole (Shattuck Plaza Hotel, Boiler Room)

Alexandria Brown, Mallory O'Meara, Cherríe Moraga

"If we forget ourselves, who will be left to remember us?" asks Cherríe Moraga in the prologue of "Native Country of the Heart." Start your festival experience by journeying with three remarkable writers who delve into the politics of remembering. Learn about a visionary designer who disappeared from the Hollywood horror scene, thanks to a jealous male colleague; a Mexican-American mother whose eroding memory endangers a daughter's connection to her roots; and—because "place" carries memory too—a region, the Napa Valley, whose reputation for lush vineyards and luxury homes eclipses its history of struggle.

10:00 - 11:15

Straddling Worlds: Native Writers Reinvent Identity (Brower Center, Goldman Theater)

Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Susan Devan Harness, Tommy Pico, and Rebecca Roanhorse, moderated by Greg Sarris

What does it mean to be a modern indigenous person, particularly when indigenous identity has been so riddled with stereotypes and when the category is so wide-reaching? Join Kali Fajardo-Anstine, Susan Devan Harness, Tommy Pico, and Rebecca Roanhorse as they plunge into the paradox of Native identity politics and discuss how it manifests in their writing.

11:00 - 12:00

Writer to Writer: Esi Edugyan and Tayari Jones (Chronicle Stage)

Esi Edugyan and Tayari Jones

In our Writer to Writer series, two authors who are fans of each other's work come together for conversation about writing and society today. Novelists Esi Edugyan and Tayari Jones both probe racial injustice in their work, and both women have received considerable praise. Edugyan's sweeping, imaginative novel "Washington Black" was named a Top Ten Book of 2018 by the New York Times, and Tayari Jones' "An American Marriage" was an Oprah's Book Club pick for that same year. Edugyan uses magic realism to explore slavery and freedom in a stupendous tale that moves from Barbados to Nova Scotia to England. Jones weaves a devastating tapestry of a modern marriage wrenched apart by a discriminatory American justice system. With the support of the Consulate General of Canada, San Francisco/Silicon Valley and She Writes Press.

11:45 - 1:00

The Lies That Bind: Kwame Anthony Appiah on Identity (Freight & Salvage)

Kwame Anthony Appiah interviewed by Carlos Lozada

Kwame Anthony Appiah, who writes the weekly Ethicist column for the New York Times, "could variously be described as biracial, Ghanaian British, an Asante, a Londoner, and a gay cis man," said Booklist. But rather than citing these facts as qualification to write on identity, Appiah opens his fascinating analysis, "The Lies That Bind: Rethinking Identity," with an anecdote about ambiguity: taxi drivers struggling to figure him out. Taking us on a tour through history and philosophy, Appiah explores the compulsion to define and gather around identity (religious, cultural, racial, national), and the pitfalls that lurk therein. How do groups struggling for justice use, or misuse, identity toward their ends? How can a more nuanced understanding bring us together, not further apart? Appiah is interviewed by Carlos Lozada, the Pulitzer Prize winning nonfiction book critic for The Washington Post.

1:30 - 2:45

The Business of Brutality: Slavery and the Foundations of Capitalism (Shattuck Plaza Hotel, Shattuck Ballroom)

David Blight, Stephanie Jones-Rogers, Caitlin Rosenthal

Look around. How much of our infrastructure—from roads and bridges to factories and food supplies—was built on the backs of American slaves? Three writer-researchers examine how the brutal history of slavery laid the foundation of American capitalism and shaped today's racial and economic inequality. In "They Were Her Property," Stephanie Jones-Rogers reveals the active role that white women played in the American slave economy. In "Accounting for Slavery," Caitlin Rosenthal examines how elite planters turned their power over enslaved people into a productivity advantage. In "Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom," David Blight investigates the legacy of the escaped slave and abolitionist, who wrote, "The white man's happiness cannot be purchased by the black man's misery." Sponsored by the Stephen M. Silberstein Foundation.

3:15 - 4:30

Ache, Rage, Rise: Portraits of Race and Gender in Short Fiction (The Marsh Theater)

Camille Acker, Jamel Brinkley, Kali Fajardo-Anstine

Come hear three rising literary stars! From a house party in Brooklyn, to the mountains of southern Colorado, to the rapidly changing streets of the nation's capital, these story collections travel the full trajectory and vibrate with vivid prose. Jamel Brinkley ("A Lucky Man," finalist for the National Book Award), Camille Acker ("Training School for Negro Girls"), and Kali Fajardo-Anstine ("Sabrina and Corina") have written coming-of-age stories anchored by young characters who are discovering power and loss, learning the rules and how to break them. Sponsored partly by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

3:15 - 4:30

Ricanstruction: Popular Fiction and Power in Post Maria Puerto Rico (The Marsh Cabaret)

Aya de Leon, Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez, moderated by Vylma Ortiz

Hurricane Maria has permanently altered the Caribbean. While journalists did initial reporting on the disaster, the first books to be published about the hurricane are popular fiction. NYC's Edgardo Miranda-Rodriguez, the creator of the superhero La Borinqueña, assembled "Ricanstruction: Reminiscing and Rebuilding Puerto Rico," a comic anthology fundraiser to benefit survivors on the island. Berkeley author Aya de Leon's next feminist heist book "Side Chick Nation" will be the first print novel about the hurricane. Join these two Puerto Rican writers to discuss the challenges of writing about disaster and why popular fiction has the power to bring the pueblo together around urgent issues.

5:00 - 6:15

The Unbreakable Human Spirit: Albert Woodfox on Survival in Solitary (Freight & Salvage)

Albert Woodfox interviewed by Shane Bauer

One of the "Angola 3," Albert Woodfox endured four decades of solitary confinement for a crime he did not commit. While his story has been profiled by many publications, today we have an opportunity to hear from him directly. From the epilogue of his just-published memoir, "Solitary," come these powerful words: "To those of you who are just entering the world of social struggle, welcome. To those of you who have spent years struggling for human rights and social justice, don't give up. Look at me and see how the strength and determination of the human spirit defies all evil." In our closing keynote session, Woodfox will be interviewed by Mother Jones reporter Shane Bauer, author of "American Prison" and himself a survivor of solitary confinement when he was arrested in Iran and held for two years in the notorious Evin Prison.