



INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

ABOUT US

ABOUT

The International Writing Program (IWP) is the oldest and largest multinational writing residency in the world. With a fifty year tradition of excellence, the IWP annually brings outstanding authors from around the world to the University of Iowa. Since 1967, nearly 1,500 writers from more than 150 countries have taken part in the Fall Residency. The goal of the IWP is to provide authors a one-of-a-kind intercultural opportunity, and the time and space to write, read, translate, study, conduct research, travel, give readings, stage work, and become part of the vibrant literary and academic community at the University and in Iowa City, the first U.S. city designated as a UNESCO City of Literature.

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THANK YOU

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A week before the 50th-anniversary Fall Residency, a coalition of hate groups—white nationalists, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and neo-Confederates, including Klansmen—marched with torches across the campus of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville chanting racist and anti-Semitic sentiments. The next day's rally turned violent and then deadly when a car was driven intentionally into antiracist counter-protesters, injuring nineteen and killing Heather Heyer.

The International Writing Program (IWP) was founded during one of America's most turbulent, distressing, and also progressive decades. Recent events make one wonder what was on the minds of the first group of writers to accept invitations to the IWP, issued by a maverick English professor from the University of Iowa, Paul Engle, and his future wife, Nieh Hualing, a novelist, translator, and editor who had fled to Taiwan from Mainland China before coming to the Iowa Writers' Workshop. At the end of the summer of 1967, as those first writers were packing for their trips, were they thinking about the nuclear standoff between the U.S. and the USSR? The war in Vietnam? The Civil Rights Movement? News traveled differently then. Most may not have learned until they arrived that "In the Heat of the Night" was in theaters everywhere, that the U.S. Senate had just confirmed Thurgood Marshall's nomination to the Supreme Court, and that eighteen White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan awaited federal trial for the murder of three civil rights workers. I like to imagine that everyone in that first group was excited to see for themselves the civic upheavals of a democracy under pressure from without and within.

"THE INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM WAS FOUNDED DURING ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST TURBULENT, DISTRESSING, AND ALSO PROGRESSIVE DECADES."

Participants in our Fall Residency have always been more than just writers; they are also prominent thinkers and activists, cultural and community leaders, they teach immigrant populations or serve as editors at major journals and publishing houses, they are lawyers and translators, and as a rule they have always tended to be quite fearless. This year was no exception. Gimba Kakanda from Nigeria writes fiction and poetry, and also reports on lapses in governmental transparency. Somali-Italian novelist, playwright, and translator Ubah Cristina Ali Farah as a child had to flee Mogadishu after the Somali civil war broke out. Poet and artist Maung Day spent most of his publishing career navigating the restrictions put in place by Myanmar's military regime, and the novels of Indonesia's Okky Madasari, founder and director of the ASEAN Literary Festival, consistently tackle the most taboo topics, advocating for the rights of the oppressed, questioning the authority of religion, and pointing to the pervasiveness of governmental corruption.

These are just a few of the thirty-five remarkable writers who convened this past fall in our UNESCO City of Literature. News travels differently now. This cohort knew in more precise terms what awaited them and were ready for the challenge. In addition to their sense of history, their good humor, their amazing literary talents, and their recipes (for the menu of our anniversary gala), they brought with them their courage and vision, and over the following months they helped thousands of us place the

current moment in a broader perspective. (And I do mean thousands: by our count, over ten thousand people attended the more than two hundred public and classroom events where IWP writers appeared.)

You may remember that in my last letter I expected a week in mid-October to be the defining event of the IWP's anniversary year. The wealth of the programming we were able to offer during that festive run would not have been possible without the generous gifts from Drs. Victoria and Ramon Lim, and Mary and John Pappajohn: more than a dozen prominent alumni returned to celebrate our Jubilee, and to lend their insights to a year of reflection and looking forward. Special readings and panel discussions ranged across political and literary history, from the role of dictators in the modern Latin American novel, to the post-war resurgence of the Iraqi novel, the possibilities of world literature, the rise of nationalism and its consequences for the free exchange of ideas. We wanted our celebrations to mark a half a century of truly internationalist institution-building—and to commemorate not only our own history, but also the sustained commitments of the University of Iowa and our federal partners, most significantly the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. (The continuing support of the latter has allowed the IWP to design groundbreaking literary exchanges, such as the Between the Lines youth programming, and digital learning tools that have brought the Iowa model to emerging writers around the globe.) These accomplishments are worth shouting about, and we did our share of shouting, especially at the gala and fundraiser held at the Iowa Memorial Union.

As it turned out, however, the year's most inspiring event came a few weeks later.

In early November, as part of the residency's concluding events in Washington, D.C., the writers were granted an early-morning tour of the Smithsonian's newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The focus of the day was to be: how we tell our stories, how we take artifacts (and chaos and rumors) and begin anew the process of narrating our humanity. Some writers were guided through the museum's history floor, while others visited the culture floor, everyone filling their notebooks as the curators immersed them in the immense collection. Then we moved to the Smithsonian Castle, the second-oldest building on the National Mall, and joined a capacity crowd in a room where the Star-Spangled Banner had once been spread out and repaired. For more than an hour, two of our visiting writers, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor from Kenya and Cristina Ubah Ali Farah of Italy, and two Smithsonian curators discussed the challenges of narrating history, in an unforgettable conversation that encompassed, for example, both the depiction of horses in mass-produced Confederate statuary and the museum that is currently being created in Lampedusa, Italy, to house artifacts from the boats of African migrants crossing the Mediterranean. I encourage you to watch the stream of that conversation on the Smithsonian's web channel at www.bit.ly/2KhLIXh.

The U.S. has a long way to go to achieve its "more perfect union," but in the capital that day the IWP's work seemed particularly poignant. It will take all of our collective courage, decency, mutual regard, and determination to honor free expression to bring us together. ▀

— CHRISTOPHER MERRILL



IWP@50: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The very first event at which IWP marked the half-century of its existence took place in January, in India. Emceed by Chandrahas Choudhury (India, '05), the panel “Channeling Creativity” at the Jaipur Literary Festival gathered IWP alumni Kyoko Yoshida (Japan, '05), Karim Alrawi (Canada/Egypt, '13) and Vivek Shanbhagh (India, '16) for a conversation about the program’s history, practices, and impact.

A few months later, in April, the support of Japan Foundation and UI’s Japanese Program made possible “A Half-century of Japanese Writers in Iowa.” With the return visit of one of IWP’s most dedicated alumni, the Japanese poet Yoshimasu Gozo ('71, '87, '04) as focus, students, academics, writers, translators, and a filmmaker gathered to discuss his work alongside that of the distinguished novelist Nakagami Kenji (Japan, '82) and finally to take in Mr. Yoshimasu’s spectacular multimedia performance.

In advance of the main festivities, a public event in September honored the life and legacy of IWP co-founder, our cherished Nieh Hualing Engle. Then in mid-October, around Paul Engle Day, the celebration culminated in a week-long series of public events. Fourteen alumni, representing the program’s five decades, returned to Iowa City from Albania, Argentina, Chile, China, Germany, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Kenya, Singapore, Taiwan, and Uruguay; they were joined by scholars, editors, and literary critics from the U.S. and elsewhere. A well-attended quartet of panel discussions on the subjects of international and national literatures was held at the Iowa City Public Library (watch video recordings at iwp50.grad.uiowa.edu/2018/01/01/50th-week); alumni readings were interspersed throughout the week.

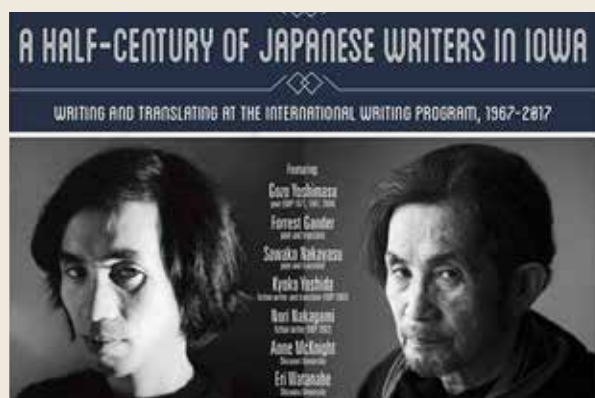
And on October 11, at the 50th Anniversary Gala, a formal fundraiser, nearly two hundred fifty people partook of a multilingual performance of original composition and choreography on themes from Walt Whitman, then listened to readings by eminent program alumni, all the while feasting on a buffet featuring alumni-provided recipes from around the world.

A new website, iwp50.grad.uiowa.edu, documents our milestones, gathers memories by participants and community members, features literary research related to the program’s history, displays a selection of documents from the program’s archives, and invites all to contribute in the years to come.

Take a look at a timeline of the IWP’s half century at iwp50.grad.uiowa.edu/the-story/a-half-century-annotated. ▀

APRIL 17-20

“A Half-Century of Japanese Writers,” a celebration of the Japanese writers who have been in residence at the IWP



AUGUST 21

Fall Residency begins



OCTOBER 10-13

Iowa City Book Festival panels featuring IWP alumni and residents



AUGUST 10

IWP@50 website launches



SEPTEMBER 5

“From Hubei to the City of Literature,” a tribute to IWP co-founder Nieh Hualing Engle (shown below at Fall Residency opening party)



OCTOBER 11

“IWP@50: Celebrating a Half-Century of the IWP” Gala Fundraiser





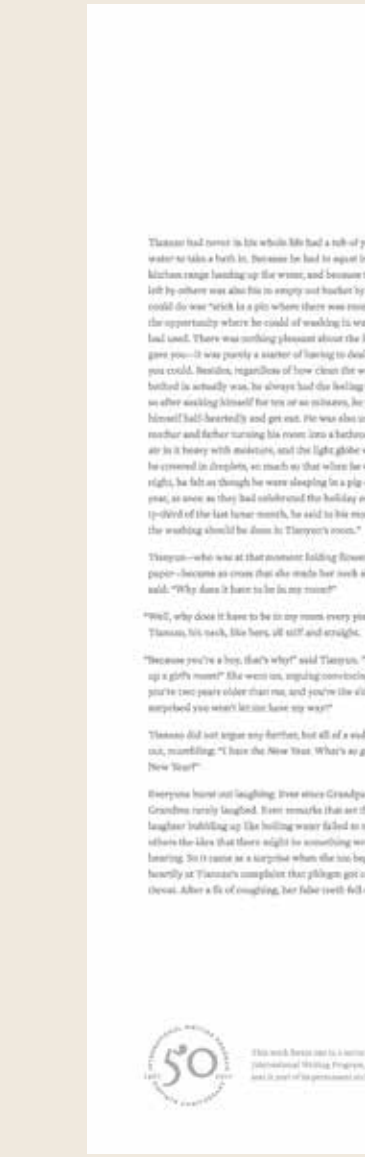
FREE TO PRINT

To view all ten broadside designs full size or download them for your own printing, visit iwp50.grad.uiowa.edu/the-2017-anniversary/broadsides.

IWP@50 BROADSIDE SERIES

This series of letterpress broadsides was prepared in the summer of 2017 to mark the IWP's 50th anniversary. The authors selected are ten of our nearly 1500 alumni, each representing, in either poetry or prose, one of the program's five decades, in different languages; the texts and translations are part of our permanent archival holdings. The broadsides were designed and printed pro bono by Bradley Dicharry and his students in the University of Iowa School of Art and Art History.







Incredibly, this past year marked the 50th anniversary session of the IWP's flagship program. Founded during the Cold War as a "United Nation of Writers," the Fall Residency remains a one-of-a-kind forum for bringing together literary artists from around the world. Research and behind-the-scenes discussions led to a calendar of over 200 public readings, lectures, panels, performances, and classroom visits, both in Iowa and around the U.S., a moveable feast that also featured more than a dozen alumni luminaries, who returned to Iowa City for the anniversary celebrations.

The pages that follow give a glimpse into the tremendous talents and commitment of the thirty-four writers from thirty-three countries who made the 2017 Fall Residency one of most inspiring sessions ever. You will also see the work of scores of community partners who brought to these twelve weeks their own love of literature and a matching commitment to greater mutual understanding. At a time when many U.S. citizens are particularly concerned about questions of equality, empowerment, and freedom of expression, the Fall Residency is truly a community effort that strives to be a model for peaceful exchange and cultural plurality, where art, translation, dialogue, home-hosting, field trips, and hundreds of other opportunities are made possible by—and grounded in—mutual respect.

... THE FALL RESIDENCY IS TRULY A COMMUNITY EFFORT THAT STRIVES TO BE A MODEL FOR PEACEFUL EXCHANGE AND CULTURAL PLURALITY, WHERE ART, TRANSLATION, DIALOGUE, HOME-HOSTING, FIELD TRIPS, AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER OPPORTUNITIES ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY—AND GROUNDED IN—MUTUAL RESPECT.



FALL RESIDENTS



GHADA AL-ABSY

Fiction writer | Egypt

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On her identity as a writer:
“Honestly, I believe that a good writer should have a hand of a worker, a nose of a perfumer, a heart of a composer and a mind of a detective, maybe a voice of a singer to write with as well! Writers should be as flexible as air, so they can reach the inside of people and things easily. [...] Egypt is the land of stories, where the pharaohs’ mythology exist together with beloved gods, priests, prophets, and simple loving people knocking at the doors of mosques and churches to be cured from pain, illness, and hatred.” (5Q series interview with the Writing University)



FATENA ALGHORRA

Poet, journalist | Belgium

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On finding a home in literature:
“The concept of homeland goes beyond the idea of carrying a nationality, it is almost genetic, and that is why the Arabic language is also a home for me—it makes me turn around when I hear it on the street of strange country. Who am I now? And how many homes do I have? Do I have real home? [...] when your home keeps shifting, you build your own home—one that nobody can take away, or pretend it is his. The home I found in poetry, the only home that never ever confuses me, the home I carry wherever I go.” (“Permanent Migration, or Re-thinking Home,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/29/17)



UBAH CRISTINA ALI FARAH

Fiction writer, poet,
playwright, translator | Italy

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On writing diasporic characters: “I chose the diaspora as the terrain of my writing, and diaspora characters carry inside them this break, a gap between before and after, a frontier enclosing something very precious, a secret, a detail, a root. The first novel I wrote, *Little Mother*, in its original form, was a collection of stories whose characters were people from my generation. Rereading them, I suddenly realized that in each story there was a kind of split, their lives were divided in half as it were, by a traumatic event, the civil war.” (“Journalism and a Free Press in the Age of Fake News,” at WorldCanvass in Iowa City, 10/18/17)



RAMSHA ASHRAF

Poet, playwright | Pakistan

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On writing as protest: “I can see the margins and minorities of my society in equivalence with what Ta-Nehisi Coates describes [...] [He] refers to minorities as ‘the kind of economic anxiety’ that appears a major threat on the politically destabilized system. The system that increasingly utilizes religion as its main tool to exploit the majority as well as the minority. At this point when the intolerance prevails and dominates the pragmatism of living together in difference—if not equally, then tolerantly—I find literary protest to be the best available option.” (“Emancipating Bodies, Encountering Taboos,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/6/17)



HAJAR BALI

Playwright, fiction writer,
poet | Algeria

*Participation courtesy of an
anonymous gift to the IWP*

On the Algerian press: “Today, the private printed press in Algeria is at the end of resources. In addition to being let loose by those who have used it, it has lost the confidence of its readership. Despite the severe sanctions against journalists and calls for mobilization in their favor, Algerian society remains totally indifferent to their fate. The average reader, disillusioned, and who during the 90s bought at least two newspapers a day, no longer reads. He prefers the foreign television channels captured by satellite, especially French and Middle Eastern.” (“Journalism and a Free Press in the Age of Fake News,” at WorldCanvass in Iowa City, 10/18/17)



PANASHE CHIGUMADZI

Novelist, essayist | South Africa/Zimbabwe

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On risk-taking and form: “Importantly, the jazz ethic of improvisation, in particular, is a major anchor for me and my work in thinking about form. I hope to create work that honours this tradition not for its half-baked haphazardry, but for bold and disciplined risk-taking experiments. To my mind, for black people, and black women in particular, experimenting and improvising with form is just as important as the narrative. It is a project of re-imagination and about reimagining ways of doing and ways of being in a world whose ways conspire against you.” (“Notes on Small Deaths,” International Literature Today class presentation)



AUDREY CHIN

Fiction writer, non-fiction writer | Singapore

Participation courtesy of the Singapore National Arts Council

On translating identity: “Should I be called a creative writer or a translator? I live in Singapore, a country where ethnicity (Chinese, Malay, Indian and Others) and dialect group are listed on every ID card. I write about South East Asia, a multi-lingual, multi-cultural archipelago, constantly grappling with how to represent characters speaking in different languages, or different Englishes, while maintaining a single narrative voice, and rendering oral languages into ‘written’ formats, while also retaining the right cultural context.” (“In Translation,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/1/17)

KRISTIAN SENDON CORDERO

Poet, fiction writer, essayist, translator, filmmaker | Philippines

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State



On multilingualism: “In my opinion, inequality between languages can be mitigated by interrogating our existing multilingual reality against the backdrop of the pernicious legacy of colonialism. To this end, we must integrate translation as a key component in our pedagogical praxis, and develop an approach to language and literature that views them not as closed, petrified specimens of cultures and ethnic groups, but rather as works-in-transit. In other words, literature and language should transcend their origins, and expand the range of local languages and literatures—like my mother tongues, Bikol and Rinconada.” (“In Translation,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/1/17)

LAVA OMER DARWESH

Poet, translator | Iraq

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On writing with purpose: “Dystopias may also be valuable because, by warning us about the future, they offer the possibility to change it. This is why, in my poems, I talk about past experiences but from an angle never before considered, hoping that, through my writing, mistakes won’t be repeated again in the future. Differing from utopia, however, is my focus on writing not for some abstract ideal, but for the generation to come. To make sure I did something to improve the world, and make a difference in the lives of my loved ones.” (“Utopia and the Future,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/22/17)



MAUNG DAY

Poet, artist, translator | Myanmar

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On his IWP experience: “The best thing is having the opportunity to become friends with writers and poets from all over the world. The conversations among the writers cover so many topics, from global politics to 80s music, from Black Lives Matter to the movies of Bela Tarr. Such a wealthy pool of knowledge. Before I came here, America was just an idea that I constructed from books and movies, and the thoughts I had about it were oftentimes negative. Of course, the country has serious problems, but I have also enjoyed the sense of freedom ingrained inside this hugely diverse society.” (Personal reflection on his 2017 Residency)



DILMAN DILA

Fiction writer, filmmaker | Uganda

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On storytelling and technology: “But today, technology has again changed how we tell stories. Optics and sound are back and no longer reserved for those who can afford a TV, or a record player, or a theater ticket. Some believe the popularity of visual media is increasing because attention spans are shortening, but I think human societies are just reverting to old story ways. I think we are hardwired to enjoy stories we can consume in one sitting. We are always impatient to get to the end.” (“Writing in the Field of Optics,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/8/17)





ESTHER DISCHEREIT

Poet, novelist, essayist, stage
and radio dramatist
| Germany

*Participation courtesy of the Max
Kade Foundation*

On migration: “In this way different linguistic, passport and home country affiliations marked the family, as did different kinds of religiosities. ‘Foreign countries are a good thing,’ we would say at home. Now we could regard this as a real advantage, as a broadening of the cultural horizon and development of human adaptability. People call it integration, assimilation or acculturation. However, at present more people than ever before worldwide had been forced to become immigrants.” (“Permanent Migration, or Rethinking Home,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/29/17)



KAORI FUJINO

Fiction writer | Japan
*Participation courtesy of the
Japan Foundation*

On writing imagined worlds: “Is it possible to really create a utopian novel? I think it’s one of the most difficult things to do. When people evaluate novels, one of the criteria they often use is to look for how closely it depicts reality. Deep down, I think that by itself is pretty meaningless. Really what I want to try to write are things that no one’s thought of yet and stories that even I as the author don’t fully understand. However, there are limits to what we can do as humans. We can only write about our own experiences and whatever imagined world we can build on top of that.” (“Utopia and the Future,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/22/17)



ENZA ARREAZA GARCIA

Fiction writer, poet
| Venezuela
*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On self-reflection: “During my time here, I had the daunting duty to think a lot about myself as a writer. Between fascination and horror, I tried to remember who I was and why I wrote “Prayers for a Fox” [...]. I was 23 when I wrote that story, and I spent most of that year hearing that we would soon live under a dictatorship. But at that time, we could still find food and medicine in our country, so we were naive in some way. We wanted to believe that we would never be like Cuba, or Poland, or Russia; we believed in institutions and elections. [...] I remember who I was then and at the same time do not recognize that voice. I would like to rewrite the story.” (“The Ways of the Force,” International Literature Today class, 10/30/17)



SANTIAGO GIRALT

Playwright, screenwriter,
filmmaker, fiction writer
| Argentina

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On writing gender: “In film, I write mostly strong female leading characters and secondary male characters. Women’s emotions enthrall me, and I explore their mystery when I write from their point of view, which allows me to showcase the machismo in my society. Though melodrama is sometimes considered a minor form, it allows me to complexly express heightened emotions and irrational passions. When I write, I start from my characters’ desires and frustrations in an attempt to understand them, which pushes me to break taboos and transcend my own sense of decency.” (“Emancipating Bodies, Encountering Taboos,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/6/17)



GIMBA KAKANDA

Fiction writer, poet,
journalist | Nigeria

*Participation courtesy of the U.S.
Embassy in Abuja*

On visiting the United States: “I wasn’t immediately amused by the invitation to explore America. I had studied a lot about the country, of course, and it’s hardly off our screens, from the mainstream to social media. America is the most scrutinized country, and idea, on the planet — arguably the leader of global pop culture and tech revolution, vigorously marketed everywhere by Hollywood and Silicon Valley. [...] But I wasn’t ignorant of the fact that America has many stories, that it’s not black and white but a rainbow, where every colour has a peculiar challenge. I am glad to have experienced some of them first hand.” (Personal reflection on his 2017 Residency)



ANNE KENNEDY

Fiction writer, screenwriter,
poet | New Zealand

*Participation courtesy of Creative
New Zealand*

On dislocation: “The idea of ‘home’ in a post-colonial situation suggests a place of rifts—not just one rift, but many, in the way an earthquake generates aftershocks and further damage. The aftermath of colonization is damage to land, community, and, among things, stories. [...] If we occupiers of contested land in the (relatively) ‘new’ place—the New World—ignore the seismic shift that was colonization as well as the history of our freedoms, the nature of our responsibilities to our country, and our subsequent dislocations in cultural identity, then we really do belong nowhere. For settlers and indigenous alike, the colonized past is the only show in town.” (“Permanent Migration, or Re-thinking Home,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/29/17)



KIM DOYOON

Fiction writer, librettist, translator, critic | South Korea

Participation courtesy of Arts Council Korea

On literature and music: “I write libretti for the contemporary opera, which need lots of understanding of music and stage. P. Westerberg said, ‘Reading music is like listening to flowers.’ But I am a librettist and critic. Understanding music and the composers’ thoughts are essential to make a good music drama. [...] For instance, I researched many sources about comfort women during World War II, a theme that will appear in one of my next projects.” (5Q series interview with the Writing University)



STUART LAU

Poet, essayist, critic | Hong Kong

Participation courtesy of The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation

On magic and critical thought in art: “By magic, I mean deep thinking that helps us to resist the ‘superficialization’ (my invention) being created by fast web browsing practices, which only inspires immediate and shallow emotions. These days, I train myself by asking ‘Why not’ instead of ‘Why.’ I not only ask why something is said, but also what sorts of things are not being said. This practice has led me to some really great discoveries.” (“Emo: The Mode of High Emotion,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/20/17)

OKKY MADASARI

Novelist | Indonesia

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State



On writing as protest: “My first novel *Entrok* [Years of The Voiceless] was published in 2010. At the time I was young and witnessing Indonesia ten years after the fall of the totalitarian regime. The nation, despite being a democratic country, was still facing problems of injustice, corruption, poverty, violence, and discrimination. While the story is about Indonesia, it’s also about democratic freedoms, about resisting military power, and saying ‘NO’ to control and censorship by our government. Themes that resonate across the world.” (“Should a Writer Speak for the Universal?,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/15/17)

TILOTTAMA MAJUMDER

Fiction writer, poet | India

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On the role of writers in shaping society: “Taboos remain, but are being reshaped. In the 18th century, Hindu widows were burnt alive alongside their husband’s corpse, and education for girls was prohibited. Today, government signs read “Save the girls, educate them,” and women fight for women with the rest of our country. A war is being waged against abominable taboos. I am a warrior with a pen in my hand, and will remain, till death.” (“Emancipating Bodies, Encountering Taboos,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/6/17)



VLADIMIR MARTINOVSKI

Fiction writer, poet, critic, translator | Macedonia

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On the visual in poetry: “Today we live in the Civilization of the Image. Images have become so pervasive that it’s now a commonplace to say they bombard and surround us everywhere we go. Literature, or the ‘Art of the Word,’ is undoubtedly adapting to our hyper-visual environment in new and creative ways. But we mustn’t forget that literature has a long history of dialoguing with the visual and plastic arts—such as ekphrastic literature, which traces its roots to Homeric times, and employs descriptions of visual art as a major poetic device.” (“Writing in the Field of Optics,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/8/17)



YVONNE ADHIAMBO OWUOR

Fiction writer | Kenya

Participation courtesy of Grinnell College

On returning to Iowa: “This residency has been tinged with a very unexpected sense of ‘homecoming’, perhaps of a more imaginative kind. I am surprised by the sense of the familiar in and of spaces, both physically and in the imagination. I guess coming back older, and more confident in my identity as writer also allows a certain clarity in some ways. [...] And what a glorious cohort we had in 2017. What a joyful, fabulous, engaged, supportive lot. So much talent and caring. So much pleasure in each other’s offerings. I had not realised how lonely I had been for this; the meeting of members of the wandering tribe.” (Personal reflection on her 2017 Residency)





MATJAŽ PIKALO

Poet, screenwriter, musician
| Slovenia

*Participation courtesy of the U.S.
Embassy in Ljubljana and the
University of Iowa*

“DO NOT ASK!”

True, I earn my living in a
strange / way, but do not ask me
what is / I do. I have quarrelled
with bread, / it was long ago. I
was too scared. /

The sun is pouring nicely, the
track is / marked with rabbits,
on a river two boats / chase the
honour for their universities.
/ Paris gave me you and the
streets through /

which I wandered, sharpening
my senses, / black woman.
Children are playing war / and
nothing beats the sight of cattle,

drinking. Hollowness falls an
apple tree / above the wheat, a
buzzard grabs a / dove. But do
not ask me what it is I do.

*Translated from the Slovenian
by Špela Gruden*



YURIY SEREBRYANSKY

Fiction writer, journalist
| Kazakhstan

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On the themes of his work:
“Searching for an identity is
the main theme of my work.
[...] For me it’s a question of
different optics. In *Destination.
Road Pastoral* I tried to
concentrate on the personal
world of my protagonist, and
his efforts to explain himself
given the new realities of the
country he was born in, and
some other sites referred to
by language or mentality. In
my novel *Prazaki*, I’m trying
to think about our new global
reality and its benefits and
failings.” (Presentation for
Polish literature students at
Loyola University, 9/20/17)



YAARA SHEHORI

Fiction writer, poet,
editor | Israel

*Participation courtesy of the
United States-Israeli Education
Foundation*

On writing dystopias: “Indeed,
utopia and dystopia are
inseparable. This is a sensitive
subject for me. I grew up in an
Israeli kibbutz, a collectivist
agricultural community once
equated with utopianism. As a
girl I was often withdrawn from
the children’s house—where we
studied, ate, slept, and played—
to pose for the cameras of
international tourists. They
were inspired by our ‘advanced’
community, and by us, lovely
children who did everything
together. Actually, for some of
us it was a nightmare. Maybe
this is why, in my own writing,
I’m drawn to writing about
dystopias.” (“Utopia and the
Future,” at the Iowa City Public
Library, 9/22/17)



SUBRAJ SINGH

Playwright, fiction writer,
journalist, critic | Guyana

*Participation courtesy of the
William B. Quarton Fund
through the Cedar Rapids
Community Foundation*

On literature as productive discomfort: “If you ever write about TABOOS, embrace our weirdness and otherness. Make it a part of your text. Put our TABOO bodies in your bodies of words, and let them comment on each other. Force the TABOO onto your reader. Discomfort them until they see what really lies beneath, until they see that literature is literature, regardless of form, as people are people, regardless of TABOOS.” (“Emancipating Bodies, Encountering Taboos,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/6/17)



WIPAS SRITHONG

Fiction writer | Thailand

*Participation courtesy of the
Bureau of Educational and
Cultural Affairs at the U.S.
Department of State*

On writing as protest: “Thai tradition, in my view, favors hierarchy and centralization over meaningful reform. It has become a solid mass and complacent, and lost its malleability. It confines us. A culture that has paved the way for our current political crossroads needs to be undermined, and values perpetuating inequalities, destroyed. ‘Preserving tradition’ has become shorthand for an ideology through which the junta is steadily sabotaging democracy, justice, and the independent media.” (“Should a Writer Speak for the Universal?,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/16/17)



SHARLENE TEO

Fiction writer | Singapore

*Participation courtesy of the
Singapore National Arts Council*

On emotion in writing: “I read and write to move and be moved. What is the point otherwise? Writing that doesn’t provoke, cajole, or evoke is failed fiction. The opposite of movement is inertia. I think the writer’s role is to frame ideas in a dynamic way that feels not just true but emotionally distinct; to give the reader the sense of being in dialogue with another individual consciousness. Something more than just words on a page. Something moving; a flawed, living thing.” (“Emo: The Mode of High Emotion,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 10/20/17)



ANTOINETTE ALOU TIDJANI

Fiction writer, poet, translator, scholar | Niger

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On translation: “Translation is creation in the direction of another language audience, in another language. The idea that the translator is a transwriter and a passeur, a term I have not yet encountered in my reading. Transwriter is not just word play; it is a résumé of living and writing between worlds. In the francophone world in which I have lived for thirty-two years, passeur refers to the go-between paid by a desire-full and adventurous alien to take him over into a bright new world. Not a mercenary, necessarily, but a doer of the impossible, whose work deserves not only symbolic but also financial reward.” (“In Translation,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/1/17)



KINGA TÓTH

Poet, translator, illustrator, songwriter, performer | Hungary

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On texts and the body: “To have an effect on all the senses—that is the way I understand the function of ‘text.’ A text, for me, is something alive—an organism that has different forms, for instance written letters, visual contours, sounds, and also exists live—for example, in a performance. The sounds that I produce sometimes hurt; what I am after is really about opening the body for the right sound, about reaching and communicating with the other. In my various concepts and projects, I try to show different worlds, and this requires different ‘behavior.’” (“Text Bodies,” International Literature Today class presentation, 9/11/17)



KIRMEN URIBE

Novelist, poet, essayist | Spain

Participation courtesy of the Etxepare Basque Institute

On writing from the margins: “If you belong to a minority, it means hard work. In the context of literature, this means fighting the clichés and prejudices others have about what you are supposed to write. The task of the writer is not to tell about the exotic particularities of a place, but rather, to write ‘from’ an individual’s distinct place in a community and the world. Joyce and Beckett were Irish, but we don’t expect them to write about sheep. They wrote from the margin, which freed them to write in new forms.” (“Permanent Migration, or Re-thinking Home,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/29/17)

JULIENNE VAN LOON

Novelist, essayist | Australia

Participation courtesy of the Paul and Hualing Engle Fund

On the universality of literature: “Good literature can illuminate complexity, and help readers arrive at a question or a set of questions without being required to form solutions. Literature allows us to sit with trouble and contradiction, and contemplate these in a way we may not otherwise experience. This capacity places literature in a particular relation to notions of truth or universality. A reader can draw conclusions from literature, but those are their conclusions, and that is a very different thing from saying a writer should or could speak for or on behalf of the universal.” (“Should a Writer Speak for the Universal?,” at the Iowa City Public Library, 9/15/17)



XAVIER VILLANOVA

Playwright, screenwriter, stage director, actor, translator | Mexico

Participation courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State

On what sets playwriting apart: “Stories have a beginning, a middle and an end, or so we’ve been told. [...] Whenever I teach playwriting, students mostly want to know: how do I write a play? How is it different from a poem or a novel or an essay? Well... It’s broken. It’s not meant to be clean or behave or give an all-encompassing view of the world; it’s meant to be and not to be something in between life and death, a sharp blade that rives uncertainties.” (“From Fracture to Action,” International Literature Today class presentation, 10/16/17)



CHUNG-HSIEN YAN

Fiction writer, poet, essayist, art critic | Taiwan

Participation courtesy of Taiwan’s Ministry of Culture

On visiting the Iowa City home of IWP co-founder Hualing Nieh Engle: “Her house is a kind of museum of IWP program. It’s like you’re going to so many writers have been there. It’s like a time capsule. You can see everyone who dropped off books, or who has been sitting on the chair. Or where Engle has been [...] with the writers. It’s a very luxurious experience to be in that very surreal atmosphere.” (U.S. Bank closing reception presentation, 10/26/17)





AUGUST 19

Writers arrive in Iowa City

AUGUST 20

Walking tour of Iowa City

AUGUST 21

IWP orientation and opening party

AUGUST 25

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series:
Ramsha Ashraf, Tilottama Majumder

MFA mixer garden party at the Iowa Writers' House

AUGUST 27

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series:
Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Kirmen Uribe

IWP Cinematheque: *Meet Me in St. Louis*

AUGUST 28

Presentations, International Literature Today: Hajar Bali, Gimba Kakanda, Vladimir Martinovski, Sharlene Teo

Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore: ZP Dala (South Africa, IWP '16)

SEPTEMBER 1

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: "In Translation," with Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Audrey Chin, Kristian Sendon Cordero, Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Kinga Tóth

IWP Translation Workshop, led by UI professors Aron Aji and Adrienne Rose

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Vladimir Martinovski, Yuriy Serebriansky

SEPTEMBER 2

Reading, Spanish-language writers. Sponsored by the UI Spanish Creative Writing MFA: Enza García Arreaza, Santiago Giralt, Kirmen Uribe, Xavier Villanova

Reading, Anthology Reading Series: Gimba Kakanda, Sharlene Teo

SEPTEMBER 3

Visit, Dane Farm Harvest Party

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Panashe Chigumadzi, Maung Day

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Kristian Sendon Cordero introduces his film *Hinulid* [The Sorrows of Sita]

SEPTEMBER 4

Outing and picnic, Lake Macbride and Wilson's Orchard

SEPTEMBER 5

Readings and presentation, Hualing Engle celebration, IWP@50

SEPTEMBER 6

Reading, Worldwide Reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

SEPTEMBER 7

Presentation, Text and Context: Jonathan Hollander, Battery Dance (NYC)

SEPTEMBER 8

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: "Writing in the Field of Optics," with Dilman Dila, Vladimir Martinovski

Literature class at Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Gimba Kakanda, Antoinette Tidjani Alou

SEPTEMBER 9

Lunch with professors Victoria and Ramon Lim: Audrey Chin, Kristian Sendon Cordero, Lau Stuart, Sharlene Teo, Yan Chung-Hsien

Reception, Center for Asian and Pacific Studies: Ramsha Ashraf, Audrey Chin, Kristian Sendon Cordero, Maung Day, Anne Kennedy, Wipas Srithong, Julianne van Loon

Reception, Spanish Department, at the home of Professor Eloy Barragan: Enza García Arreaza, Santiago Giralt, Vladimir Martinovski, Yuriy Serebriansky, Kirmen Uribe, Xavier Villanova

SEPTEMBER 10

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Kristian Sendon Cordero, Julianne van Loon

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Santiago Giralt introduces his film *Antes del estreno* [Before Opening Night]

SEPTEMBER 11

Presentations, International Literature Today: Maung Day, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Yaara Shehori, Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Kinga Tóth

Reading and class visit, Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Esther Dischereit

Workshop participation, The Center for Afrofuturist Studies: Dilman Dila

SEPTEMBER 12

Dinner with Professor Mériam Belli, UI Department of History: Ghada Al-Absy

Class visits and readings, Cornell College (Mount Vernon, Iowa): Dilman Dila, Esther Dischereit

SEPTEMBER 13

CIVIC Meeting, Kosovo Delegation: Kristian Sendon Cordero, Anne Kennedy, Kirmen Uribe

SEPTEMBER 14

Presentation and reception, Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Performance, Global Express, UI Theater Department collaboration: Hajar Bali, Lava Omer Darwesh, Maung Day, Dilman Dila, Santiago Giralt, Anne Kennedy, Vladimir Martinovski, Matjaž Pikalo, Subraj Singh, Sharlene Teo, Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Kinga Tóth, Kirmen Uribe, Xavier Villanova

SEPTEMBER 15

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: "Should a Writer Speak for 'the Universal'?", with Hajar Bali, Panashe Chigumadzi, Okky Madasari, Wipas Srithong, Julianne van Loon

Presentations, IWP Translation Workshop: Enza García Arreaza, Santiago Giralt

Literature class at Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Alum event, Denis Johnson Memorial Celebration, co-hosted by IWP

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Fatena Alghorra, Lava Omer Darwesh

Dinner with novelist Tobias Wolff: Xavier Villanova

Dinner with Professor Mériam Belli (Department of History): Yaara Shehori, Sharlene Teo, Kirmen Uribe

Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Josephine Rowe (Australia, IWP '11)

SEPTEMBER 16

Community potluck, Secrest Octagonal Barn (West Liberty, Iowa)

SEPTEMBER 17

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Esther Dischereit, Ubah Cristina Ali Farah

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Dilman Dila introduces his film *Her Broken Shadow*; Ghada Al-Absy introduces *The Stone Cake*

SEPTEMBER 18

Presentations, International Literature Today: Fatena Alghorra, Fujino Kaori, Tilottama Majumder, Kirmen Uribe

SEPTEMBER 19 - SEPTEMBER 21

Writers travel to Chicago

SEPTEMBER 19

Reading and class visit, DePaul University: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah

Visit and tour, American Writers' Museum

SEPTEMBER 20

Reading and class visit, Loyola University: Fatena Alghorra, Esther Dischereit, Yuriy

Serebriansky, Antoinette Tidjani Alou,
Kirmen Uribe

Reading and class visit, U Illinois-Chicago:
Ubah Cristina Ali Farah

Reading, Poetry Foundation: Fatena Al-
ghorra, Kristian Sendon Cordero

SEPTEMBER 21

Class visit, Loyola University: Ubah Cristi-
na Ali Farah

Performance, opening for the “Feed me
Weird Things” concert series: Antoinette
Tidjani Alou

SEPTEMBER 22 - SEPTEMBER 25

Visit, City of Asylum (Pittsburgh): Maung
Day, Vladimir Martinovski, Kinga Tóth

SEPTEMBER 22

Performance, Jazz Poetry Month: Maung
Day with Waclaw Zimpel (Poland)

SEPTEMBER 23

Performance, Jazz Poetry Month: Maung
Day, Vladimir Martinovski, Kinga Tóth
with LAM jazz group (Poland)



*Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor (Kenya) at the Smithso-
nian Institution (Washington, D.C.) on 11/2/17*

SEPTEMBER 24

Performance, Jazz Poetry Month: Vladimir
Martinovski with Sandra Cisneros and Hu-
bert Zemler and Krzysztof Dys (Poland)

SEPTEMBER 22

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: “Utopia and
the Future,” with Lava Omer Darwesh, Fuji-
no Kaori, Gimba Kakanda, Yaara Shehori

Presentations, IWP Translation Workshop:
Fatena Alghorra, Kirmen Uribe

Literature class at Grinnell College (Grinnell,
Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series:
Yaara Shehori, Subraj Singh, special guest
Waqas Khwaja (Pakistan, IWP '88)

Dinner at the home of professor Philip Lut-
gendorf (Department of Slavic and Asian
Languages): Ghada Al-Absy, Fatena Alghor-
ra, Ramsha Ashraf, Tilottama Majumder,
Subraj Singh

SEPTEMBER 23

Visit and hike, Effigy Mounds (Harpers
Ferry, Iowa)

SEPTEMBER 24

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Enza
García Arreaza, Anne Kennedy

Dinner with Lisa Lucas, National Book
Foundation: Panashe Chigumadzi, Santiago
Giralt, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Kirmen
Uribe

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: an eve-
ning of short films introduced by Hajar Bali,
Audrey Chin, Esther Dischereit, Yaara She-
hori, Anne Kennedy, Vladimir Martinovski,
Kirmen Uribe

SEPTEMBER 25

Masterclass with Bonnie Sunstein on teach-
ing Creative Writing to young people: Audrey
Chin, Santiago Giralt, Anne Kennedy, Okky
Madasari, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Subraj
Singh, Sharlene Teo, Julianne van Loon

Presentations, International Literature Today: Panashe Chigumadzi, Kristian Sendon Cordeiro, Esther Dischereit, Santiago Giralt, Julianne van Loon

SEPTEMBER 26

Lecture, Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor Rosanna Warren: "Max Jacob: a French Poet between the Arts"

SEPTEMBER 27

Reading and class visit, Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Santiago Giralt

Reading and discussion, Jefferson High School (Cedar Rapids, Iowa): Fujino Kaori

Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor Rosanna Warren

SEPTEMBER 28

Q&A, Shambaugh House: Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor Rosanna Warren

Presentation, Senior College: Ghada Al-Absy, Subraj Singh

Class visit, Professor Elke Heckner (Department of German): Esther Dischereit



Kirmen Uribe (Spain) at Prairie Lights Bookstore (Iowa City) on 9/2/17

Lecture, Iowa City Foreign Relations Council: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah

Reading and class visit, Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa): Kirmen Uribe

SEPTEMBER 29

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: "Permanent Migration, or, Re-Thinking Home," with Fatena Alghorra, Esther Dischereit, Anne Kennedy, Yuriy Serebriansky, Kirmen Uribe

Presentations, IWP Translation Workshop, with guest Rosanna Warren: Ghada Al-Absy, Vladimir Martinovski, Kinga Tóth

Literature class at Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Audrey Chin, Kim Doyoon, Lau Stuart

SEPTEMBER 30

Reading, 100.000 Poets for Change: organized by Kinga Tóth

Reception, UI Department of English

OCTOBER 1 - OCTOBER 4

Mid-Residency travel period: residents travel to either Seattle or New Orleans

OCTOBER 1

UI Alumni Reception, home of David and Joan Rice (Seattle): Ghada Al-Absy, Vladimir Martinovski

OCTOBER 2

Workshop, Hugo House (Seattle): Esther Dischereit, Julianne van Loon

Reading, Folio Atheneum (Seattle): Lava Omer Darwesh, Yaara Shehori, Kinga Tóth

OCTOBER 3

Class visit, Bard Early College (New Orleans)

Class visit and reading, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA): Santiago Giralt, Anne Kennedy, Okky Madasari,

Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Subraj Singh, Sharlene Teo

Reading, Hugo House (Seattle): Lau Stuart, Tilottama Majumder, Wipas Srithong, Antoinette Tadjani Alou

OCTOBER 5

Reading and discussion, Carleton College (Northfield, Minnesota): Fujino Kaori

Reading, Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa): Santiago Giralt, Xavier Villanova

Performance, "Memory as Creative Fuel," collaboration with UI School of Music: Ghada Al-Absy, Kim Doyoon, Wipas Srithong and the Chiara Quartet

Presentation, Senior College (Iowa City): Audrey Chin, Tilottama Majumder

OCTOBER 6

Panel, "IWP@50, Five Decades of Translating in the Trenches," at the American Literary Translators' Association conference (Minneapolis, Minnesota): Vladimir Martynovskiy, IWP staff

Literature class, Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Reading and discussion, University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, Minnesota): Fujino Kaori

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: "Emancipating Bodies, Encountering Taboos," with Ramsha Ashraf, Maung Day, Santiago Giralt, Tilottama Majumder, Subraj Singh

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Ghada Al-Absy, Okky Madasari

Performance, "Feed me Weird Things" concert series: Kinga Tóth

OCTOBER 7

Panel, the American Literary Translators' Association conference (Minneapolis, Minnesota), "The Fiction of Fujino Kaori: Translation and Collaboration": Fujino Kaori

OCTOBER 8

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Matjaž Pikalo, Sharlene Teo

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Bi Feiyu (China, '06), IWP@50 guest, *Blind Massage*, based on his eponymous novel

OCTOBER 9

Presentations, International Literature Today: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Dilman Dila, Wipas Srithong

Reading, IWP@50, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Tim Parks

OCTOBER 10

Panel, IWP@50, Iowa City Public Library: "World Literature Today," with Tim Parks, Lorna Goodison (Jamaica, '83), Peter Nazareth (Uganda/USA '73), Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor (Kenya, '05), Jeremy Tiang (Singapore, '11)

Reading, IWP@50, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Alberto Fuguet (Chile, '94), Pola Oloixarac (Argentina, '10)

OCTOBER 11

Panel, IWP@50, Iowa City Public Library: "Fifty Years of Latin American Literature," with Claire Fox, Luis Bravo (Uruguay, '12), Alberto Fuguet (Chile, '94), Pola Oloixarac (Argentina, '10)

Gala fundraiser, IWP@50: Celebrating a Half-Century of the IWP

OCTOBER 12

Presentation, the Examined Life conference: Ghada Al-Absy

Coffee chat with visiting novelist and human rights activist Sayed Kashua

Panel, IWP@50: "One Chinese Language, Many Chinese Literatures," with Jin Feng (Grinnell), Bi Feiyu (China, '06), Dung Kai-cheung (Hong Kong, '09), Li Di An (China), Poon Yiu Ming (Hong Kong, '83), Ya Hsien (Taiwan, '67)

Lecture, "Humor, Political Consciousness, and the Role of the Writer": Sayed Kashua

Reading, Shambaugh House, IWP@50: Alumni Luis Bravo (Uruguay, '12) and Anja Utler (Germany, '14)

Award presentation, Iowa City Book Festival: Alexander Chee receives the Paul Engle Prize

OCTOBER 13

Panel, IWP@50: "National Literatures in a Time of Rising Nationalism," with Daniel Simon (*World Literature Today*), Dung Kai-cheung (Hong Kong, '09), Luljeta Lleshanaku (Albania, '99), Sadek Mohammed (Iraq, '14) [*in absentia*], Anja Utler (Germany, '14)

Presentations, IWP Translation Workshop: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Esther Dischereit, Fujino Kaori

Literature class, Grinnell College (Grinnell, Iowa): Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

Reception, Iowa City Book Festival, Clinton Street Social Club

Reading, Iowa City Book Festival: Christopher Merrill

Panels, Iowa City Book Festival:

"A Sense of Place": Audrey Chin, Anne Kennedy, Larry Baker, Jacquelyn Vincenta, Will Bardenwerper

"Writing as Recovery": Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Xavier Villanova, Melissa Fraterrigo, Whitney Terrell, Mike Lankford

"Who Do You Read?": Kristian Sendon Cordero, Dilman Dila, Fujino Kaori, Donald Ray Pollock, Lori Erickson

"Politics": Ramsha Ashraf, Okky Madasari, Yuriy Serebriansky, Loren Cooper, Nathan Englander

Dinner at the home of Nieh Hualing Engle: IWP@50 Sinophone alumni and guests, with Audrey Chin, Lau Stuart, Yan Chung-Hsien

OCTOBER 15

Reading, Iowa City Book Festival, UNESCO Cities of Literature partners: Ljubljana/Matjaž Pikalo, Melbourne/Julienne van Loon, Nottingham/Alice Gribbin, Granada/Luis Muñoz

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Xavier Villanova presents his film *Ocean Blues*

OCTOBER 16

Presentations, International Literature Today: Ramsha Ashraf, Audrey Chin, Anne Kennedy, Subraj Singh

Bilingual Reading, UI Japanese Translation Workshop: Fujino Kaori

OCTOBER 17

Bilingual Reading, UI Japanese Translation Workshop: Fujino Kaori

Performance, Flowers for Othello dance collaboration, Figge Art Museum (Davenport, Iowa): Esther Dischereit with dancer Holly Handman-Lopez; Santiago Giralt filming

Reading, Figge Art Museum (Davenport, Iowa): Lau Stuart, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

OCTOBER 18

Roundtable discussion, UI African Studies



Tilotama Majumdar (India) at Hugo House (Seattle) on 10/3/17

Program: Ghada Al-Absy, Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Hajar Bali, Panashe Chigumadzi, Dilman Dila, Gimba Kakanda, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Antoinette Tidjani Alou

Class visits, Southeast Junior High: Santiago Giralt, Subraj Singh, Sharlene Teo

OCTOBER 19

Class visits and joint reading, Kirkwood Community College: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Matjaž Pikalo, Subraj Singh

Class visits, West Liberty Middle School: Santiago Giralt, Xavier Villanova

Presentations, Senior College: Kristian Sendon Cordero, Vladimir Martinovski

Class Visit, Professor Anny Curtius (Department of French and Arabic): Antoinette Tidjani Alou

Performance, UI Dance Collaboration: Fatena Alghorra, Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Kim Doyoon

OCTOBER 20

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: “Emo: The Mode of High Emotion,” with Ghada Al-Absy, Enza García Arreaza, Lau Stuart, Sharlene Teo, Xavier Villanova

Presentations, IWP Translation Workshop: Hajar Bali, Yuriy Serebriansky, Yan Chung-Hsien

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Fujiino Kaori, Yan Chung-Hsien

OCTOBER 22

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Hajar Bali, Wipas Srithong

Presentation, IWP Cinematheque: Antoinette Tidjani Alou presents *Sarraounia*

OCTOBER 23

Presentations, International Literature Today: Lava Omer Darwesh, Kim Doyoon, Lau Stuart

OCTOBER 24

Class visit to Iowa City, Des Moines Central Academy: Ramsha Ashraf, Julianne van Loon

Q&A, Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa): Hajar Bali, Gimba Kakanda

Presentation, IWP Translation Workshop Spanish session with professor Luis Muñoz: Kinga Tóth

Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Antoinette Tidjani Alou

OCTOBER 25

Reading and visual art presentation, Yellow Door Gallery (Des Moines, Iowa): Maung Day, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor, Kinga Tóth

Panel, Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), “Re-thinking Home in an Age of Migration”: Vladimir Martinovski, Antoinette Tidjani Alou, Xavier Villanova

OCTOBER 26

Presentations, Senior College: Anne Kennedy, Xavier Villanova

Closing party, U.S. Bank: readings by Audrey Chin and Lau Stuart

OCTOBER 27

Reading, Division of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Ghada Al-Absy

Lecture, Division of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah

Performance, UI Department of German: Esther Dischereit, with MFA students Laura Moser and Sven Engelke

Panel, Iowa City Public Library: “Images of America: What We Saw” (all writers)

Reading, Shambaugh House Reading Series: Santiago Giralt, Xavier Villanova

Reading, Prairie Lights Bookstore: Rachel Rose (Canada, IWP ‘15)

OCTOBER 29

Reading, Prairie Lights Reading Series: Dilman Dila, Kinga Tóth

IWP farewell reception and presentation of certificates, Iowa Memorial Union River Terrace

OCTOBER 29 - OCTOBER 31

Theater Festival, Portland, Maine: playwrights Hajar Bali, Santiago Giralt, Subraj Singh, Xavier Villanova

OCTOBER 30

Performance, Portland Stage with "From Away," excerpts of writers' plays: Hajar Bali, Santiago Giralt, Subraj Singh, Xavier Villanova

OCTOBER 30

Presentations, International Literature Today: Ghada Al-Absy, Enza García Arreaza, Yuriy Serebriansky, Yan Chung-Hsien

OCTOBER 31

Presentations, International Women's Club, Iowa City: Audrey Chin, Esther Dischereit

Halloween party at the home of professor Kendall Heitzman (Department of Asian and Slavic Languages)

NOVEMBER 1 - NOVEMBER 7

End-of-Residency travel to Washington, D.C., and New York City

NOVEMBER 1

Workshop leader, "Split This Rock": Antoinette Tidjani Alou

NOVEMBER 2

Visit, National Museum of African American History and Culture

Panel, Smithsonian Institute, "Crafting a Story": Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor

NOVEMBER 3

Panel, Library of Congress Spotlight: Enza García Arreaza, Santiago Giralt Reading

and lecture, Library of Congress Nigerian Book Lecture series: Antoinette Tidjani Alou

NOVEMBER 5

Reading, Poets House, New York City: Ubah Cristina Ali Farah, Maung Day, Anne Kennedy, Vladimir Martinovski

Staged reading of his play *Loire*, Pearl Studios: Xavier Villanova

NOVEMBER 6

Reading at Berl's, sponsored by Birds LLC: Esther Dischereit, Santiago Giralt, Sharlene Teo, Kinga Tóth

NOVEMBER 7

Departures, end of program

NOVEMBER 7 - NOVEMBER 21

Follow-on residency, Murphy Writing School, Stockton University (Galloway, New Jersey): Antoinette Tidjani Alou

NOVEMBER 8

Reading and talk, Stockton University

NOVEMBER 9

Featured writer, Visiting Writer Series, Stockton University

NOVEMBER 13

Lecture, "The History in the Blood: Thoughts on the Poetics and Politics of African Studies"

NOVEMBER 15

Featured poet, South Jersey Poets Collective, University of Stockton Arts Garage

NOVEMBER 7 - NOVEMBER 28

Follow-on residency, The Island Institute (Sitka, Alaska): Kristian Sendon Cordero

NOVEMBER 9

Meet and greet

NOVEMBER 10

Interview with Peter Bradley of the Island Institute for KCAW radio

NOVEMBER 13

Class visit, Pacific High School Songwriting Unit

NOVEMBER 14

Lecture, ESL classroom at Sitka High School

NOVEMBER 15

Class visit, Pacific High School Songwriting Unit

NOVEMBER 16

Lecture, ESL Sitka High School, with Blatchley Middle School ESL students and Filipino students

Class visit, “Gifted & Talented,” Blatchley Middle School

NOVEMBER 18

Poetry workshop

NOVEMBER 19

Storytelling with 4 local storytellers at Sitka Tells Tales

NOVEMBER 20

Lecture about his approach to filmmaking, Sitka High School

NOVEMBER 26

Screening of his film *Hinulid* at the Sitka Coliseum Theater

NOVEMBER 27

Printing and assembly, chapbook “My Father’s Tongue”

NOVEMBER 7 - DECEMBER 12

Follow-on residency, Pittsburgh City of Asylum (Pennsylvania): Ramsha Ashraf, Enza García Arreaza

NOVEMBER 10

Reading, Alphabet City (Pittsburgh): Enza García Arreaza with Kathy Connor & Tony DePaolis

NOVEMBER 12

Reading, Alphabet City (Pittsburgh): Ramsha Ashraf with Tomchess & Bandit Hat

NOVEMBER 10 - NOVEMBER 12

Post-Residency Outreach, Virginia, Esther Dischereit

NOVEMBER 10

Reading, Albemarle High School, Charlottesville

NOVEMBER 12

Screening, Virginia Film Festival, Charlottesville: Esther Dischereit presents Mood & Memory ▪



Ramsha Ashraf (Pakistan), Maung Day (Myanmar), and Santiago Giralt (Argentina) at the Iowa City Public Library on 10/6/17

BETWEEN THE LINES

The summer of 2017 included two sessions of Between the Lines, a creative writing and cultural exchange program for students aged 16-19. The first session brought together 36 students and three chaperones from Russia, Arabic-speaking countries, and the U.S. A special session, entitled 'Identity and Belonging,' funded by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art Building Bridges program, united 5 Muslim and 6 non-Muslim students from around the United States.

Between the Lines 2017 was a great success by any measure, but was characterized in particular by community, inclusion, bravery in the face of creative vulnerability, and a focus on meaningful cultural exchange. The first two days of each session included community building activities that modeled and established the kind of environment that would best facilitate open communication and cross-cultural dialogue. Within a matter of days, students were engaged in insightful, energizing, challenging discussions on topics of culture, language, literature, and identity.



Between the Lines mornings began at Shambaugh House with group meetings, followed by Global Literature Seminars and Creative Writing workshops. Evenings were spent in special programs, such as a book-making workshop wherein participants discussed the book as an object, and made paper and books; an Open Mic Night, during which participants were fearless and enthusiastic, resulting in an incredible night of live prose and poetry; a movement workshop, during which students explored their identities as they exist in and with their bodies, performing a cooperative movement exercise called Hero and Mountain, where one student at a time is supported by the strength of the entire group; a Nonfiction Master Class, focused on conflict and conflict resolution, in which students were introduced to the breadth of nonfiction modes, and the art of the personal essay. A new session, 'Beyond BTL,' was added: here students heard from past participants, and were introduced to ways in which they can build on their BTL experiences and new creative writing skills.

By the end of each session, participants considered one another family. Their worldviews were more empathetic and global, and their creative sensibilities grew to include conceptions of language as impactful, and literature as power. ■

PARTICIPANTS

Peace and the Writing Experience

Participants

Mohammed Abdelshafy (Egypt)
Walaa Albaqali (Tunisia)
Vera Alekseeva (Russia)
Farah Al-Rifai (Jordan)
Faris Amer (Jordan)
Amelia Anthony (USA)
Lina Baaziz (Algeria)
Gerel Badaeva (Russia)
Darius Christiansen (USA)
Mariia Fesenko (Russia)
Chloe Gottlieb (USA)
Jeffrey Gu (USA)
Abdelbaki Hamouche (Algeria)
Haneen Hlehel (Israel)
Olivia Howe (USA)
Sarah Issever (USA)
Sara Kao (USA)
Ekaterina Kuzovikhina (Russia)
Zineb Laadioui (Morocco)
Fedor Larionov (Russia)
Yan Lyubimov (Russia)
Nikita Malyshev (Russia)
Zain Minkah (USA)
Christian Neaimeh (Lebanon)
Em Odesser (USA)
Hannah Pahs (USA)
Maria Pel (Russia)
Charles Potter-Wehr (USA)

Aleksandr Prokopovich (Russia)
Kayla Reado (USA)
Hope Rogers (USA)
Tarik Shwaish (Iraq)
Evgeniia Sozankova (Russia)
Katrina Starbird (USA)
Daria Vinogradskaya (Russia)
Haneen Zaqout (Gaza, Palestinian Territories)

Chaperones

Fouzia Guerroudj (Algeria)
Mira El Teeny (Lebanon)
Kira Tverskaya (Russia)
Karim Alrawi (Canada and Egypt, faculty)

Identity & Belonging

Participants (all USA)

Yasmina Braish
Maeve Brammer
Grace Clement
Michael Davis
Emma Edwards
Victoria Gong
Molouk Harp
Asiya Mohammed
Fadel Muthana
Houra Sara Sadeghi
Deija Vinson

Instructor

Karim Alrawi (Canada and Egypt, faculty)



LINES & SPACES

AMERICAN WRITERS ABROAD

Whether it be across borders, as in the Lines & Spaces special session with youth from Armenia and Turkey, or reuniting alumni from around the world for a summit of writers in Tangier, Morocco—the Lines & Spaces tours are a catalyst for bringing people together in dialogue.

The 2017 Lines & Spaces Summit and Reading Tour began in early May in Tangier, Morocco, with a meeting of ten acclaimed alumni writers from around the globe. Over the course of five days, the group met daily for discussion sessions centered on work-in-progress of their essay drafts devoted to the themes of identity and belonging; to read the final versions of the essays, go to iwpcollections.org. The week's discussions were enriched by group outings focused on places of local cultural and historical significance. After the completion of the Lines & Spaces summit, a smaller delegation continued on for a series of workshops and readings in regional hubs of Kenitra, Fes, and Casablanca, connecting with more than 360 aspiring writers.

In November a delegation of five U.S. authors met with over 250 Armenian participants during a series of panel discussions, roundtables, lectures, workshops, receptions, and readings. In addition, a bi-national writing workshop for Turkish and Armenian youth (ages 18-25) was held. The 3-day workshop began with community building exercises focused on core identities, and progressed to writing workshops, with exercises exploring those identities through poetry, fiction, and playwriting.

MOROCCO DELEGATION



Karim Alrawi (fiction, playwriting, screenwriting),
Canada/Egypt
Said El Haji (fiction, essay), the Netherlands/Morocco
Alisa Ganieva (fiction, essay), Russia/Dagestan
Harris Khalique (poetry, essay), Pakistan
Birgöl Oguz (fiction), Turkey
Ukamaka Olisakwe (fiction, screenwriting), Nigeria
Kiki Petrosino (poetry), USA
Patrícia Portela (fiction, playwriting), Portugal/
Belgium
Mabrouck Rachedi (fiction, essay), France/Algeria
Eleni Sikelianos (poetry), USA
Christopher Merrill (poetry, non-fiction), USA

ARMENIA DELEGATION



Natashia Deón (fiction), USA
Lisa Schlesinger (playwriting), USA
Michael Collier (poetry, essay), USA
Cate Dicharry (fiction), USA
Christopher Merrill (poetry, non-fiction), USA

DISTANCE LEARNING

The Distance Learning Program (DL) provides opportunities for open education and cultural exchange through the creation and delivery of free online courses in creative writing and literature. In 2017, the DL Program offered two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and two online outreach courses, bringing together over 17,000 online learners and so forming new global writing-learning communities.

PROGRAMMING

Spring 2017

A Room of One's Own: Writing Nonfiction (Algeria)

Summer 2017

Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Fiction and Nonfiction

Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Poetry and Plays

Fall 2017

On the Line: Playwriting (Russia)

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

In celebration of the IWP's 50th anniversary, the DL Program offered aspiring writers an all-summer opportunity for online learning and online community, promoted as the "IWP Online Writing Summer." Each MOOC addressed the theme of writing on identities and social issues in two genres. These two MOOCs were titled Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Fiction and Nonfiction and Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Poetry and Plays. Beginning on May 15th and ending on September 5th, the IWP Online Writing Summer brought free and accessible online education in creative writing to over 17,000 participants around the world.

Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Fiction and Nonfiction was co-hosted by Christopher Merrill, IWP Director and UI professor of English, and Venise Berry, UI professor of Journalism. Contributing authors, each of whom provided a video lecture on the craft of writing fiction and/or nonfiction on social issues topics, included Karim Alrawi, Tim Bascom, Lucy Jane Bledsoe, Jennifer Cognard-Black, Kia Cothron, zp Dala, Patricia Foster, Janine di Giovanni, Obari Gomba, Lina Ferreira, Boris Fishman, Ruel Johnson, Charles Monroe-Kane, Elena Passarello, Vladimir Poleganov, Vu Tran, Kali VanBaale, Inara Verzemnieks. Alrawi, Dala, Gomba, Fishman, Johnson, and Poleganov are former Fall Residents; Alrawi has also served as a Between the Lines instructor. The MOOC instructors,

who provided lectures, facilitated ongoing class discussion, and led small groups on the intersection of writing and social issues, were Zaina Arafat, Monica Bergers, Lakiesha Carr, Elena Carter, Bruce Elgin, Christa Fraser, Hannah H. Kim, and Derek Nnuro. Bergers and Elgin also served as community managers, promoting inclusiveness in the MOOCs' learning community and providing support to new online learners, new writers, and non-native speakers of English. 12,175 aspiring writers enrolled in this MOOC, which opened on May 15th and closed on July 3rd, 2017.

Power of the Pen: Identities and Social Issues in Poetry and Plays was co-hosted by Christopher Merrill, IWP Director and UI professor of English, and Lisa Schlesinger, professor in the UI Playwright's Workshop. Contributing authors, whose video lectures introduced MOOC participants to new perspectives on the process of writing poetry and plays on social issues themes, included Marvin Bell, Leonard Berkman, Scott Bradley, Art Borreca, Tameka Cage Conley, Gabrielle Calvocoressi, Kevin Coval, Peter Gil-Sheridan, Megan Goherty, Sam Hunter, Richard Kenney, El Jones, Daniel Khalastchi, Dana Levin, Mathew McGuire, Elsa Menendez, Courtney Sina Meredith, Kei Miller, Nina Morrison, Jennie Page White, Camille Rankine, Lisa Schlesinger, Eleni Sikelianos, and Prageeta Sharma. Jones and Meredith are former IWP Fall Residents; Coval has also served as a guest lecturer for Between the Lines. The MOOC instructors, who offered week-by-week class lectures, led discussion sessions, and guided small group discussions on social justice topics and craft concerns, were Micah Bateman, Tameka Cage Conley, Samantha Collier, Fatima R. Espiritu, Sam Lahne, Pamela Marston, Sara Martin, and Danielle Wheeler. Bateman and Wheeler also served as community managers in order to strengthen community building while providing special support to non-native speakers of English, inexperienced writers, and new online learners. 6,885 aspiring writers enrolled in this MOOC, which opened on July 17th and closed on September 5th, 2017.



"I SAW AND APPRECIATED HOW EVERY LECTURER WANTED TO TEACH US, PUT WORK IN HIS LECTURE, REALLY TRIED AND CARED. AND I FELT... LIKE I MATTERED. LIKE WE WERE ALL ONE WORKSHOP, LIKE I WAS THERE IN THE LIBRARY? OR THE PLACE WITH BOOKS, WHERE YOU RECORDED THE LESSONS. I LOVED IT.

— MOOC PARTICIPANT



Outreach Courses

In 2017, the DL Program provided two outreach courses: one for women-identifying writers in Algeria with an interest in writing nonfiction; and one for young aspiring playwrights in Russia.

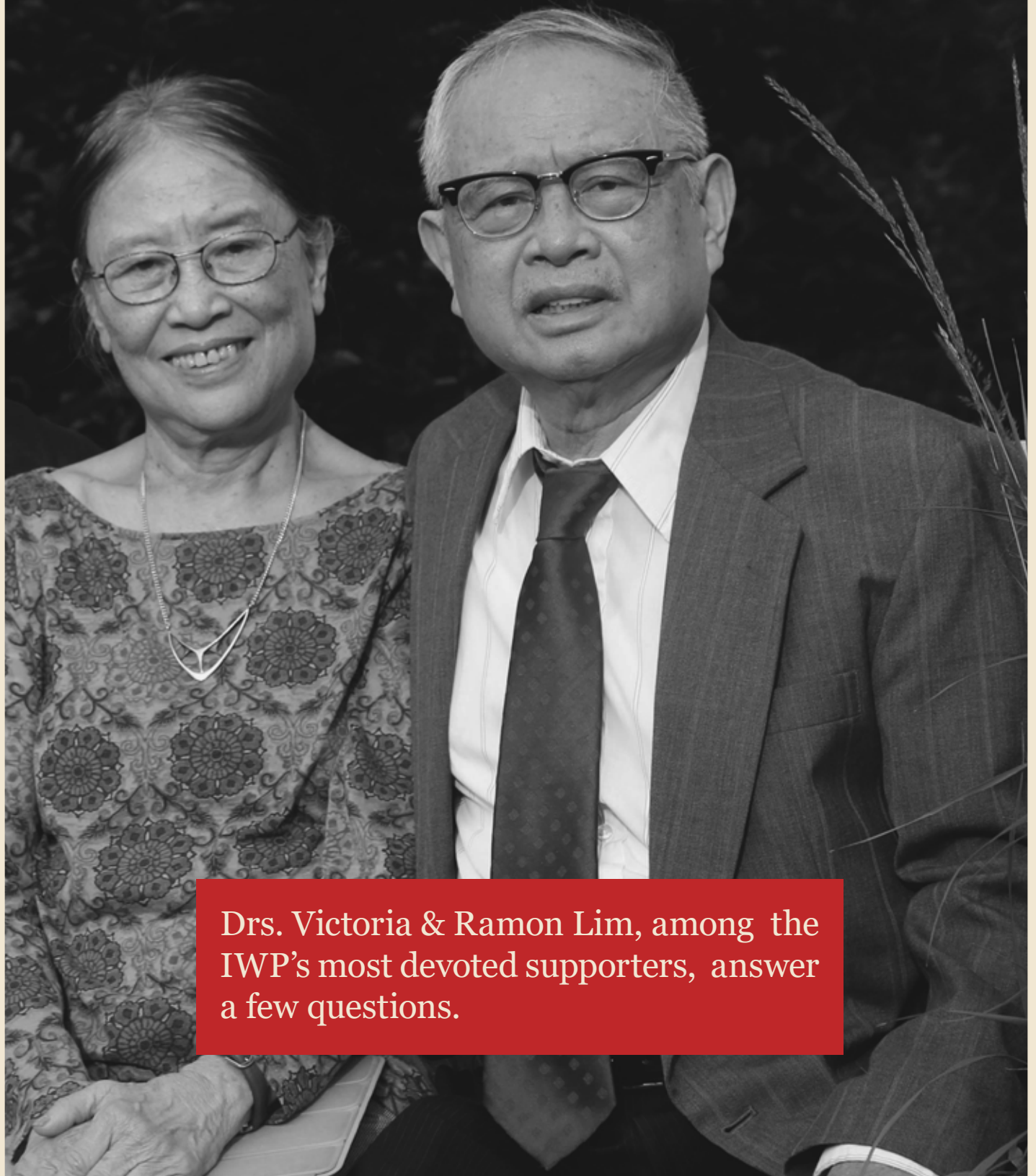
A Room of One's Own: Writing Nonfiction (Algeria) brought together 30 female writers for a six-week course taught by Elena Passarello, Oregon State University professor of Creative Writing and graduate of the University of Iowa's Nonfiction MFA Program. Opening on April 18th and closing on May 23rd, 2017, this course introduced participants to the basic principles of the memoir, the personal essay, the researched "journalistic" essay, the lyric essay, and "flash nonfiction." Participants had been selected by the U.S. Embassy in Algiers, and the weekly classes were held at the American Cultural Center. Students began their work with an examination of memory in autobiographical writing, and progressed through a series of writing assignments to create a final portfolio of personal and professional writing.

On the Line: Playwriting (Russia) brought together 42 young writers in two Russian cities. Taught by recent Stegner Fellow Aamina Ahmad, a graduate of Goldsmith's College and the Iowa Writers' Workshop, this course offered eight weeks of intensive and interactive study to aspiring playwrights in Moscow and Smolensk. The course's title, *On the Line*, refers to Act II of Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, in which the eponymous character says, "The journey'll be a long one ... a long one yet, I've just come to a stopping-place on the line." Classes met weekly at the American Cultural Center and at the Smolensk University for the Humanities and included short lectures on the craft of playwriting, discussions of excerpted plays, and writing exercises. Weekly assignments asked students to create characters and explore conflict through writing and revising scenes for the stage. Two course facilitators, Tatiana Gurevich (Moscow) and Yuliya Starovoytova (Smolensk), promoted

the course, selected the students, managed the videoconferencing facilities, and supported the students' participation. The DL Program was delighted to note that four of the applicants selected for participation were alumni of the IWP's *Between the Lines* Program: Gerel Badaeva (2017, Moscow); Artyom Shestopalov and Georgii Martirosyan (2016, Moscow); and Elizaveta Shutova (2015, Smolensk). The seventh class presented two guest lecturers — Ksenia Golubovich, 2006 Fall Resident, and Xavier Villanova, 2017 Fall Resident — who spoke on establishing character, conveying emotion, and developing conflict in dramatic writing, and illustrated their points with excerpts from *Othello* and *Waiting for Godot*. The eighth and final class was centered on performance: working in groups, the students staged readings of scenes they had written as assignments during the course. Opening on October 3rd and closing on November 21st, the course equipped young writers with the tools and discipline to overcome the "stopping places" they may encounter in their future creative pursuits. ■



INTERVIEW



Drs. Victoria & Ramon Lim, among the IWP's most devoted supporters, answer a few questions.

On the International Writing Program

Ramon Lim: It is important to note that, in the early 1980s, IWP played a critical role in the unification of China by bringing writers from the two sides (Mainland and Taiwan) to come together and dialogue under one roof and at the same table—an event that happened only in Iowa City, of all places in the world. Initially, the writers who came were one generation ahead of us, those that had been famous in the 1930s and 1940s, before the regime change in China. They were gradually replaced by younger writers. Today, most writers are one or two generations younger than we. Therefore, over the last fifty years in the history of IWP, a span of four generations of Chinese writers paraded before our eyes, here at the University of Iowa. I often joke that, if you want to meet famous Chinese writers, don't go to China, as they are scattered in different places. Instead, come to Iowa because they will eventually end up here. To be personally connected to the IWP has been the most satisfactory and rewarding experience of our life. We hope our endowed fund will help carry this IWP tradition way into the future.

[...] I would be remiss if I didn't mention the role of IWP in bringing together writers from all over the world. Here we promote internationalism rather than nationalism, and it is precisely this spirit that makes the IWP stand out among all literary gatherings. Despite local variations in custom, language, and way of life, all great writers explore the deepest core of human nature, which is in common among all mankind. For three months each year, the IWP creates a miracle by melding writers of all ethnicities and nationalities into one tightly knit family. It is significant that Chinese writers are members of this family. Our support of IWP helps ensure that Chinese literature will always be an integral part of world literature.

"HERE WE PROMOTE INTERNATIONALISM RATHER THAN NATIONALISM, AND IT IS PRECISELY THIS SPIRIT THAT MAKES THE IWP STAND OUT AMONG ALL LITERARY GATHERINGS."

On being world citizens

Victoria Lim: My husband and I are both ethnic Chinese. My three children all married Caucasian

Americans with their forebears from places including Ireland, Germany, Russia, England, Scotland, and France. Their religious traditions encompass Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism. My grandchildren will hopefully learn to enjoy both the music of the "Blue Danube Waltz" and the cantata "Ode to the Yellow River." Having grown up tethered to the Confucian tradition, I am culturally Chinese. Having spent most of my adult life in the U.S., I learned Western civilization – the rise of Christianity, the Renaissance movement, the scientific method, the industrial revolution, and the new economic discipline of Adam Smith – with great admiration. I have no difficulty combining them in my daily living.

On the gap between the sciences and humanities, and his new book

Ramon Lim: Since an early age, I was constantly bothered by the question of who we are (individually as well as a species) and what our place in the universe is. I believe that the ultimate goal of science, apart from its utilitarian role, is to help us gain insight into what life is about – life, not only physically, biologically, and socially, but also existentially. While I grappled with this issue, I realized that science alone does not help, and can even sidetrack. It is only by combining scientific research and philosophical contemplation that a holistic view of life can emerge.

[...] Five years after my retirement, I began working on *Self and the Phenomenon of Life*, which took

three strenuous years to finish. I came to the conclusion that most of humanity's concerns — life and death, being and nothingness, goodness and evil, war and peace, determinism and free will—can be explained in simple biological terms, under the unified notion of “self,” defined here as a natural system that seeks its own perpetuation. Of all the things I have done in my life, this book is dearest to my heart, as it is the fruit of a lifetime of learning, pursuing, and thinking. It is what I want to share with future generations.

On the impact of her career in her writing

Victoria Lim: My life is more than my medical career. I was born in China, immigrated to the Philippines before I learned to walk, and lived my childhood and formative years there. After my MD from the Philippines, I came to the U.S. for my residency and fellowship training. The training was interrupted and took several years longer than usual because I got married and had three children. Then I began my academic career in Chicago, where I started as a semi-trainee and later as faculty. I worked there for 13 years, followed by 25 years at the College of Medicine here in Iowa City.

I have written (though not yet published) about my journey through American academia for two reasons. One is to preserve some historical perspective by showing the cultural norms of treating the Chinese in American academia during my time, and second, as a gift to our grandchildren. I would like them to know that with discipline and diligence adversities can be overcome, and I want them to embrace the wonder of diversity in human society as it is in nature. From a global vantage point, the biggest surprise to me is the incredibly rapid rise of China in the 21st century. When I arrived in the United States, China was “the sick man of Asia,” and being an overseas Chinese was a difficult existence. For me, pursuing an academic career in U.S. medical schools was a struggle. As an outsider, I often felt unanchored. When I ultimately became more accepted in my career, I wondered whether this was to my own credit or because of the new status of my mother country. On a positive note, after the initial difficulties, I carved out a good career in Iowa, and for that I am grateful to the people in the College of Medicine as well as to those at the University Hospitals and Clinics.

On establishing the Ramon and Victoria Lim Medical Lectureship

Ramon Lim: Upon our retirement, we set up the Lim Medical Science Lectureship as a token of thanks to the UI College of Medicine, which had nurtured our careers for over twenty years. It is at this institution where our scientific work blossomed. To us, the IWP and the medical school are of equal importance—the former out of personal liking, the latter a source of official employment and recognition. By donating to both, we strike a balance between the two. As we recede from the academic scene, we want to encourage younger generations to get into medicine. We select outstanding scientists from all over the country to deliver lectures in cutting-edge medical fields, who also serve as role models for our medical students. We are happy to bring top scientists to Iowa, many of whom are of Asian descent. These second-generation Asian scientists, whose parents are immigrants like us, are starting to fill important academic posts, with achievements far greater than those of their parents. ▪

International Writing Program Editor Nataša Ďurovičová interviewed Ramon and Victoria Lim in the winter of 2018.

Victoria Lim, MD, is a UI professor emerita of Internal Medicine, specializing in kidney diseases. In her free time, she writes about her journey through U.S. academia. **Ramon Lim, MD, PhD**, is a professor emeritus of Neurology and a researcher of brain proteins and brain cell biology at the University of Iowa. His book *Self and the Phenomenon of Life: A Biologist Examines Life from Molecules to Humanity* was published in 2017. In retirement, he also practices calligraphy.

PROGRAM SUPPORT



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 KRUI: Host Siya Mali
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OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY OTHER INSTITUTIONS:

Berl's Brooklyn Poetry Shop (NY)
Birds, LLC (NY)
Cedar Rapids Jefferson High School (IA)

City of Asylum/Pittsburgh (PA)
Des Moines Central Academy (IA)
Feed Me Weird Things (IA)
Figge Art Museum (IA)
Filipino Arts & Cinema, International (CA)
Folio: The Seattle Athenaeum (WA)
Hugo House (WA)
International Women's Club of Iowa City (IA)
Iowa City Book Festival (IA)
Island Institute, Sitka (AK)
Louder Than A Bomb, Chicago (IL)
Midwest Writing Center (IA)
New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (LA)
Poetry Foundation, Chicago (IL)
Poets House, New York (NY)
Portland Stage Company, Portland (ME)
Press Street, New Orleans (LA)
PS1 (IA)
Richard Stockton University of New Jersey (NJ)
South Jersey Poetry Collective (NJ)
Southeast Junior High, Iowa City (IA)
Split This Rock D.C. Youth Slam (D.C.)
West Liberty Middle School (IA)
Yellow Door Gallery, Des Moines (IA)

FOUNDATIONS, EDUCATIONAL, & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS:

American Language Center — Tangier Casablanca
Ari Literature Foundation: Arevik Ashkharoyan and Lianna Aghamyan
Arts Council Korea, Seoul, South Korea
Creative New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand
The Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, Cedar Rapids, IA
The Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professorships Program
The Max Kade Foundation, New York, NY
Ministry of Culture, Taiwan
National Arts Council Singapore
The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation, Hong Kong
Tangier American Legation Institute for Moroccan Studies (TALIM)

IWP ADVISORY BOARD:

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Downing Thomas, Professor of French, University of Iowa, USA
Etienne Van Heerden, fiction writer, poet, journalist, South Africa
Eliot Weinberger, translator and essayist, USA

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY:

Executive organizer: Alice Gribbin

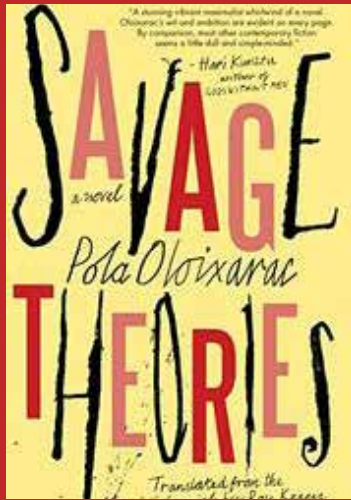
Programming: Iowa City Public Library and its staff; Professor Jean-François Charles, UI School of Music;
Professor Jin Feng, Grinnell College; Professor Claire Fox, Department of English, UI; Dr. Su Hongjun;
Professor George de la Peña, Department of Dance, UI; Daniel Simon, Editor, *World Literature Today*

Hospitality: Nancy Bird & the Iowa City Downtown District staff; Mary Cooper Hogan; LanLan Hwang; Hélène Lesage

Other: Usha Balakrishnan, CEO, CARTHA; Professor Bradley Dicharry, UI School of Art and Art History; Drs. Ramon and Victoria Lim; John and Mary Pappajohn; Mauro Heck Photography

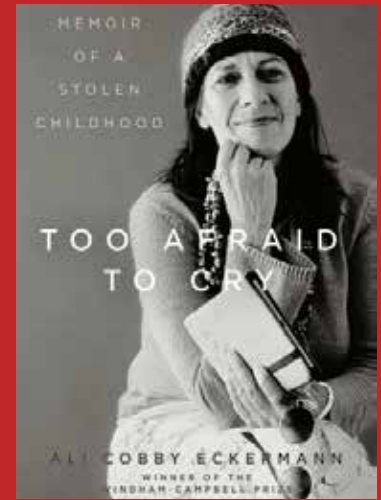
Photography by Kelly Bedeian, Meggan Fisher, Mauro Heck, and Kathleen Maris Paltrineri appears in this annual report.

THIS YEAR'S BOOKSHELF



Savage Theories (2017) is the debut novel of Pola Oloixarac (Argentina, IWP, '10). It centers on Rosa Ostreech, an academic, and the novel's narrator. While her colleagues tour the underground scene of Buenos Aires, Ostreech struggles with her thesis on violence and culture. Meanwhile, the Dutch anthropologist Johan van Vliet begins work on a theory that explains human consciousness and civilization by reference to our early primate ancestors, who spent thousands of years as prey. The novel explores violence, sex, and philosophy. Its characters grapple with visionary theories, searching for their place in the world.

Translated from the Spanish by Roy Kesey. Soho Books, 2017.



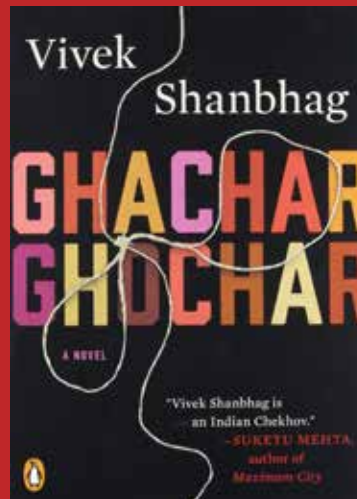
In her new memoir *Too Afraid to Cry: Memoir of a Stolen Childhood*, Ali Cobby Eckermann (Australia, IWP, '14) touches on the racism endured by indigenous communities in Australia. Eckermann, the winner of the Windham-Campbell Prize, chronicles her experience as part of The Stolen Generation, children who were forcibly removed from their families by the Australian government and church missions. As an adult, Eckermann attempts to move past her traumatic childhood, reconcile with her birth family, and find acceptance within their Indigenous community.

Liveright/Norton, 2018.



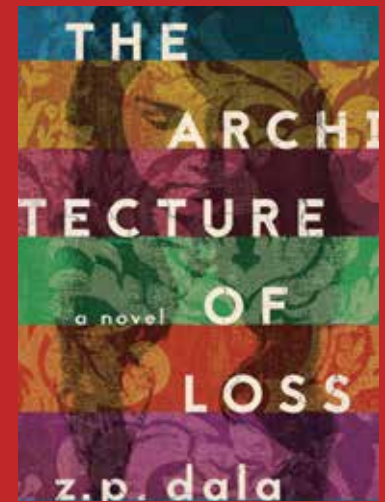
Spring Garden by Tomoka Shibasaki (Japan, IWP, '16) is a recently translated and photo-realistic novella of urban alienation in Tokyo. Winner of the 2014 Akutagawa Prize, it follows Taro and Nishi, who are neighbors in a lonely, soon-to-be-demolished apartment building. The two bond over the impending destruction and a sky-blue house in the area that decades before had been featured in a famous photography book. Their obsession with the sky-blue house, a former gathering place for celebrities, consumes them.

Translated from the Japanese by Polly Barton. Pushkin Press, 2017.



The success of a spice company leads to a rapid rise in social and economic status for the family at the center of *Ghachar Ghochar* by the Indian novelist Vivek Shanbhag (India, IWP, '16). In the midst of this rise in status, the dynamics within and outside the family change. Their world becomes 'ghachar ghochar' - a nonsense phrase that, to the narrator, comes to mean something entangled beyond repair. Originally written in Kannada, *Ghachar Ghochar* is the first of Shanbhag's books to appear in English. It was shortlisted for the fiction category of the 2017 Los Angeles Times Book Prize.

Translated from the Kannada by Srinath Perur. Penguin Random House, 2017.



The Architecture of Loss by Z.P. Dala (South Africa, IWP, '16) takes place in South Africa and focuses on the impact of the anti-apartheid struggle on women. Architect Afroze Bhana, estranged from her mother at age six and sent away from her rural hometown, must make a return when she falls ill. However, even when faced with her own mortality, Afroze's mother, a former doctor and anti-apartheid activist, cannot connect with her daughter, a proof of the damaging nature of her past.

Pegasus Books, 2017.

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