Bay Area Book Festival #Unbound

Engage with the brightest thinkers & doers from the comfort of your living room.

Berkeley, CA, April 15, 2020 – Kicking off the weekend of May 1-3, the Bay Area Book Festival will launch the “Bay Area Book Festival #Unbound”: a series of world-class live and recorded virtual author programs on the Festival’s YouTube channel. Topics will include voting rights, health and wellness, and the ways in which art and literature shape our personal and social lives during crisis. The line-up also includes a robust slate of sessions for kids, teens, and families.

Following the launch weekend, adult programming will continue through June every Tuesday and Thursday evenings, with YA events on Wednesday evenings, and programs for young children and middle-graders on Saturday mornings. The Festival’s year-round Women Lit series will also go virtual with Women Lit #Unbound to feature lunchtime live events exclusive for Women Lit members, with the recorded program later appearing as an evening Festival #Unbound event.

For tickets, online access, and the full #Unbound schedule and confirmed speakers, please visit: baybookfest.org/unbound for adult programming; baybookfest.org/virtualkids for youth programming.

Since its inception in 2015, the Festival has built a reputation for the quality of its literary programs, its international scope, and its commitment to social justice. “#Unbound will bring you beautifully-produced, thought-provoking sessions with top authors on topics that matter more urgently than ever,” says Festival founder and executive director Cherilyn Parsons. “This year’s election arguably is one of the most important in our lives, so as planned in our original Festival, the centerpiece of #Unbound remains the six-session Voting Rights Program to air on the #Unbound platform as well as nationwide in collaboration with several other book festivals, C-Span Book TV, and many nonprofit partners.”
SELECTION OF PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS FOR MAY/JUNE

VOTING RIGHTS - ADULT SERIES

May 14, 7pm: Courts, COVID-19 & Voter Suppression with Richard Hasen, Alan Hirsch, and Abdi Soltani - moderated by Lala Wu
People in Wisconsin lined up wearing masks as they risked infection and violated a shelter-in-place order simply to exercise the right to vote. With less than six months to go until the 2020 Presidential election, can we expect a repeat of the debacle in Wisconsin—this time, on a national scale?

- Speakers: Richard Hasen, Legal Scholar, named one of the 100 most influential lawyers in America by the National Law Journal, author of Election Meltdown: Dirty Tricks, Distrust, and the Threat to American Democracy; Alan Hirsch, A Short History of Presidential Election Crises: (And How to Prevent the Next One; Abdi Soltani, Executive Director of the ACLU of Northern California

- Moderator: Lala Wu, co-founder of Sister District Project, enlisting 40,000 women nationwide in the fight to win crucial state legislative elections

May 28, 7pm: One Person, No Vote: Carol Anderson in Conversation with Congresswoman Barbara Lee
One of our nation’s leading voices on racial justice, Carol Anderson is the author of the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning bestseller White Rage, in which she chronicles the history of systemic injustices that have impeded black progress in America. In her follow up, One Person, No Vote, she zeros in on the fallout from the 2013 Supreme Court ruling that gutted the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Anderson will be joined by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, one of the most well-regarded, outspoken, and trailblazing members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and currently the only African American woman in House Democratic leadership.

VOTING RIGHTS - YOUNG ADULT SERIES

June TBD: The Future is Ours: Restoring Democracy for the Next Generation with Carol Anderson, Jeff Fleischer, and Elizabeth Rusch - moderated by Khepera Lyons-Clark
What’s wrong with the American election cycle, why does it matter, and how can we empower young people to become involved, take action to have their voices heard, and restore democracy?

- Speakers: Carol Anderson, National Book Critics Award Circle winner and bestselling author of White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Nation’s Divide (Bloomsbury/2016), One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression is Destroying Our Democracy
(Bloomsbury/2018), and the young-adult edition, One Person, No Vote: How Not All Voters Are Treated Equally (Bloomsbury YA/2019); Jeff Fleischer, author of Votes of Confidence: A Young Person's Guide to American Elections (Zest Books/March 2020); Elizabeth Rusch, author of You Call THIS Democracy? (HMH Books for Young Readers/March 2020)

- Moderator: Khepera Lyons-Clark, one of the fierce young women of CinnamonGirl, Inc., an Oakland-based organization that strives to provide girls of color with the access, experiences and a network to grow into successful, global leaders.

*The Voting Rights series has been generously supported by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, the Stephen M. Silberstein Foundation, Mal Warwick Donordigital, and Guy and Jeanine Saperstein*

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

May 13, 7pm: Parenting in a Time of Crisis with Sarah Jacquette Ray, Madeline Levine, and Christine Carter - moderated by Dacher Keltner
Parents all over the world are facing a dilemma: what do we tell children about threatening truths, from COVID-19 to climate change? How do we balance their need to be informed and prepared with their equally important right to experience the carefree joy of youth and dream of the future?


- Moderator: Dacher Keltner, professor of psychology at UC Berkeley and faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center.

*This panel has been generously sponsored by Bayer, ‘Science for a Better Life’*

May 26, 7pm: How to Raise a Reader with Pamela Paul of The New York Times, moderated by developmental psychologist Diana Divecha of the Yale Child Study Center
In a world where so much is competing for a child’s attention, how do you raise a reader? How to help your child turn to books over TV and games, much less carve out time to dive headlong into a book? Join New York Times Book Review editor Pamela Paul in a lively conversation with developmental psychologist Diana Divecha of the Yale Child Study Center, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and Greater Good Science Center, to show us how to give kids of all ages one of the greatest and most joyful gifts.
LITERARY PROGRAMMING

May 19, 7 pm: Sex, Art and Power: Writer-to-Writer with Garth Greenwell and Lidia Yuknavitch - moderated by Keiko Lane
In our Writer-to.Writer series, two writers who are fans of each other’s work come together for a conversation. Garth Greenwell’s most recent book Cleanness (FSG/January 2020) was described in Harpers as “an electrifying portrait of sex’s power to lacerate and liberate, to make and unmake our deepest selves.” In Greenwell’s article for the New Yorker, he praises Lidia Yuknavitch’s work and that her “sex scenes are remarkable among current American novelists, not just for their explicitness but for the way she uses them to pursue questions of agency, selfhood, and the ethical implications of making art.” Come listen in as two of contemporary literature’s most incendiary writers talk about the relationships between queer bodies and sex, language and literary citizenship, and the moral and artistic complexities of desire and power. Moderated by Keiko Lane, an Okinawan American writer, psychotherapist, and former faculty member of the Somatic Psychology Department at CIIS, whose work has appeared most recently in Queering Sexual Violence (Riverdale Avenue Books/2016), TheRumpus.net, and TheFeministWire.com.

*This panel is generously sponsored by California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS)*

CHILDREN/YOUTH

Picture Book
May 23, 10:00 am - Everyone's Awake with Colin Meloy and Shawn Harris
Bestselling children's author Colin Meloy, who's also the lead singer of the rock group The Decemberists, brings us a wildly fun read-aloud book for families that makes getting ready for bed feel like a hilarious adventure. He's joined by illustrator Shawn Harris, whose clever and infectious drawings contain Easter eggs and references that kids will take great glee in finding. Join us for the most musically fun going-to-bed routine ever. Also, there may or may not be tap dancing involved...

Middle Grade
May 23, 11:00 am: Lemonade and Stuck-At-Home Startups for Kids with Brian Weisfeld
Join Brian Weisfeld, author of The Startup Squad book series, as he makes a pitcher of lemonade, while inspiring kids with stories of kidpreneurs who started their own businesses and empowers kids with ideas for startups they can launch while stuck at home. Tune in with six lemons, one cup of sugar, and access to cold water and make lemonade along with him.

Other programs of note include Ready, Set, Write: NaNoWriMo Middle Grade & Young Adult Writing Challenge (June TBD), a special community-building writing initiative, moderated by Grant Faulkner, Executive Director of National Novel Writing Month, and led by
two popular YA guest authors, Mitali Perkins and Maggie Tokuda-Hall; and **Book Club for Kids Podcast with Anne Nesbet - moderated by Kitty Felde (May 30, 10:30 am)**, a virtual episode of the popular Book Club for Kids podcast in which host Kitty Felde joins book-loving kids from Albany Middle School in a lively conversation with author Anne Nesbet, whose latest, *Daring Darleen, Queen of the Screen* (Candlewick/April 14, 2020), is an edge-of-your-seat adventure that plunges readers into the silent film era.

**WOMEN LIT**

**May 10, 7pm: Women Lit #UNBOUND: Sacred and Profane: Debut Novelist Chelsea Bieker on *Godshot* - moderated by Brooke Warner**

Go deep with Chelsea Bi**eker** and Brooke Warner, publisher of She Writes Press and Spark Press, as they plumb the depths of one unforgettable girl’s miraculous journey to fertile ground. Bieker’s explosive literary debut, *Godshot* (Catapult/March 2020), praised by bestseller Kristen Arnett as “a beautiful blow to the heart,” is a hymn to the salvation found in hard-won personal rebirth. Stricken with drought, the once-verdant community of Peaches, California clings to a cult leader for salvation, and 14-year-old Lacey, abandoned by her mother, is left to reap a revelatory, fraught harvest of her own. *Godshot* has won Bieker comparisons to Margaret Atwood, Emma Cline, and Janet Fitch; but the beauty of her “absolute masterpiece” (T. Kira Madden) lies in Lacey’s incomparable voice: the voice of a brokenhearted believer, by turns darkly funny and achingly tender, who you’ll miss after turning the last page.

**LINKS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND MORE**

Photos, logos, and video teasers for #UNBOUND are downloadable at [https://www.baybookfest.org/press-kit-photos](https://www.baybookfest.org/press-kit-photos)

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