JOIN US NOVEMBER 1-3, 2019

CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF CITYLIT

CHESAPEAKE ROOM PIER 5 HOTEL

FEATURED GUEST ARTISTS:
Dominique Christina & Kondwani Fidel
ALONG WITH
Marita Golden, Jaquira Díaz, Etel Adnan, Rion Amilcar Scott
Erika Meitner, Joy Ike
CITYLIT STAGE

Dates
November 1, 2 & 3, 2019
Friday-Sunday, 12pm-10pm
Brilliant Baltimore: A Festival of Literature & Light
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 many more remarkable poets and writers, along with 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 – 9:00 PM  **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 (SS)**
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.*


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 Carhudgeon* and Mariahaddessa 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 El-Haddad, *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 reflects 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.

@citylitproject #CityLitStageBBF2019
Please Like us on Facebook. Follow us on Instagram & Twitter. Sign up for our mailing list:
https://app.etapestry.com/hosted/CityLitProject/OnlineForm.html

Information:
410.752.8632/www.baltimorebookfestival.org
410.271.8793/citylitproject.org

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*CLS2019 BBF CITYLIT STAGE FINAL SCHEDULE*
A Revolutionary Summer

WHO THEY ARE: A Revolutionary Summer is an intensive critical reading and writing program dedicated to shifting harmful narratives about Black women and girls through literature, art and self-inquiry.

[www.arevolutionarysummer.com](http://www.arevolutionarysummer.com)

Maryland Writers' Association

WHO THEY ARE: The Maryland Writers' Association (MWA) is a voluntary, not-for-profit association of writers at all levels dedicated to supporting the art, business, and craft of writing in all its forms.

[www.marylandwriters.org](http://www.marylandwriters.org)

Libraries Without Borders

WHO THEY ARE: Libraries Without Borders is a non-profit organization that believes that regardless of circumstances, people should have equal access to information and life enhancing resources.

[www.librarieswithoutborders.us/](http://www.librarieswithoutborders.us/)

The Inner Loop

WHO THEY ARE: A literary reading series and network for creative writers in the DC/Baltimore area.

[www.theinnerlooplit.org](http://www.theinnerlooplit.org)

Yellow Arrow Publishing

WHO THEY ARE: Yellow Arrow is a Baltimore-based nonprofit supporting women writers.


Writers & Words

WHO THEY ARE: Writers & Words is a Baltimore reading series that features four readers each month, one in fiction, non-fiction, poetry and the genre-defying “wild card” category which in the past has included a playwright, a scientist, and a children’s book author (and everything in between). Writers & Words’ mission is to connect writers to other writers in the Baltimore literary community and beyond.

[www.writersandwords.net/](http://www.writersandwords.net/)
The Baltimore Review
WHO THEY ARE: The Baltimore Review, founded in 1996, is a literary journal publishing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. The journal publishes quarterly online issues as well as an annual print compilation.

www.baltimorereview.org

Iceland Readers Retreat
WHO THEY ARE: The Iceland Readers Retreat offers lectures and talks by renowned authors while we learn about the rich literary heritage of this book-loving nation. Our 2020 event features award-winning writer Adam Gopnik.

www.IcelandReadersRetreat.com

Zora's Den
WHO THEY ARE: A community of Black women writers that offers social engagement, support and encouragement. In Our Own Words is a reading series that further celebrates prominent and rising Black, female voices.

www.zorasden.com

Mason Creative Writing
WHO THEY ARE: Mason Creative Writing is a fine arts program and literary arts community based at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. In addition to graduate and undergraduate degree programs, Mason Creative Writing includes the Fall for the Book literary festival, Stillhouse Press, Poetry Daily, the New Leaves Writers’ Conference, and the literary journals phoebe and So To Speak.

www.creativewriting.gmu.edu

Howard County Poetry & Literature Society
Founded in 1974, HoCoPoLitSo is a community-based not-for-profit arts organization that produces live and recorded readings and other literary events for the general public, including students, seniors, and inclusive audiences.

www.HoCoPoLitSo.org
City People: Black Baltimore in the Photographs of John Clark Mayden
Baltimore Lives: The Portraits of John Clark Mayden

WHO THEY ARE: City People: Black Baltimore in the Photographs of John Clark Mayden presents a selection of the artist's black-and-white street portraits taken since the 1970s. These photographs capture the ordinary joys and sorrows, quiet moments, and daily realities of Baltimore's African American neighborhoods. The companion volume Baltimore Lives contains 101 gorgeous reproductions of Mayden's photographs, with an introduction by the artist and art historian Michael D. Harris.

www.library.jhu.edu/city-people/

www.jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/baltimore-lives
Ben Marcus is a photographer and videographer. Raised in Montgomery County, Maryland, he went to Philadelphia to study media production at Temple University, graduating in 2016. These days, he is working on projects for nonprofits in the Philadelphia and Baltimore area. As a lover of poetry and writing, he is excited to capture candid moments at the CityLit Stage this year. You can view samples of his work at benmarcusmedia.com."