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Annual Report 2008-2009



iwp International
Writing Program
Annual Report 2008-2009

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Troubled Waters, Creative Solutions

A Letter from IWP Director Christopher Merrill

The IWP is, and always will be, a true “United Nations of writers.”

Dear Friends,

In this space last year, we called our 40th Anniversary a “watershed year.” Little did we know that, come June, the Iowa River would overrun its banks and send our community and the University to higher ground. The recovery effort, still in progress across Iowa City, has brought together people from every trade, discipline, and walk of life. All of us are dedicated to restoring this place—and particularly the UI Arts Campus—to its former glory. It’s a challenge that requires both patience and imagination. As the University emerges from this difficult period, I’m reminded of H.G. Wells’s observation in *The Time Machine*: “It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble.”

For over forty years now, the IWP has welcomed writers whose intellectual and creative “versatility” continue to transform the cultural landscape. Many of these writers come from regions that have experienced more than their fair share of disasters, natural and man-made. And so, alongside the rushing waters of the Iowa River last summer, there also flowed an outpouring of support from alumni and friends of the IWP. Their letters, phone calls, and e-mails were more than uplifting; they reminded us that the IWP’s important work must continue, whatever the circumstances. When I consider the flood’s effect on the UI campus, and on the IWP’s summer and fall 2008 exchange programs, I bring a revitalized sense of our place within the global network of literary artists. The IWP is, and always will be, a true “United Nations of writers.”

In 2008, the IWP organized a dynamic slate of events and activities for our visiting writers. We began with the June launch of “Between the Lines,” a new enrichment program for high school students from Arabic-speaking countries. The flood, which occurred just 24 hours prior to the students’ arrival in the U.S., made it necessary to move the program from Iowa City to Chicago. We are grateful to our willing—and nimble!—partners in both cities, who worked long and traveled far, all to create innovative programming that stretched our students’ writing skills and introduced them to the literary culture of the U.S. Preparations for the summer 2009 exchange are underway, and this time the program will take place in Iowa City, as originally envisioned.

The fall residency continues to be the centerpiece of our year. We hosted 35 writers from 29 countries, who took part in one of the most dynamic residencies ever. Despite the summer flood, which closed the Iowa House Hotel and many of the arts buildings on campus, the UI community embraced these writers with an array of opportunities for fellowship and collaboration. Once in Iowa City, the writers pursued research projects, worked on new translations, and interacted with the community. Between August and November, our writers took part in over 100 public events in Iowa City and elsewhere. They treated audiences to wonderful discussions, readings, and performances of their work. Our writers were featured presenters at the Chicago Humanities Festival; at the Cities of Asylum/Pittsburgh Jazz Poetry Concert; and in classrooms

from Cambridge, MA to Austin, TX. Brief biographies of the writers we hosted, along with samples of their work and the papers they delivered, are available on the IWP website: <http://iwp.uiowa.edu/writers/index.html>.

In the spring, the IWP led a group of American writers on an overseas reading tour, where they engaged their literary counterparts in Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. We also hosted our third New Symposium session on the Greek island of Paros, convening writers from around the world to explore the topic, “Home/Land.” This convocation was the last one to be organized in Paros; next year, the program will move to Morocco and will be renamed Souk Ukaz—the Arabic term for a marketplace where storytellers once spun their tales—in honor of the locale. The subject for the inaugural Souk Ukaz will fit the location, as well: “The City.” Linked with this exchange will be the 2009 reading tour featuring American authors, which will take place in cities across Morocco and Tunisia.

At a time when international dialogue may be more important than ever, we are grateful for the gifts each writer brings to our program and beyond. Cultural diplomacy takes place in classrooms and in dining rooms; on bookshelves and at podiums, and in the stories that make up a year in the life of this extraordinary program. It’s a time for rebuilding; the coming year will bring even more opportunities for new growth. Iowa City’s recent designation as a UNESCO City of Literature

within the Creative Cities Network provides one platform for that growth. Moreover, in spring 2009, the IWP will launch another new exchange, “The Life of Discovery,” which will unite early-career American writers and visual artists with their counterparts in western China. In all our endeavors, the IWP strives to bring artists together to facilitate the creative process. It is a vision that keeps us going, even in the tough times.

Thank you for supporting the International Writing Program.

Onward!



A stylized, handwritten signature of Christopher Merrill in black ink.

Christopher Merrill
Director

The Fall Residency

August 25 to November 18

The flooding of the Iowa River last summer presented the IWP with daunting logistical challenges, but with the help of the Iowa City community, we nevertheless provided 35 international writers with an environment in which they could flourish.

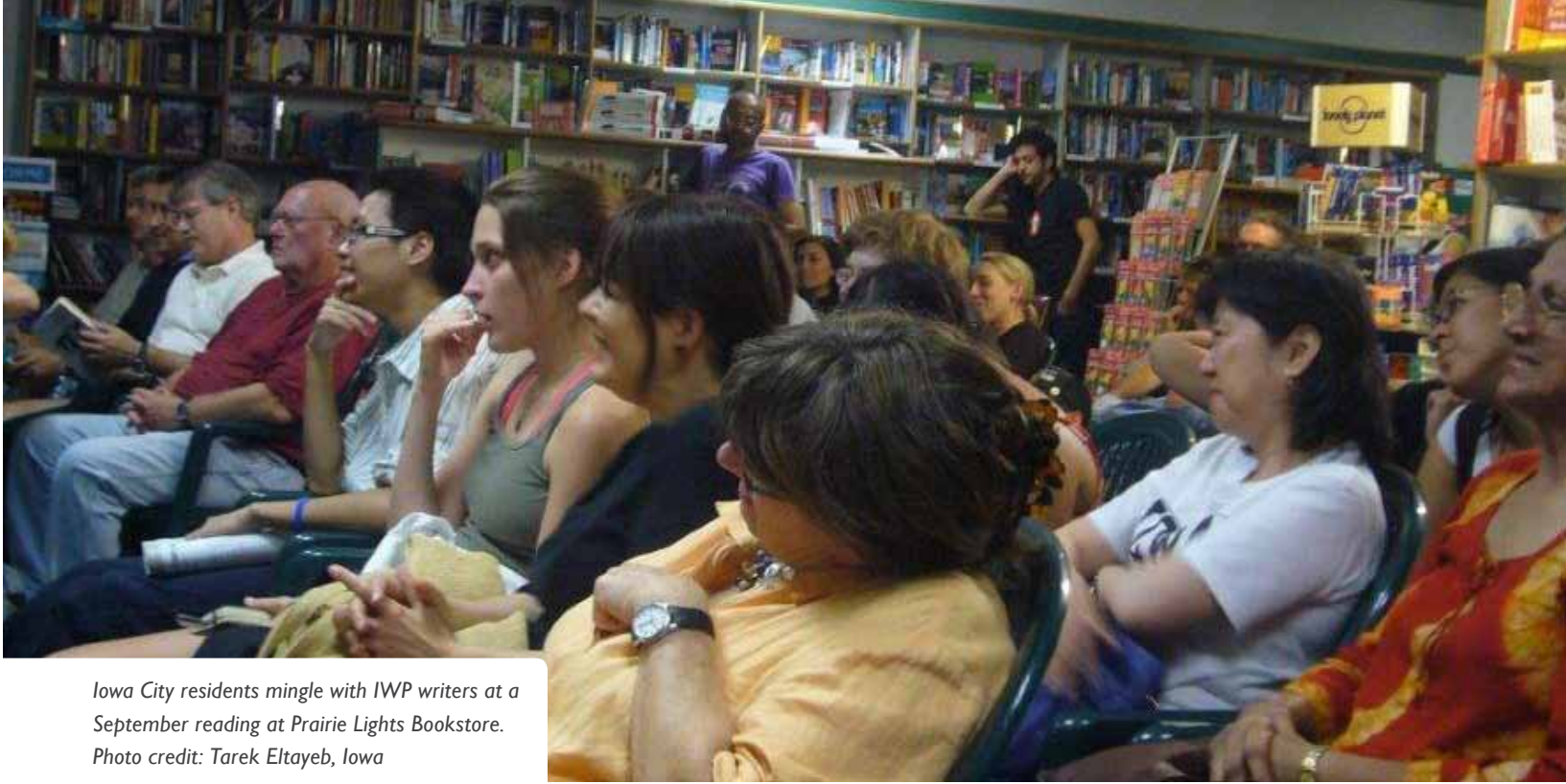
Indeed, the challenging situation allowed the writers to engage even more fully with the people and landmarks of Iowa City—meanwhile forging strong, cross-cultural bonds with one another. At a time when dialogue between international artists may be more important than ever, each of the 35 residents formed bonds with new American friends as well as with writers from across the globe: This year the residency hosted writers from Iran, Jordan, Syria, and Israel; Macedonia, Romania, and Cyprus; Venezuela, and Argentina; China, South Korea, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Burma; Nigeria, Cameroon, and Uganda; Kazakhstan and Russia; and many others.

As the fall residency approached, floodwaters forced the closure of the Iowa House Hotel, the traditional “home-away-from-home” for the program’s visiting writers, and eliminated several essential performance and exhibition spaces on campus. But thanks to the generosity and care of local innkeepers, the writers found lodging at a variety of small hotels, apartments, and bed-and-breakfasts, each located within a mile of the Shambaugh House, the IWP’s home. The program provided University vehicles and drivers for transportation around town, and the Shambaugh House—with newly-installed wireless service and a basement revamped into a writer’s lounge—became the hub for all residency activities.

The community efforts didn’t stop there. The denizens of Iowa City and the University of Iowa welcomed the writers to the Midwest in a variety of special ways. The Council for International Visitors to Iowa Cities (CIVIC) again hosted a dinner honoring the writers, this year at the University’s Levitt Center. The writers also gathered at the home of Michael Judge, Adjunct Instructor at the University’s School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and his wife Masae for the 2nd Annual “World Comes to Iowa” soiree. Members of the local European, African, and Asian communities also extended invitations to special dinners.

The writers returned the favor, forging the sort of friendships and cross-cultural bonds that truly made them honorary citizens of Iowa City. These writers—a true “United Nations of Writers”—hosted dinners at their own homes, offering cuisine from their countries and sharing with guests their own lives, cultures, and creativity. They also treated local audiences to a series of literary activities, collaborations, and performances—in all, over 100 public events in some 20 cities across 13 states.

Some of the performative highlights of the Iowa portion of the residency included: “Local Express”, a series of one-act plays staged by local theatre director Maggie Conroy; a short course, “Gender in the Arab World,” led by UI Professor Denise Filios; a four-day conference, “Science Writing at the Writing University,” sponsored by the IWP and 18 other University programs; the U.S. launch of *The Tomorrow Code*, a children’s novel by IWP writer from New Zealand Brian Falkner; and



Iowa City residents mingle with IWP writers at a September reading at Prairie Lights Bookstore. Photo credit: Tarek Eltayeb, Iowa

a live broadcast on WSUI radio’s *The Exchange* with IWP director Christopher Merrill, Tarek Eltayeb (a novelist, fiction writer and poet from Austria), and Anat Pick (a sound-text performance artist from Israel). On Paul Engle Day, October 12, playwright Lisa Schlesinger and director Lisa DiFranza staged a reading of an exciting new work-in-progress: a one-man play entitled, “Leaner Than Light: 12 Frames of Paul Engle.” The performance took place at the Old Capitol Theatre and was the prelude to a full production that will premiere in 2009. The play is generously supported by a grant from Humanities Iowa. IWP writers read from their work at Prairie Lights Bookstore and at Shambaugh House, participated in panel discussions at the Iowa City Public Library, and lectured at UI Senior College. Digital recordings of the readings, as well as interviews with many of the writers, are archived on the Virtual Writing University website and other locations: <http://at-lamp.its.uiowa.edu/virtualwu/index.php/archive/titles/C52/>. In short, our writers offered rich and unique perspectives on writing, culture, and world affairs, captivating hundreds of UI undergraduates, faculty, and community members.

Individually, too, the writers gave generously of their time and expertise. They visited many classrooms at the University, including the undergraduate courses International Literature Today and International Translation Workshop. They also traveled to local schools, such as Elizabeth Tate Alternative High School and Longfellow Elementary, to discuss their writing and cultural background. These visits, which peppered

the writers’ weekly calendars, fostered new connections and renewed old partnerships the IWP has built over the years.

...the writers gave generously of their time and expertise.



Giving writers the chance to exploring new places is an important part of the IWP residency.

- 8.23**
Residency begins
- 8.24**
Iowa City Walking Tour
- 8.25**
Opening party at The Merrills' home
- 8.30**
Pizza party at The Merrills' home
- 9.1**
Trip to Lake Macbride
- 9.2**
Text & Context: Race & the 2008 Presidential Election
- 9.3**
CIVIC Fundraising Dinner
- 9.4**
Poetry & Translation Reading by Reginald Gibbons
- 9.9**
Text & Context: Publishing in the United States
- 9.9**
Translation Reading by Jamie Richards

Field Trips, Reception & Cultural Events

- 9.13**
Hike at Red Bird Farm
- 9.15**
Fiction Reading by Shimada Masahiko
- 9.16**
Text & Context: U.S. Role in the Changing Global Order (With Vladimir Sambaiew, President of the Stanley Foundation)
- 9.18**
Truman Capote Prize Ceremony and Reception
- 9.20**
Party hosted by Journalism Professor Michael Judge
- 9.27**
Trip to Amana Colonies
- 9.30 - 10.4**
Group Trips to San Francisco, Miami and New Orleans
- 10.7**
Poetry Reading by Richard Kenney
- 10.9 – 10.10**
Writing Science at the Writing University Conference
- 10.12**
Paul Engle Day Performance

- 10.15**
Fiction Reading by Michael Cunningham
- 10.16**
Special Fiction Workshop by Michael Cunningham
- 10.17**
Talk and Screening by Filmmaker Rainer Simon
- 10.18**
Trip to Effigy Mounds
- 10.21**
Text & Context: Studying Writing
- 10.22**
US Bank Reception
- 10.23**
Talk by Ross Benjamin, Literary Critic and Translator of German Literature

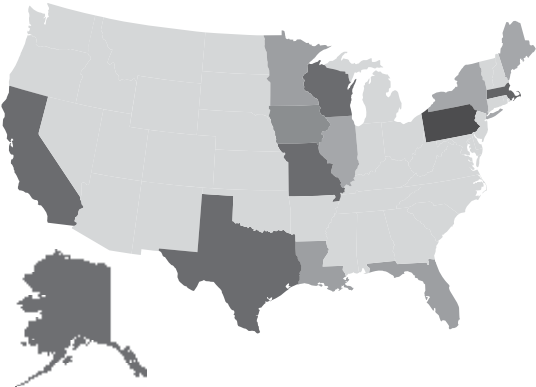
- 10.24**
Q&A With Sal Robinson, an Editor at Harcourt
- 10.26**
Harvest Party at Dane Farm
- 10.30 - 11.2**
Chicago Humanities Festival

Other Visits:

- Cornell College, Iowa
- Chatham University, Pennsylvania
- The Chicago Humanities Festival, Illinois
- City of Asylum/Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- The City of Miami, Florida
- The City of New Orleans, Louisiana
- The City of New York, New York
- The City of San Francisco, California
- The District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.
- George Washington University, District of Columbia
- Grinnell College, Iowa
- The Guild Literary Complex, Illinois
- Harvard University, Massachusetts
- Haverford College, Pennsylvania
- The Hermitage Artist Retreat, Florida
- The Island Institute in Sitka, Alaska
- New York Theatre Workshop, New York

- 11.2**
Reading Featuring MFA students from Writers' Workshop, Nonfiction Program, Playwrights Workshop & Translation Workshop
- 11.3**
Fiction Reading by Marilynne Robinson
- 11.4**
Election Day
- 11.6**
Translation MFA Student Reading
- 11.11**
Closing Party
- 11.12 - 11.14**
Trip to Washington, D.C.
- 11.14 - 11.18**
Trip to New York
- 11.18**
Departure/End of Residency

- Northern Illinois University, Illinois
- Northwestern University in Chicago
- Portland Stage Company, Maine
- The University of Chicago, Illinois
- The University of Illinois-Chicago, Illinois
- The University of Texas at Austin, Texas
- Westminster College, Missouri
- Viterbo University, La Crosse, Wisconsin



2008 Fall Residency Activities

Organized by writer

Maryam Ala Amjadi (Iran)

9.13 Participation in Pittsburgh Jazz Poetry Concert
9.26 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Writing in Translation/Writing across Languages”
10.6 Middle East Contemporary Poetry Performance
10.7 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
10.10 Presentation, Undergraduate Literature Class
10.13 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.14 Presentation, Undergraduate Middle Eastern Literature Seminar
10.26 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
11.7 Participation in Local Express Reading Performance
11.8 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Turtles Can Fly*

Laila Al Atrash (Jordan)

10.4 Reading & Presentation, Chatham University
10.9 Panel Presentation, “Gender in the Middle Eastern World”
10.10 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.12 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Dreams of Hind and Camelia*
10.17 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
10.20 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.23 Presentation, Undergraduate Middle Eastern Literature Seminar
10.28 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College

Haifa Bitar (Syria)

10.6 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.7 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
10.9 Panel Presentation, “Gender in the Middle Eastern World”
10.10 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.14 Presentation, Undergraduate Middle Eastern Literature Seminar

Alan Chermesov (Russia)

10.27 Presentation, Russia Today Class
10.27 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.29 Discussion, Fourth Year Russian Class
10.29 Presentation, Russian Translation Workshop
10.31 Reading & Presentation, University of Chicago Department of Slavic Languages & Literature

Tarek Eltayeb (Austria)

9.14 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.15 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.21 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
10.24 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The Migrant as Figure in Literature Today”
10.28 Presentation, Undergraduate Middle Eastern Literature Seminar
11.10 Presentation, Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

Brian Falkner (New Zealand)

9.7 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.22 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.8 Reading & Presentation, Longfellow Elementary School
10.10 Participation in Panel: Science and Creative Writing
10.17 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
10.22 Reading & Presentation, Longfellow Elementary School
11.8 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore

Carlos Gamero (Argentina)

9.8 Presentation, International Literature Today
9.21 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.25 Presentation I, Undergraduate Spanish Creative Writing Class
9.26 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Writing in Translation/Writing across Languages”
9.25 Presentation II, Undergraduate Spanish Creative Writing Class
10.16 Presentation, Undergraduate Seminar on Transnational Literature
10.22 Week-long professional trip to Austria and Germany for readings
11.7 Anthology Reading Series Reading
11.9 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *La ciénaga*

Yael Globberman (Israel)

9.7 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.26 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Writing in Translation/Writing across Languages”
9.29 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.6 Middle East Contemporary Poetry Performance

Andrey Grishaev (Russia)

10.27 Presentation, Russia Today Class
10.27 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.29 Discussion, Fourth Year Russian Class

10.29 Presentation, Russian Translation Workshop
10.31 Reading & Presentation, University of Chicago Department of Slavic Languages & Literature

Dina Gudym (novelist; Kazakhstan)

8.29 Reading, Shambaugh House
9.29 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.15 Presentation, Undergraduate Literature Seminar
10.17 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
10.23 Presentation, Elizabeth Tate High School

Leonardo Henríquez (Venezuela)

9.12 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
9.19 Reading, Shambaugh House
9.22 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.19 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Sangrador*

Hu Xudong (China)

8.31 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.8 Presentation, International Literature Today
9.12 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”

Kim Gyeongmee (South Korea)

9.29 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.17 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
10.17 Reading, Shambaugh House

Igor Karaulov (Russia)

10.27 Presentation, Russia Today Class
10.27 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.29 Discussion, Fourth Year Russian Class
10.29 Presentation, Russian Translation Workshop
10.31 Reading & Presentation, University of Chicago Department of Slavic Languages & Literature

Maya Kucherskaya (Russia)

10.12 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.13 Presentation, International Literature Today

Kyaw Win (Myanmar)

9.26 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.3 International Burma Studies Conference, Northern Illinois University
10.10 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “What Matters Now: Social Change in the World”
10.13 Presentation, International Literature Today

Agnes S. L. Lam (Hong Kong)

9.12 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
9.15 Presentation, International Literature Today

10.12 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.14 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
10.16 Presentation, Chinese Studies students, University of Iowa

Lee Jang Wook (South Korea)

9.26 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.6 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.10 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “What Matters Now: Social Change in the World”

Nikola Madzirov (Macedonia)

9.5 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The City”
9.13 Participation in Pittsburgh Jazz Poetry Concert
9.17 Week-long professional trip to Austin, TX for poetry readings
9.28 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Shadows*
10.5 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.6 Presentation, International Literature Today
11.7 Participation in Local Express Performance
11.7 “Anthology” Reading (Graduate Student Reading Series)

Kristof Magnusson (Germany/Iceland)

9.21 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.26 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Writing in Translation/Writing across Languages”
10.13 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.22 Special Q & A Session with students from Des Moines Central Academy
10.28 Reading, Grinnell College

Gutierrez “Teng” Mangansakan II (The Philippines)

9.19 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.5 IWP Cinemathèque screening of *Dispatches from Mindanao*
10.20 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.24 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The Migrant as Figure in Literature Today”
10.29 Presentation, Undergraduate Literature Class

Niq Mhlongo (South Africa)

9.5 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The City”
9.11 Reading and Talk at Cornell College (Mount Vernon, IA)
9.14 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Tsotsi*
9.29 Presentation, International Literature Today
9.29 Presentation, Undergraduate Literature Class
10.13 Presentation, Scott Community College (Bettendorf, IA)
10.26 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
11.5 Presentation, Iowa City Foreign Relations Council

Glaydah Namukasa (Uganda)

8.31 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.6 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.10 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “What Matters Now: Social Change in the World”

10.13 Presentation, Scott Community College (Bettendorf, IA)
11.6 Presentation, Elizabeth Tate High School
11.18 Presentation, Haverford College (Haverford, PA)
11.19 Presentation, Westminster College (Fulton, MO)

Alina Nelega (Romania)

9.12 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.1 Reading, Viterbo University
10.9-27 Participation in Romanian Play Festival (Romania)
11.3 Presentation, International Literature Today
11.7 Participation in Local Express Reading Performance
11.10 Reading, Portland Stage Company (Portland, ME)
11.17 Reading, New York Theatre Workshop

John Nkengasong (Cameroon)

9.11 Reading and Talk at Cornell College (Mount Vernon, IA)
9.14 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
9.22 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.17 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”

Anat Pick (Israel)

9.8 Presentation, International Literature Today
9.12 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
9.12 Performance, Shambaugh House
10.1 Performance, Viterbo University
10.6 Middle East Contemporary Poetry Performance
10.13 Dada Sound Poetry Performance

Ruby Rahman (Bangladesh)

8.29 Reading, Shambaugh House
9.5 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The City”
9.22 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.14 Reading & Presentation University of Iowa Senior College
10.28 Presentation, Undergraduate Literature Seminar

Veronica Raimo (Italy)

9.5 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The City”
9.21 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *Fists in the Pockets*
9.25 Presentation, Elizabeth Tate High School
10.5 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.20 Presentation, International Literature Today

Rogelio Saunders (Cuba/Spain)

9.13 Participation in Pittsburgh Jazz Poetry Concert
9.25 Reading & Presentation, Undergraduate Spanish Creative Writing Class
9.28 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.7 Reading, Grinnell College
10.10 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “What Matters Now: Social Change in the World”
11.3 Presentation, International Literature Today

Ioannis “Jianni” Skaragas (Greece)

9.5 Reading, Shambaugh House
9.15 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.10 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “What Matters Now: Social Change in the World”
10.28 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
11.7 Participation in Local Express Reading Performance

Madeleine Thien (Canada)

9.28 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.20 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.22 Special Q & A Session with students from Des Moines Central Academy
10.24 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The Migrant as Figure in Literature Today”

Yorgos Trillidis (Cyprus)

9.5 Reading, Shambaugh House
9.26 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Writing in Translation/Writing across Languages”
10.9 Presentation, Elizabeth Tate High School
10.22 Special Q & A Session with students from Des Moines Central Academy
11.3 Presentation, International Literature Today
11.7 Participation in Local Express Reading Performance

Uche Umezurike (Nigeria)

9.12 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “Note to Self: Why I Write What I Write”
10.17 Reading, Shambaugh House
10.20 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.21 Reading & Presentation, University of Iowa Senior College
10.26 IWP Cinemathèque Screening of *The Widow*

Nailya Yamakova (Russia)

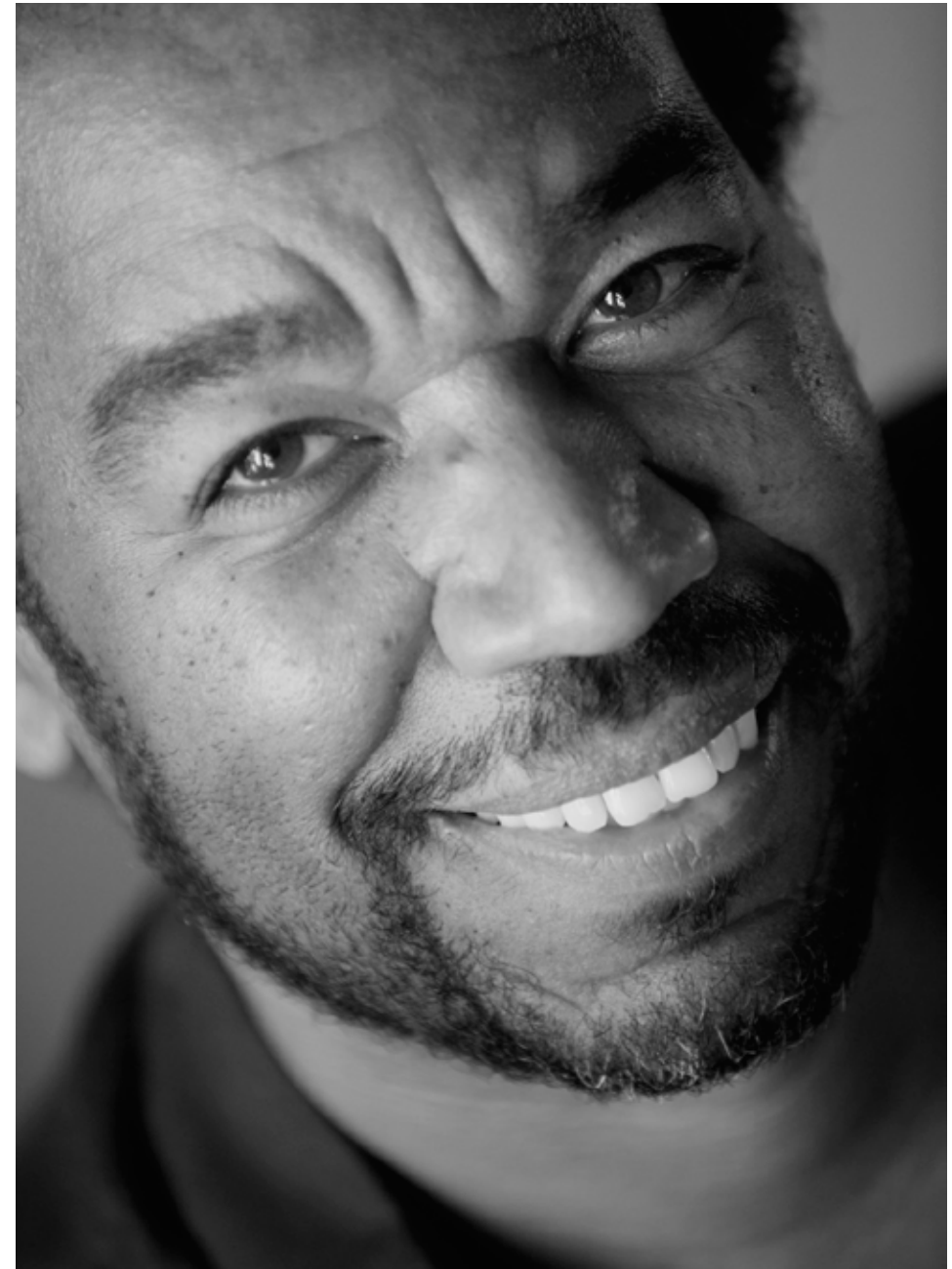
10.27 Presentation, Russia Today Class
10.27 Presentation, International Literature Today
10.29 Discussion, Fourth Year Russian Class
10.29 Presentation, Russian Translation Workshop
10.31 Reading & Presentation, University of Chicago Department of Slavic Languages & Literature

Amina Zaydan (Egypt)

10.9 Panel Presentation, “Gender in the Middle Eastern World”
10.19 Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore
10.24 Iowa City Public Library Panel: “The Migrant as Figure in Literature Today”
11.3 Presentation, International Literature Today

A Selection of Writer Portraits from the Fall 2008 Residency

Photos by Tom Langdon



Tarek El Tayeb (Austria)



Dina Gudym (Kazakhstan)



Anat Pick (Israel)



Carlos Gamerro (Argentina)



Laila Al Atrash (Jordan)



Uche Umezurike (Nigeria)

2008 Fall Residency Participants

Maryam Ala Amjadi (Iran) Poet	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Laila Al Atrash (Jordan) Novelist, Journalist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Haifa Bitar (Syria) Novelist, Fiction Writer	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Alan Chermesov (Russia) Fiction Writer	Open World Cultural Leaders Program
Tarek Eltayeb (Austria) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Poet, Playwright	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Brian Falkner (New Zealand) Novelist, Fiction Writer	Creative New Zealand
Carlos Gamerro (Argentina) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Screenwriter, Translator	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Yael Globberman (Israel) Poet, Fiction Writer, Novelist	U.S.-Israel Education Foundation (USIEF)
Dina Gudym (Kazakhstan) Novelist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Andrey Grishaev (Russia) Poet	Open World Cultural Leaders Program
Leonardo Henríquez (Venezuela) Director, Film Editor, Screenwriter, Novelist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Hu Xudong (China) Poet, Essayist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Kim Gyeongmee (South Korea) Poet, Essayist, Script Writer	Arts Council Korea (ACK)
Igor Karaulov (Russia) Poet	Open World Cultural Leaders Program
Maya Kucherskaya (Russia) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Essayist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Kyaw Win (Myanmar) Editor, Translator	Independent Funding
Agnes S. L. Lam (Hong Kong) Poet, Essayist, Literary Critic	Centre for Applied English Studies, University of Hong Kong
Lee Jang Wook (South Korea) Poet, Novelist, Editor	Korea Literature Translation Institute (KLTi)
Nikola Madzirov (Macedonia) Poet, Essayist, Translator	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Kristof Magnusson (Germany/Iceland) Fiction Writer, Playwright, Translator	Max Kade Foundation
Gutierrez “Teng” Mangansakan II (The Philippines) Journalist, Poet, Essayist, Filmmaker, Editor	U.S. Embassy Manila
Niq Mhlongo (South Africa) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Screenwriter	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Glaydah Namukasa (Uganda) Novelist, Fiction Writer	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Alina Nelega (Romania) Playwright, Fiction Writer, Journalist	Romanian Cultural Institute
John Nkengasong (Cameroon) Novelist, Fiction Writer, Poet, Playwright	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Anat Pick (Israel) Sound-Text Performance Artist	Foundation for Jewish Culture The University of Iowa Louis Schulman Hillel
Ruby Rahman (Bangladesh) Poet, Fiction Writer, Essayist	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Veronica Raimo (Italy) Fiction Writer, Poet, Playwright, Screenwriter, Translator	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Rogelio Saunders (Cuba/Spain) Poet, Fiction Writer, Novelist, Essayist	William B. Quarton Foundation
Ioannis “Jianni” Skaragas (Greece) Fiction Writer, Novelist	Fulbright Foundation of Greece
Madeleine Thien (Canada) Fiction Writer, Novelist	Quebec Arts Council
Yorgos Trillidis (Cyprus) Fiction Writer	Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture
Uche Umezurike (Nigeria) Children’s Novelist, Fiction Writer, Poet	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Nailya Yamakova (Russia) Poet	Open World Cultural Leaders Program
Amina Zaydan (Egypt) Novelist, Fiction Writer	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State



Reading Tours in the Middle East & Cyprus

April 12 to 22 (Oman and Saudi Arabia)

May 11 to 15 (Cyprus)

Oman and Saudi Arabia Reading and Lecture Tour Participants

Ron Carlson

(fiction writer, professor at the University of California, Irvine; USA)

Patricia Hampl

(non-fiction writer, professor at the University of Minnesota; USA)

Richard Kenney

(poet, professor at the University of Washington; USA)

Michelle Latiolais

(fiction writer, professor at the University of California, Irvine; USA)

Christopher Merrill

(poet, director of the International Writing Program; USA)

During the 2008 Middle East Reading Tour hosted by the IWP, our delegations of American writers attended a reading by Omani poets; dined privately with the literati of Riyadh; met a Saudi Arabian prince; and discussed Cyprian politics with writers from both sides of the Green Line that separates the Greek and Turkish populations of Cyprus. In short, it was a rich and enlightening trip—for the Americans as well as for their Middle Eastern peers.

Our first delegation of four very well-known American writers spent ten days traveling in Oman and Saudi Arabia, where they gave readings, visited schools and attended cultural events. A few weeks later, our second delegation spent five days in Cyprus, where they became acquainted with a rich, and politically fraught, region. Both trips were made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Americans left the Middle East having forged deep connections with members of the literary communities in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Cyprus. Among the welcome outcomes of this new understanding: A special issue of *Cadences*, the University of Cyprus's literary journal will feature the American writers' work, and plans are underway for a guest-curated issue of the IWP's online journal *91st Meridian* to introduce Greek and Turkish writing to a wider Anglophone readership. The delegation's visit to Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, inspired members of the Saudi literary community to try to form local creative-writing workshops like those so popular stateside.

And it would be difficult to overstate the impact on the members of our delegations, who left the region with a stack of reading material, new email correspondents, invitations to teach, a sense of wonder, and a determination to further deepen their understanding of Arabic and Cypriot literary culture.



From left to right: IWP Program Officer Kelly Bedeian, with American writers Michelle Latiolais and Patricia Hampl.



In Riyadh, the American delegation met with His Royal Highness Prince Turki Al-Faisal, who served as Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. from 2005-2007.

**The Americans left the Middle East
having forged deep connections with
members of the literary communities
in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Cyprus.**



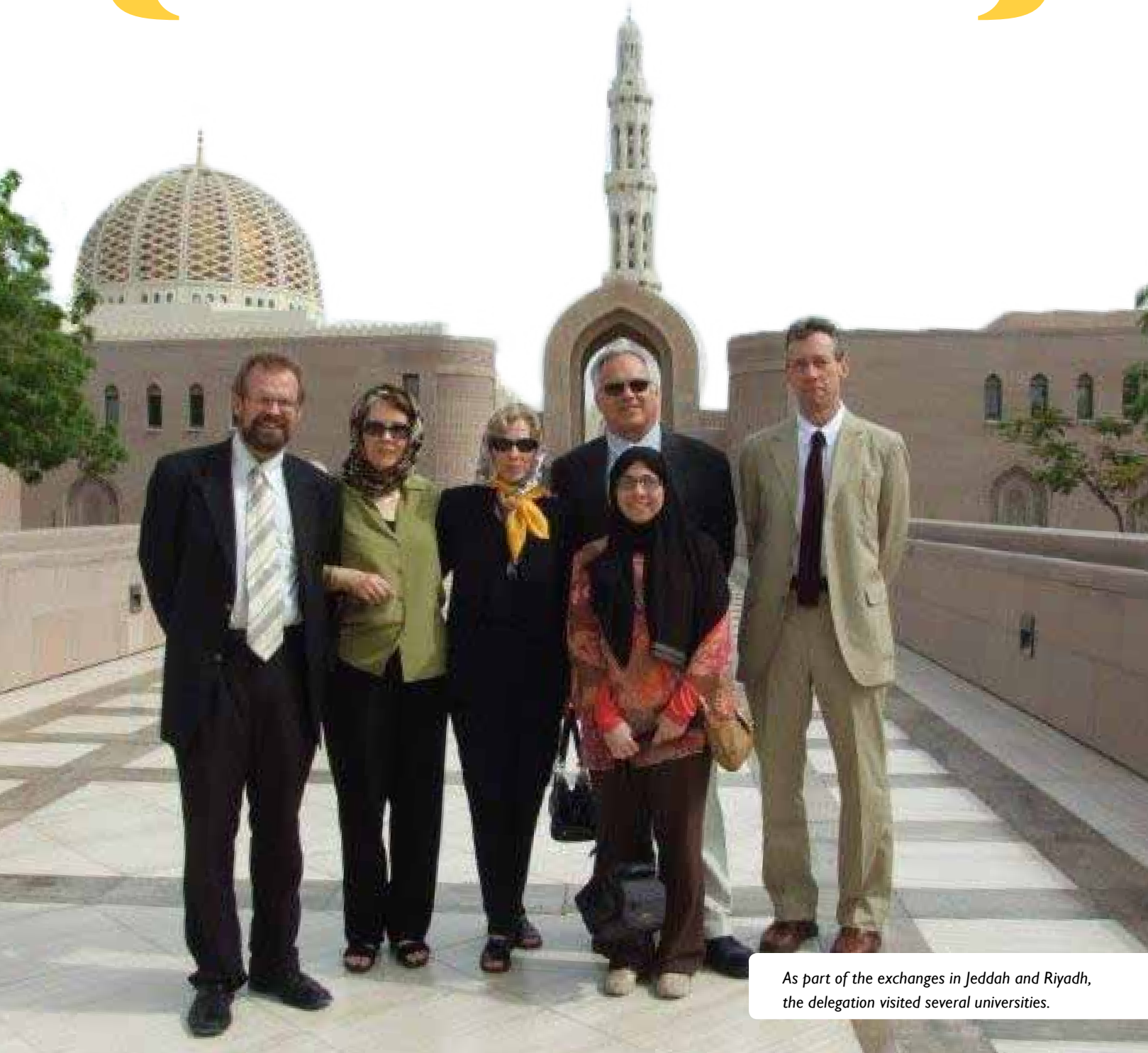
During the tour, the American delegation met with officials as well as students.



Patricia Hampl speaks with Asim Mohamed Al Saidi (IWP, '04) in Oman.



The American delegates made presentations on literary topics to writing students in Oman.



As part of the exchanges in Jeddah and Riyadh, the delegation visited several universities.



In Riyadh, a presentation to professional Saudi writers sparked exciting dialogue.

Cyprus Reading and Lecture Tour Participants



The group of American writers and IWP director Christopher Merrill (center) gathered in Cyprus for the Reading & Lecture Tour.



Shared meals and conversations formed a vital part of the Cyprus exchange.

Jennifer Kwon Dobbs
(poet; USA)

Debra Marquart
(poet, essayist, novelist; USA)

Christopher Merrill
(poet, director of the International Writing Program; USA)

David St. John
(poet; USA)

Natasha Trethewey
(poet; USA)



In Cyprus, the delegation met frequently with local writers and discussed literary topics in formal and informal settings.

New Symposium

May 15 to 21
Paros, Greece

What does it mean—emotionally, philosophically, politically, or otherwise—to be “at home” in a place?

We chose this thorny question as the focus of this year’s New Symposium, the third in a series in which the IWP convenes a group of international writers for a week of rich dialogue on contemporary topics.

This year’s event, held on the Greek island of Paros, was rich indeed. The participants included American, international and local writers—in all, 14 writers representing China, Cyprus, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, and the United States. Not surprisingly, their vastly different experiences, perspectives and vocabularies led to a rich conversation on the theme of “Home/Land,” in which they shared and debated many deeply held, and often conflicting, beliefs.

The New Symposium was organized by the IWP, funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and co-sponsored by the Fulbright Foundation in Greece, EKEMEL (European Translation Center—Literature & Human Sciences) and the Office of the Mayor of Paros.

Read the papers presented at the New Symposium and view a 30-minute film about the exchange on the IWP website: <http://iwp.uiowa.edu/paros/2008paros/index.html>.

Participants

- Amma Darko (fiction writer; Ghana)
- Nirwan Dewanto (essayist, poet, editor; Indonesia)
- Jennifer Kwon Dobbs (poet; USA)
- Debra Marquardt (poet, essayist, novelist; USA)
- Jeffrey Carson (poet, translator; Greece/USA)
- Kei Miller (poet, fiction writer; Jamaica)
- Kavery Nambisan (novelist, fiction writer, essayist; India)
- Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (poet; Ireland)
- Nikos Papandreou (novelist, fiction writer, essayist; Greece)
- David St. John (poet; USA)
- Stephanos Stephanides (scholar, poet, essayist, translator; Cyprus)
- Natasha Trethewey (poet; USA)
- Anastassis Vistonitis (poet, essayist, journalist, translator; Greece)
- Macdara Woods (poet, translator; Ireland)
- Xi Chuan (poet; China)





Between the Lines

June 14 to 28
Chicago, Illinois

IWP director Christopher Merrill (far right) welcomes students and chaperones to Chicago.

This year, we launched one of our most exciting new projects: Between the Lines, an ambitious partnership between the IWP and the Iowa Young Writers' Studio, in which young writers from Arabic-speaking countries gather for a two-week summer program.

The inaugural program brought 12 young students, joined by three chaperones, from across the Middle East—Lebanon, Israel, Syria, the Palestinian Authority, and Jordan—to study creative writing together, with funding from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. From the start, there were hurdles to jump: The program was initially intended to be held at the University of Iowa, but because of the flooding of the Iowa River, the university wasn't able to house the Between the Lines participants. Within a day, we landed on a creative solution: moving the program to the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The logistical details thus settled, things went remarkably smoothly. The students, ranging in age from 15 to 19, made a delightful group, approaching their writing workshops, literature seminars, and various extracurricular activities with enthusiasm, verve and an eagerness to learn. Among the highlights, they attended a citywide storytelling festival, participated in a translation workshop with American peers, toured the *Chicago Tribune* newsroom, submitted their poetry for inclusion in a public art exhibit and attended a performance by an experimental theatre group.

By the end of the two-week period, the students not only expanded their understanding of the art of reading and writing, but also formed lasting, cross-border friendships. We're looking forward to continuing to build Between the Lines into a vibrant, lasting element of our program.

Read highlights from the 2008 Between the Lines session on the IWP website:
<http://iwp.uiowa.edu/projects/2008highlights.html>

Participants

Randa Ghantous (student; Tel Aviv)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Ehab Ghosheh (student; Jerusalem)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Qais Mousa (student; Jerusalem)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State



From left to right - participants Karim Ghawi (Amman) and Qays Mousa (Ramallah) study poetry.

Rand Safi (student; Jerusalem)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Lina Soufan (student; Jerusalem)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Samar Saleh (student; Damascus)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Edwar Tarzi (student; Damascus)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Hiba Al-Masri (student; Amman)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Kareem Ghawi (student; Amman)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Fares Jaber (student; Amman)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Eliane Aoun (student; Beirut)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Ali Awarke (student; Beirut)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Hiyam Mahmoud (chaperone; Amman)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Reina Mina (chaperone; Amman)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

Jalal Sirees (chaperone; Damascus)
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs
at the U.S. Department of State

...the students not only expanded their understanding of the art of reading and writing, but also formed lasting, cross-border friendships.

Program Support

The IWP can only continue its activities thanks to the continuing support of the University of Iowa, as well as federal, state, community and individual funding sources. We would like to acknowledge our profound debt to the individuals, entities and institutions listed below.

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The Department of Theatre Arts: Professors Dare Clubb and Art Borreca

The Department of Cinema and Comparative Literature: Chair Russell Valentino, Professors Ruedi Kuenzli and Maureen Robertson, and administrative staff

The Department of Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures: Professor Margaret Mills, Lecturer Ashot Vardanyan

Department of Classics: Chair Carin Green
and Professor Peter Green

School of Library and Information Science: Professor
James Elmborg and graduate research assistants

Virtual Writing University: Editor Lauren Haldeman

Music Research Librarians Ruthann McTyre and M. Wilson Kimer

The Department of French and Italian: Lecturer Hope Fitzgerald

South Asian Studies Program: Co-directors
Meena Khandelwal and Philip Lutgendorf

Program Support

Tim Barrett

A Bella Vista Inn: Daissy Owen

Between the Lines Staff: Instructors Daniel Khalastchi, Dunya Mikhail, and Anjali Sachdeva; Curriculum Developer Dora Malech; Instructor and Curriculum Developer Iman Humaydan

Nigol Bezjian (Beirut, Lebanon)

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Cheryl Jacobsen

The Java House

Jerry & Margie's Catering

Anna Kolesnikova

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Stephen Nugent (Nicosia, Cyprus)

Elena Osinskaya

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Harris, Paul Ingram, Kathleen Johnson

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Andrew Woolford

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Drs. Ramon and Victoria Lim

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Dicharry and his students

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The Fulbright Foundation of Greece

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Foundation, Cedar Rapids, IA

The Guild Literary Complex, Chicago, IL

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Humanities Iowa: Executive Director Christopher
Rossi, Grants Director Cheryl Walsh, & staff

The Iowa City Chinese Community

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The University of Iowa Louis Schulman Hillel, Iowa City, IA

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Cultural Programs Division of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs: Chief Daniel Schuman and Bureau Program Officers Colombia Barrosse, Lea Perez, Alina Romanowski, and Jill Staggs

The United States Embassies of Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, China, Cyprus, Egypt, India, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Oman, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syria, the Philippines, Uganda, Venezuela, and their Public Affairs Officers

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U.S. Senator Charles E. Grassley and his staff

Iowa City Mayor Regenia Bailey, City Manager Michael A. Lombardo, and City Council

U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, U.S. Department of State: Director Jefferson Brown

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826 Chicago, Chicago, IL

Ames Public Library, Librarians Ames, IA: Lynne Carey and Rema Nilakanta

Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL

The Chicago Humanities Festival, Chicago, IL: Artistic Director Lawrence Weschler and staff

City of Asylum/Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA: President Henry Reese

Effigy Mounds National Monument, Harpers

Ferry, IA: Merle Frommett and staff

The Hermitage Artist Retreat, Englewood, FL

Hull-House Chicago, Chicago, IL: Lisa Yun Lee and staff

The Island Institute, Sitka, AK: Co-director Carolyn Servid
The Lark Theatre Company, NY, NY

New Orleans Citizen Diplomacy Council, New Orleans, LA

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The Portland Stage Company of Portland, ME: Affiliate Artist Lisa DiFranza, Artistic Director Anita Stewart, actors, and staff

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Special Thanks

The IWP is grateful to Senior Program Advisor Peter Nazareth and to Housing Coordinator Mary Nazareth for their generous donation to the Shambaugh House Library in 2008. The Peter and Mary Nazareth Collection contains hundreds of books, many of them rare volumes, penned by IWP writers. We cherish this gift, and the Nazareths’ continuing service to the International Writing Program.



(Bookplate designed by Shari DeGraw of Empyrean Press.)

In Memoriam

This Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Joanne Hemingway.

Honor Roll

Contributors to The International Writing Program

This honor roll gratefully recognizes individuals and organizations who contributed \$100 or more from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008, to the International Writing Program through The University of Iowa Foundation, the preferred channel for private support of all areas of the University.

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- Abboud, Francois M., Iowa City, Iowa
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- Shuttleworth, Winifred A., Cedar Rapids, Iowa
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- Stanley, Richard H., Muscatine, Iowa
- Stewart, Pamela M., Iowa City, Iowa
- U.S. Bank, Iowa City, Iowa

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If you would like to discuss how you can support the International Writing Program, please contact:

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(319) 335-3305 or (800) 648-6973
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Corrections
The recognition extended to those listed in this honor roll is one small way to thank contributors. Every effort has been made to ensure that this honor roll is accurate. If your name has been omitted or misspelled, we apologize. Please contact the UI Foundation with any questions or corrections. Thank you.



*International Writing Program participants
and staff, fall 2008.*