

5TH ANNIVERSARY
BAY AREA
BOOK
FESTIVAL

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



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Talks on Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship, & Belonging

Saturday, May 4

10:00 - 11:15

Us vs. Them: Refugees, Asylum, and the Politics of the Borderlands (Berkeley City College Theater)

Aaron Bobrow-Strain, Jonathan Freedman, Steven Mayers, J.J. Mulligan Sepúlveda, Eileen Truax, moderated by Sara Campos

Who is worthy of our compassion? Every day more Central American refugees arrive at the U.S.-Mexico border desperate for asylum. Our government greets them with armed guards and tear gas. Hearing human stories behind the headlines can change how we talk about immigration. Aaron Bobrow-Strain ("The Death and Life of Aida Hernández"), Steven Mayers and Jonathan Freedman ("Solito, Solita"), J.J. Mulligan Sepúlveda ("No Human Is Illegal"), and Eileen Truax ("We Built The Wall") examine the history behind this human rights crisis and tell the urgent stories of those who have experienced it firsthand.

1:30 - 2:45

Human Face: Literature That Brings Human Rights To Life (The Magnes Museum)

Atia Abawi, Aaron Bobrow-Strain, Eliot Pattison

Storytelling can bring depth, humanity, and understanding to the headlines. "A Land of Permanent Goodbyes" depicts a young boy who must escape from war-torn Syria, masterfully told by journalist Atia Abawi, who witnessed the crisis firsthand. In "The Death and Life of Aída Hernandez," Aaron Bobrow-Strain follows an undocumented teen mom and reveals the human consequences of militarizing what was once a more forgiving border. With "Bones of the Earth," Eliot Pattison concludes his mystery series set in Tibet, which he writes about so readers can "understand what it feels like to witness an armed policeman assault a praying monk."

1:30 - 2:45

Let The World Move: Speculative Fiction From the Periphery (Veterans 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.

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. 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.

Sunday, May 5

10:00 - 11:15

The Heart of Hate (Brower Center, Tamalpais Room)

Bradley Hart, Bill Ong Hing, Arjun Sethi

"No one is born hating another person," Nelson Mandela famously said. "People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate they can be taught to love." With the threat of fascism looming around the world, human rights activist Arjun Singh Sethi ("American Hate"), historian Bradley Hart ("Hitler's American Friends"), and immigration attorney Bill Ong Hing ("American Presidents, Deportations, and Human Rights Violations") reveal the roots of hateful political ideologies in the United States and bear witness to survivors of hate crimes, police violence, mass detention, and deportation. They chart a course for unlearning hatred and bigotry.

11:45 - 1:00

From Germany into the World: Brave New Literature on Connection and Belonging (Shattuck Plaza Hotel Boiler Room)

Dorothee Elmiger, Katja Petrowskaja, Takis Würger, moderated by Sabine Kieselbach

Where is my place in the world? Where do I belong? Three distinct voices from Germany and Switzerland explore these questions in their work, all bestsellers in Europe. In "Maybe Esther," Katja Petrowskaja creates a kind of literary family tree, in luminous prose delving into legends and history. Takis Würger's "The Club" is a smoldering story of class, privilege, love, and moral ambiguity, centered around an elite club at Cambridge University. In Dorothee Elmiger's "Shift Sleepers," refugees, workers, inspectors, artists, and ghosts meet in a forest and converse about the meaning of homeland, safety, happiness, and more. Come discover these new voices in translation, one of the most exciting areas in literature today. With the support of the initiative "Wunderbar Together," initiated by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Goethe Institut, and supported by the Federation of German Industries (BDI); the Goethe-Institut San Francisco; Goethe-Institut's translation support program "Books First"; also supported by the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco and Pro Helvetia.

2:15 - 3:30

War Zone: Coming of Age in Times of Conflict (Florence Schwimmley Little Theater)

Atia Abawi, e.E. Charlton-Trujillo, and Benny Lindelauf, moderated by Kenan Mirou

What do you do when your world is suddenly turned upside down? Growing up is hard enough, but these teen protagonists must cope with loss and navigate violence completely out of their control. Atia Abawi's "A Land of Permanent Goodbyes" follows Tareq, a kid forced to flee his home in war torn Syria. e.E. Charlton-Trujillo's "Fat Angie: Rebel Girl Revolution" features Angie, a high school sophomore mourning the death of her sister in Iraq. The two writers will discuss how they write about teenage trauma and resilience, and why these tough-to-write stories are so valuable to readers who need to find hope within their pages.