



CITYLIT STAGE

Dates November 1, 2 & 3, 2019
Friday-Sunday, 12pm-10pm
FREE!

Location Baltimore's Inner Harbor, **Chesapeake Room,
Pier 5 Hotel - Baltimore**
711 Eastern Avenue, Baltimore



Description **CityLit Project** is a cultural institution that builds and connects a literary community of avid readers and writers throughout Maryland, offering a wide range of programs, creating opportunities for growth, and platforms to engage emerging and established writers. CityLit produces events throughout the year advancing the cause of empowering language and writing skills in light of a changing publishing industry, amplifying voices of people of color, as well as those without affiliations. This year's **CityLit Stage** sparks the campaign **\$15 for 15 years**, for serving the region with prominent authors, innovative programming and a place for writers to read, learn, and grow, and for readers to discover the power of story from authors who may not be on their radar. A special nod to writing the difficult story; to ordinary girls living extraordinary lives; to discovering the world inside a book; to the language of Arab-American queens; to revolutionary summers when the "*words loved me & I loved them back*"; to ancestral paths and healing in the aftermath; to keeping our hearts wild and feeding on the balm of hope. Join us to experience **Dominique Christina, Kondwani Fidel, Jaquira Díaz, Rion Amlicar Scott, Etaf Rum, Erika Meitner, Marita Golden**, and a sprinkling of musical guest artists, including **Joy Ike**. CityLit celebrates 15 years of bringing you the best ... all for *free*. Won't you celebrate with us? citylitproject.org

MISSION: CityLit Project nurtures the culture of literature in Baltimore and throughout Maryland. CityLit creates enthusiasm for the literary arts, connects a community of avid readers and writers, and opens opportunities for young people and diverse audiences to embrace the literary arts.

Schedule **Friday, November 1**

4:00 – 6:00 PM **Free Friday Feedback**

The ever-popular feature returns in its 7th year with five editors from exemplary regional magazines and presses. Journalists, poets and novelists will critique and provide guidance on ways to improve the work. Thirty-minute *One-on-One* conversations. Sign-up sheets available at the Festival opening. First come. First served. Five double-spaced pages. Only **18** 30-minute slots available. Must register in advance at the Festival opening. **Ian Anderson**, *Mason Jar Press*, memoir, fiction, poetry (5-6); **Evan Balkan**, screenwriting; **Rebekah Kirkman**, *BmoreArt*, creative nonfiction;

Chelsea Lemon Fetzer, *CityLit*, poetry, fiction; **Gabriella Souza**, fiction, creative nonfiction.

6:00 PM **Memoir: Writing the Difficult Story**

Three authors summon blades of courage by confronting a rapist in an effort to examine how it's possible for a *good* person to do a horrific thing; by grappling with and dismantling a form of self-hatred, and the dredge of colorism that stems from the oppression of white supremacy; by a walk back through a vulnerable past in the wake of violence, and the grind through the forces that create a "habit of fear". Join **Jeannie Vanasco**, *Things We Didn't Talk About When I Was a Girl*; **Petula Caesar**, *She's Such a Bright Girl: An American Story*; and **Karen Stefano**, *What the Body Remembers*, in a riveting and frank conversation about taking control, the what ifs and getting to grace with moderator **Sharea Harris**.

7:00 PM **Musical Guest Artist: From the Soul: A Session with Christen B**

We keep bringing her back so others can be mesmerized and experience the magical, seamless weave of her poetry and song.

7:30 – 9:00PM **The Bones, The Breaking, The Balm: Presenting Dominique Christina & Kondwani Fidel**

Two spoken word poets. One force. An intense, grounding experience, a reckoning with the truth, connecting the past to the present. An evening with 2017 National Poetry Series winner, educator, activist, **Christina**, author of *Anarcha Speaks: A History of Poems*, who revives the voice of the long-silenced Anarcha, an enslaved black woman subjected to the painful medical experiments by 19th-century physician J. Marion Sims. "*we lost our mouths/ 'cross a mighty mighty ocean/ coulda died but we don't know how.*" Baltimore's literary gem, **Fidel**, author of *Hummingbird in the Trenches*, examines in breathtaking poetry and prose what it's like to be young and black, living in America. An evening not to be missed.

Saturday, November 2

12:00 PM **Unthinkable, Unspeakable, Unforgettable: Creating Compelling Characters: A Master Class with Marita Golden (\$\$)**

Attendees will explore the characteristics of unforgettable fictional characters, and learn how to create confounding, conflicted, maddening characters, the kind that readers can't look away from and never forget. How to create a character willing to "go there" "say that" "break the rules"? Expect that and more. Memorable characters -Sethe in *Beloved*, Bigger Thomas in *Native Son*, Anna Karenina in the novel of the same name, are all bold, decisive and possess deeply complex interior lives. Learn the elements of creating dynamic characters in your writing. *Handouts provided.* Led by co-founder and President Emeritus of the Zora Neale Hurston/ Richard Wright Foundation, **Marita Golden**, a veteran teacher of writing and acclaimed award-winning author of seventeen books, including *The Wide Circumference of Love*, which Just A Rebel Productions acquired for a television series, and the recently published, a multi-cultural anthology *Us Against Alzheimer's: Stories of Family Love and Faith* edited by Golden.

1:30 PM **Musical Guest Artist: QueenEarth**

Singer songwriter **QueenEarth** has released 5 albums of original music, solo projects and collaborations, and travels with her educational

concert, *QueerCore: Behind the Music*, to share stories for LGBT audiences and its allies.

2:00 PM **Ordinary Girls: Jaquira Díaz in Conversation with Gabrielle Lucille Fuentes**

Jaquira Díaz's highly anticipated, electrifying debut work, *Ordinary Girl*, shares her unflinching memoir that gives voice to black and brown girls, queer and poor, who never saw themselves in books; where love triumphs a life as a repeat offender; and the struggles of a mother battling mental illness and addiction - a white woman who didn't know how to protect her brown children become real talk for a real life, with **Gabrielle Lucille Fuentes**, author of *The Sleeping World* interviewing.

3:00 PM **The World Inside a Book: Celebrating the Art of Reading – for parents and young readers**

Co-editors **Claudia Bedrick** and *Brain Pickings'* Maria Popova (*who will not be appearing*), explore the beautifully illustrated, bestselling “feast of a book” *A Velocity of Being: Letters to a Young Reader* with some of today's most remarkable culture-makers, writers, artists, scientists, entrepreneurs, and philosophers—who reflect on the joys of reading, how books broaden and deepen human experience. A shared-love-of-books contributors, **Matthew Burgess**, *The Unbudgeable Curmudgeon* and **Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie**, *Laila's Happiness*, join *Ana & Andrew* series author, minimalist guru **Christine Platt** in the joys of writing children's literature and the power of storytelling as a tool for social change.

4:30 PM **The Language of Queens: Arab American Women Writers Speak Life**

In an unprecedented convening, five Arab American women poets, novelists, journalists read and discuss their work, and engage in a conversation that includes breaking silences, the culture of writing the real and the imagined, motherhood, and what it means to be authentic on the page. Debut novelist **Etaf Rum**, *A Woman is No Man*, **Susan Muaddi Darraj**, with a forthcoming new middle-grade series *Farah Rocks*, Saudi-American essayist **Eman Quotah**, and journalist **Laila ElHaddad**, *Gaza Mom: Politics and Parenting in Palestine*, talk life with moderator, poet, editor, and community activist, **Zeina Azzam**.

6:00 PM **Beat the Blues with Pen Parentis: Writers, Who are Parents, too, Share Ways to Reframe Challenges in the Writing Life**

Are rejections piling up? Fear of rejection holding you back? Perhaps you've never published or maybe you've tasted success but can't seem to get your work back out there? Celebrated authors join *Pen Parentis* founder **Milda De Voe**, an award-winning writer of poetry and interstitial fiction, and curator and co-host of *Pen Parentis Literary Salons* **Christina Chiu**, winner of the James Alan McPherson Award for her novel, *Beauty*. For 10 years, *Pen Parentis* has provided audience-building performance opportunities and other resources to working writers who are also parents. **Dan Brady**, author of poetry collections *Strange Children* and *Subtexts*, forthcoming in 2020, **Melanie Hatter**, 2019 Kimbilio National Fiction Prize award-winner of *Malawi's Sisters*, novelist **Sonja Curry-Johnson**, author of the upcoming *Strike The Thick World Flat*, and **Susan Muaddi Darraj**, American Book Award winner for *A Curious Land*, whose children's book series, *Farah Rocks* debuts January 2020, share their resilience skills and strategies, practical advice, and new ways to reframe challenges. They'll discuss using discouragement as a motivator for their own work.

7:00 PM **Short Stories Matter: The Art of the Short Tale**

These prize-winning authors remind their fellow writers and readers that great written works are not always lengthy ones. This collection of authors prove this point well. **Rion Amlicar Scott's** new *The World Doesn't Require You* is a powerful follow-up of his debut collection, *Insurrections*, awarded the 2018 PEN/Bingham Prize for debut fiction; **Camille Acker**, author of *Training School for Negro Girls*, with a wide-ranging cast of characters, all of whom call Washington, DC, home; **Elise Levine**, author of the recent collection *This Wicked Tongue*, and *Driving Men Mad*; and **Andria Nacina Cole**, whose short story *Leaving Women* won the Ploughshares' Cohen Award. Prepare to be informed, entertained, and wanting to write your own short tale.

8:00 PM **Musical Guest Artist: TBA**

Sunday, November 3

12:00 PM

A Revolutionary Summer: The Words Loved Me & I Loved Them in Return - Andria Nacina Cole & the Daughters

Co-founder and director **Andria Nacina Cole**, of the critical reading and writing program, *A Revolutionary Summer* share experiences with **the Daughters**. ARS is dedicated to shifting harmful narratives about Black women and girls through both the meaningful study and creation of art and the deliberate application of self-inquiry. A Revolutionary Summer exists "...to keep Black girls whole, to balance the scales, to offer up a Nobel Laureate, radical painter, love song, and afro picked to perfection for every stupid, shallow representation of her." For eight Sundays every summer up to 21 young women gather to experience and discuss the creative works of consequential Black woman artists. Andria and her stellar team continue to lead Black girls to literature that reflects and affirms them on the CityLit stage.

1:00 PM

New Lit Tales: Beauty, Ancestry & Healing in the Aftermath

This session is moderated by **Marion Winik**, host of *The Weekly Reader* podcast at WYPR and author of a dozen books, most notably her collection of witty, arresting portraits of various deceased people in the newly released *The Big Book of The Dead*. Winik discusses brave new work with authors **Judith Krummeck**, whose *Old New Worlds* weaves the tale of related women separated by centuries sharing very similar challenges; **Melanie Hatter**, whose *Malawi's Sisters*, a powerful account of what happens to a family after the senseless murder of a young black woman, won the Kimbilio National Fiction Prize selected by Edwidge Danticat; and **Christina Chiu**, author of the soon-to-be-released novel *Beauty*, which offers a fresh and bold telling of the Asian-American experience through three families. This dynamic trio will touch on how one writes stories involving ancestry, lineage, family and shared history, and how those stories can become more than just an interesting read.

2:00 PM

Oh, But My Heart is Wild & My Bones are Steel: Women Poets Take the Stage with Pique Collective

In honor of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemoration, and the challenging history of women empowerment, including for women of color, CityLit Stage celebrates women poets featuring **Erika Meitner**, winner of the 2018 National Jewish Book Award in poetry and author of *Holy Moly Carry Me*; **Rachael Uwada Clifford**, whose work has been selected to appear in 2019 Best New Poets anthology; **Chet'la Sebree**, winner of the 2018 New Issues Poetry Prize, whose new release *Mistress*, "sketches one of the most charged and intriguing figures in our nation's history" writes poet Evie Shockley, the story of Sally Hemings mulatta has never been told like this; **Tatiana Figueroa Ramirez**, a VONA/Voices alum, who debuts her

chapbook *Coconut Curls y Café con Leche*; and Furious Flower Poetry Center's **Lauren Alleyne's** new work *Honeyfish*, about black immigrant women navigating external and internal identities, has published in *The Atlantic* and *Ms. Muse*. Baltimore-based **Pique Collective** is a quintet of modern musicians bringing together local artists, craft brews, and lively concerts of new and recent works. They will join the poets on stage with a musical rendition of the poets' work.

4:15 pm - 5:30 PM

Musical Guest Artist: Breathe ... a Musical Moment with Joy Ike
Joy Ike, whose music tinkers with pop, soul, folk, world fusion, was born to Nigerian immigrants. The singer/songwriter's music, voice, and writing have drawn comparisons to female musicians Nina Simone, Laura Nyro, and Regina Spektor, but her percussive piano-playing and soaring vocals give homage to her African upbringing. This Philadelphia-based artist possesses a powerful instrument of a voice, which she wields with humble virtuosity. Join us for an evening that will leave you stoked with hope. Ike shares her latest release, *Bigger Than Your Box*, a joyously defiant work, that dares us to believe in ourselves, to knock down the walls of fear and doubt we build around ourselves. "*This is an open-armed invitation to dive headfirst into the unseen*", says Ike. We're here for it, and you should be, too.

Information:

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