



The Loft Literary Center

Open Book Suite 200
1011 Washington Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Chris Jones
612-215-2589
cjones@loft.org

The Loft Literary Center Announces 2018–19 Mentor Series Fellows

Twelve Minnesota Emerging Writers Selected for the Year-long Fellowship Program

The Loft Literary Center is pleased to announce the recipients of the The Loft Mentor Series Fellowship. The Mentor Series offers twelve emerging Minnesota writers the opportunity to work intensively with six nationally acclaimed writers of prose and poetry.

Selected participants work throughout the year with the six mentors, and all participants and mentors give public readings at the Loft. Dates for those readings will be announced in Spring. Learn more [about the program here](#).

This program is funded by the Jerome Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and by the generous support of Loft members.

2018–19 ENTRIES AND SELECTIONS

The Loft Literary Center received 181 entries to the 2018–19 Loft Mentor Series Fellowship, from which the preliminary judges had the difficult task of choosing 20 finalists per genre. There were 60 entries in nonfiction; 51 poetry applications; and



70 fiction submissions. The selection process included current program mentors and program alumni. The fellows are listed below.

Nonfiction Selections

Hilal Isler, Debra J. Stone, Jeannie Goodspeed, and Mimi Imuro Van Ausdall have been selected for the year-long fellowship program in creative nonfiction.

Honorable mentions are Andrea Sanow and Naomi Cohn. Finalists are: Anna Henderson, Lula Saleh, Irna Landrum, Bridget Mendel, Cynthia Lehew-Nehrbass, Marcia Peck, Brian Olson, Ashley Abramson, Hawona Sullivan Janzen, EmmaLee Pallai, Lizabeth Sjaastad, Patricia Kester, Diane Richard, Sami Pfeffer, Thet-Htar Thet, Callan Cotter, Christina Schmid, and Kelley Still.

Poetry Selections

Ariane Sandford, Jaya Stenquist, Brianna Flavin, and Maitreyi Ray have been selected for the year-long fellowship program in poetry.

Honorable mentions are Nusaiba Imady and JD Hegarty. Finalists are Anna Rasmussen, Sonja Sharp, Lauren K Carlson, Teresa Klotz, Leah Lemm, Katie Vagnino, Rickey Mantley, Hayley Graffunder, Venessa Fuentes, Debra Stone, Pamela Wynn, Libby Casey Irwin, Brendan Stermer, Christopher Vaughan, John Muellner, Toni Kaercher, and Libny Dubreuze.

Fiction Selections

Jessie Lee-Bauder, Haeyoon Fry, Molly Olguin, and Anessa Ibrahim have been selected for the year-long fellowship program in fiction.

Honorable mentions are Bret Farley and Jaya Stenquist. Finalists are Char Miller, Hannah Holm, Julie Zhou, Nusaiba Imady, Alexandra Watson, John Ratz, Ari Baum-Hommes, Mimi Imuro Van Ausdall, Bridgit Albrecht, Callan Cotter, Pamela Bosch, Shireen Rahnema, Denise Biggs, and Graham Sutherland.

BIOS FOR THE 2018–19 LOFT MENTOR SERIES FELLOWS

Ariane Sandford (poetry) was born in Barbados and raised in East Germany, Washington, D.C., South Africa, and Bavaria. Her poems have appeared in *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Booth*, and *Paper Nautilus*, among others. She holds an MFA from



Hamline University and teaches humanities and English at Dunwoody College of Technology. In her free time she volunteers at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. After a childhood of constant travelling, she's happy to call Minneapolis home, where she lives with her young son and various animals.

Jaya Stenquist (poetry) studied poetry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she was the 2013-2015 Martha Meir Rank Distinguished Graduate Fellow in Poetry. Her work has appeared in *West Branch Wired*, *Mid-American Review*, and in English and Icelandic in *Iceview*. She lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with her two cats.

Brianna Flavin (poetry) is a poet from Saint Paul who holds an MFA from the University of Virginia. She works as a content writer, adjunct professor, and volunteer prison writing mentor. She spends the rest of her time hanging out with her family and gardening.

Maitreyi Ray (poetry) is a multimedia artist, poet, and performer who lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She has performed at many Twin Cities arts and literary events including Daddy, Patrick's Cabaret: Raw Materials, and Queertopia. Maitreyi was recently shortlisted for the 2018 Cosmonauts Avenue Poetry Prize. She is a Sagittarius.

Jessie Lee-Bauder's (fiction) short stories are both confessional and surreal, as she conveys the experience of occupying an intersection of identities that simultaneously welcome and isolate. She also deals with experiences shared across identities and examines the universal wants for connection, and to love and be loved. She has a BA in Creative Writing from Macalester College and lives in Minneapolis.

Haeyoon Fry (fiction) is an author and accountant from Saint Paul, MN. She has been published in *Sixfold's* 2017 Winter Fiction issue, listed as a finalist for New Millennium Writings, and featured on her mother's refrigerator. She has an incomplete degree in English Literature from Hamline University, an incomplete degree in German Literature from the University of Trier, and an incomplete certification in the safe removal of bio-hazardous materials.

Molly Olguin (fiction) received her MFA in fiction from The Ohio State University in 2016. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming from *Redivider*, *Fugue*, *The Normal School*, *River Styx*, *Quarterly West*, *Betwixt*, and others. She was a finalist for the 2017 F(r)iction Winter Literary Competition, the 2016 Fugue Prose Contest, and was



awarded the 2015 AWP Intro Awards Prize in fiction. She currently resides in the Twin Cities, where she teaches English and creative writing to high school students.

Anessa Ibrahim (fiction) is a fiction writer from Los Angeles. Her writing has appeared in *American Short Fiction*. She holds an MFA from the University of Minnesota, and is a recipient of a 2018 Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant. She is currently working on a novel.

Hilal Isler (creative nonfiction) teaches social justice at the University of Minnesota. She writes mostly about her experience, growing up the child of Turkish immigrants.

Debra J. Stone (creative nonfiction) lives in Robbinsdale and attended Carleton College. She co-founded and co-facilitates the Northside Writers Group that meets every second Wednesday of the month at Homewood Studios for the past ten years. Her poetry has been published in *About Place*, *Wild Age Press*, *Home Sweet Home Exhibit*, in the chapbook *Bringing Gifts*, *Bringing News*, *The Saint Paul Almanac* and short stories published by *Rigorous*, *Random Sample Review.com*, *Tidal Basin*, *Black Magnolia Literary Journal* and other literary journals. Debra has received residencies at New York Mills, The Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Study, The Vermont Studio Center, Callaloo, and was a participant in The Givens Black Writers Retreat. She has received a Beyond the Pure Fellowship grant from Intermedia Arts. Currently, Debra serves as Board Member and Engagement Committee Chair for the nonprofit independent publisher Graywolf Press. Debra is writing towards a collection of essays.

Jeannie Goodspeed (creative nonfiction) is a mother of three, wife, pediatrician, and writer. When her second child was born with profound disabilities, Jeannie experienced a new chapter of motherhood, one full of grief but also many unexpected joys. After her daughter's death, Jeannie began writing as a way to remember and honor her child. In her memoir, Jeannie explores the heartbreak and beauty that can come with choosing palliative care. Jeannie lives in Saint Paul with her husband, daughter, and son.

Mimi Imuro Van Ausdall, PhD, (creative nonfiction) is a Minneapolis-based writer and teacher. Her creative and scholarly work appears in *MUTHA Magazine*, *The Journal of Lesbian Studies*, and *Feminist Formations*, among others. She has been the recipient of the National Women's Studies Association Graduate Scholarship in



Lesbian Studies and of the Consortium of Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Fellowship at Purdue University. She is currently working on a book of personal essays.

BIOS FOR THE 2018–19 MENTORS

Fiction

V.V. Ganeshanathan's debut novel, *Love Marriage*, was longlisted for the Orange Prize and chosen one of Washington Post Book World's Best of 2008, as well as a Barnes & Noble Discover Great New Writers Pick. Her work has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*, among others. A recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, and the American Academy of Berlin, she has been visiting faculty at the University of Michigan and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She presently teaches in the MFA program at the University of Minnesota. She is at work on a second novel, excerpts of which have appeared in *Granta*, *Ploughshares*, and *Best American Nonrequired Reading 2014*.

Carmen Maria Machado's debut short story collection, *Her Body and Other Parties*, was a finalist for the National Book Award, the Kirkus Prize, LA Times Book Prize Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction, the Dylan Thomas Prize, and the PEN/Robert W. Bingham Prize for Debut Fiction, and the winner of the Bard Fiction Prize, the National Book Critics Circle's John Leonard Prize, and the Crawford Award. In 2018, *The New York Times* listed *Her Body and Other Parties* as a member of "The New Vanguard," one of "15 remarkable books by women that are shaping the way we read and write fiction in the 21st century." Her essays, fiction, and criticism have appeared in the *New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Granta*, *Tin House*, *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, *The Believer*, *Guernica*, *Best American Science Fiction & Fantasy*, and elsewhere. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and has been awarded fellowships and residencies from the Michener-Copernicus Foundation, the Elizabeth George Foundation, the CINTAS Foundation, Yaddo, Hedgebrook, and the Millay Colony for the Arts. She is the Writer-in-Residence at the University of Pennsylvania and lives in Philadelphia with her wife.

Creative Nonfiction



Moustafa Bayoumi is the author of the critically acclaimed *How Does It Feel To Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America* (Penguin), which won an American Book Award and the Arab American Book Award for Non-Fiction. The book has also been translated into Arabic by Arab Scientific Publishers. His latest book, *This Muslim American Life: Dispatches from the War on Terror* (NYU Press), was chosen as a Best Book of 2015 by *The Progressive* magazine and was also awarded the Arab American Book Award for Non-Fiction for Peace. In 2015, he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters by Southern Vermont College. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Angela Pelster won the Great Lakes Colleges Association New Writer Award in Nonfiction, and was a finalist for the PEN Award for the art of the essay for her essay collection *Limber* (Sarabande, 2014). Her work has previously appeared or is forthcoming in *Ploughshares*, *Tin House*, *Granta*, *The Kenyon Review* and *The Gettysburg Review* amongst others. Her children's novel *The Curious Adventures of India Sophia* (River Books, 2005) won the Golden Eagle Children's Choice award. *War Prayer*, her essay film collaboration with her husband Richard Wiebe, won Best of Festival in Iowa City, premiered in Rotterdam and played nationally and internationally in Chicago, Ann Arbor, Marseilles, Syros and Scotland amongst others. She's been awarded a Minnesota State Arts Board grant and is the founder and director of the screening series *Writers Go to the Movies*. Her MFA is from the University of Iowa, and she teaches in the Creative Writing Programs at Hamline University in Saint Paul.

Poetry

Danez Smith is a Black, Queer, Poz writer & performer from St. Paul, MN. Danez is the author of *Don't Call Us Dead* (Graywolf Press, 2017), finalist for the 2017 National Book Award, the Lambda Award for Gay Poetry, and two Publishing Triangle Awards. Their first collection, *[insert] boy* (YesYes Books, 2014), was the winner of the Kate Tufts Discovery Award and the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry. Danez's third collection, *Homie*, will be published in Spring 2020. They are the recipient of fellowships from the Poetry Foundation, the McKnight Foundation, the Montalvo Arts Center, Cave Canem, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Danez's work has been featured widely including on *Buzzfeed*, *The New York Times*, *PBS NewsHour*, *Best American Poetry*, *Poetry Magazine*, and on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert. Danez is a member of the Dark Noise Collective and is the co-host



of VS with Franny Choi, a podcast sponsored by the Poetry Foundation and Postloudness. Danez is also the recipient of the inaugural Four Quartets Prize from the Poetry Society of America and the T.S. Eliot Foundation. Find more at www.danezsmithpoet.com

Natalie Diaz was born and raised in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, on the banks of the Colorado River. She is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Tribe. Her first poetry collection, *When My Brother Was an Aztec*, was published by Copper Canyon Press. She is a Lannan Literary Fellow and a Native Arts Council Foundation Artist Fellow. She was awarded a Bread Loaf Fellowship, the Holmes National Poetry Prize, a Hodder Fellowship, and a PEN/Civitella Ranieri Foundation Residency, as well as being awarded a US Artists Ford Fellowship. Diaz teaches at the Arizona State University Creative Writing MFA program. She splits her time between the east coast and Mohave Valley, Arizona, where she works to revitalize the Mojave language.

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Incorporated in 1975, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation's leading independent literary centers. The Loft advances the artistic development of writers, fosters a thriving literary community, and inspires a passion for literature.