

Publishing Unbound

Description of the Event

Publishing Unbound was a three-day event that took place February 9-11, 2018. It was organized collaboratively by the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, the Magazine Association of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University's Publishing Program, with additional assistance and funding from Dalhousie University's Department of English. The goal of the event was to bring together stakeholders in Canadian independent publishing—including authors, educators, scholars, and publishing professionals—for an intensive discussion of systemic barriers to access in Canada's publishing industry. The event began from the premise that structural issues of racism, sexism, ableism, and cis-supremacy have shaped this industry, while recognizing that those involved in the industry, at every level, are working actively to develop strategies for enacting real change.

Publishing Unbound engaged in focused dialogue around four key topics: publishing in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the activist roles of small presses in Canada, the links between magazines and social change, and practical models for change within the industry (including intergenerational mentorship) (see Appendix A for the event program). Our goal was to produce a practical set of materials, including recommendations for resources, for publishers, authors, educators, and researchers. These materials include an annotated bibliography as well as this report, both to be hosted at publishingunbound.ca, with recommendations for future areas of research and for future iterations of similar events.

The overwhelming agreement of participants at Publishing Unbound was that more such events are needed, held in other regions of the country and organized by other stakeholders. To this end, we are also happy to share our organizing decisions, participant rationale, and summary of the event. Our hope is that Publishing Unbound will be the first of many similar events dedicated to supporting greater equity in the Canadian publishing industry.

Organizing Decisions

Publishing Unbound was conceived as a collaboration between the university and the publishing industry, represented by the four event organizers: Heidi Waechtler (ABPBC), Sylvia Skene (Magazine Association of BC), Hannah McGregor (Simon Fraser University), and Erin Wunker (Dalhousie University). We initially sought funding through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Connection program, and successfully received funding from the Canada Council for the Arts.

The event was organized in the style of an academic workshop, in which invited participants gather together to discuss a specific topic, often with the goal of publishing a special journal issue or edited volume of essays. Academic workshops let organizers carefully select participants to ensure representation of key fields or topics, and due to the focused nature of the group they make space for unusually extensive and frank conversation.

However, it became clear as we approached non-academic participants that this kind of event was unfamiliar to them; in the publishing industry, workshops are generally educational events in which people pay to learn from selected speakers. The invitation-only nature of Publishing Unbound led to some confusion and some concerns from members of the industry, who felt that the lack of audience was contrary to the openness at the heart of the event. Responding to their concerns, we scheduled a public evening of readings and talks at SFU Harbour Centre the Friday before the invitation-only weekend workshop.

Upon further discussion, the organizers agreed that invitation-only had enough advantages to outweigh the concerns. By inviting participants rather than accepting applications, we could prioritize the participation of people who may not have applied, including early-career publishers, many of whom are women of colour. We will detail the rationale for participants further in the next section.

In addition, the absence of an audience made the event into a safe venue for frank and open discussions, without the risk of harassment or derailing comments, which cannot be assured at open events. This is not to say that open events are without merit, but rather that there is value to both of these approaches.

The number at the weekend workshop was limited by our decision to pay travel, accommodation, and an honorarium to all participants, recognizing that many people working in publishing cannot afford to travel to events without assistance. Other iterations of similar events could focus on local participants, thus mitigating travel and accommodation costs; however, we believe honoraria should be paid to participants wherever possible, as a failure to do so would undermine the importance of an event such as this and the specialized knowledge possessed by diverse participants. Women of colour and people from other underrepresented groups are disproportionately called upon to perform free labour, especially emotional labour, and a key value to organizing an event that seeks to address equity in any industry must be a commitment to remunerating such labour.

Finally, we decided not to record or circulate the detailed notes of the conversations that unfolded at Publishing Unbound, and asked participants not to tweet about or share the content of

these conversations. These assurances of confidentiality allowed participants to speak openly about difficult topics. This report respects that confidentiality and thus summarizes the key themes of conversations without identifying speakers, while redacting any potential identifying details or information that might expose participants to risk. At future events, different decisions could be made, but only with the complete agreement of all participants.

Participant Rationale

Several concerns governed our choices of participants, including representation of various stakeholders (authors, publishers, educators, scholars), geographical reach, and a privileging of the participation of Indigenous and racialized participants. (For detailed bios of participants see Appendix B.)

As organizers, we collectively drew on several key networks and communities, prioritizing people working with BC-based book and magazine publishers, SFU-affiliated writers and teachers, and people affiliated with Canadian Women in the Literary Arts. Thus our participants included Adèle Barclay, who was CWILA critic-in-residence, as well as CWILA editors Shazia Hafiz Ramji and Fazeela Jiwa and CWILA co-founder Laura Moss. BC book publishers were represented by Cynara Geissler (Arsenal Pulp Press) and Greg Younging (Theytus Books), while magazine editors were represented by Karla Comanda (*Ricepaper Magazine*) and Jónina Kirton (*Room Magazine*). Finally, we invited Jordan Abel, David Chariandy, Leanne Johnson, and Deanna Reder from SFU. Hazel Millar (Book*hug, Toronto), Ashley Opheim (Metatron, Montreal), and Kateri Akwenzie-Damm (Kegedonce Press, Neyaashiinigiimig Reserve) were invited to ensure that small presses of various geographical locations, ages, and publishing approaches were represented. Finally, we invited Léonicka Valcius, Phoebe Wang, Vivek Shraya, and Jael Richardson due to their high-profile public activism on the topic of equity and diversity in Canadian publishing (Ms. Shraya and Ms. Richardson were unfortunately unable to attend due to personal conflicts).

Of course many of these participants play multiple roles in relation to Canadian publishing, but this brief description gives a sense of how decisions were made regarding who to invite. It should also be noted that not all invited participants agreed to attend, nor were we able to invite everyone we would have ideally liked to include; as mentioned in the previous section, budget and time posed restrictions as well.

Summary of Event

Publishing Unbound began with a public event on Friday, February 9, 2018 advertised as “an evening on the future of publishing in Canada.” This event was free but ticketed through Eventbrite, with roughly 130 people in attendance. It was moderated by co-organizer Erin Wunker, and included talks and readings from Jordan Abel, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, and David Chariandy. It also included a traditional welcome from Elder Ray Thunderchild and an ASL interpreter. Original plans for this event were somewhat modified as, mere hours before the event began, news broke that Gerald Stanley had been found not-guilty in the murder of Coulten Boushie, an event that spoke clearly of the violent colonial foundation of Canada and the ongoing violences that characterize Canadian society. Dr. Wunker and Ms. Akiwenzie-Damm directly referenced this event in their remarks, and the following day several organizers and participants took an extended lunch to participate in the protest outside the CBC in Vancouver.

Saturday’s program consisted of group introductions plus four focused conversations in which participants offered brief remarks before moderators opened the floor for general discussion. During the introductions, some key concerns arose, including how those of us who teach in publishing programs can encourage a focus on feminism, gender and sexuality, and anti-oppression; how we can decolonize publishing; what comes after inclusion; how we can support others and build opportunities in the publishing industry; economic justice; tackling unconscious exclusion and bias; and how we can share our struggles while learning to thrive amongst those struggles. Participants also agreed that they would like to focus on moving from theoretical conversations to practical ways forward.

Panel 1: Activism and Small Presses in Canada included speakers Hazel Millar, Hope Nicholson, Ashley Opheim, and Cynara Geissler. A common theme of their remarks was a need for community support and conversation between small presses, with a focus on publishers supporting one another in the right to push back on and critique over-restrictive grant guidelines. The conversation focused on the possibilities of sustainable, collective funding models, including cooperatives and unions.

Panel 2: Indigenous Publishing in the Wake of the TRC featured Jordan Abel, Greg Younging, and Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm. (Deanna Reder was unable to attend for personal reasons.) The presenters spoke about the long history of reconciliation as a project in Canada, the ongoing shortage of Indigenous editors, and the risk that non-Indigenous editors are publishing Indigenous stories as a trend rather than a long-term commitment. Discussing the relationship between publishing and politics, speakers addressed how the work of publishers is to “prepare the ground” for reconciliation and pointed to the Indigenous Editors Circle at Humber College as a promising program for training Indigenous editors. Conversation also turned to the tension between a “ticking the boxes” approach to publishing Indigenous stories versus a meaningful and sustainable engagement with Indigenous creators and communities.

Panel 3: Magazines, Communities, and Social Change included Shazia Hafiz Ramji, Fazeela Jiwa, Leanne Johnson, Karla Comanda, and Jónina Kirton. Their remarks addressed structural issues within magazine publishing, including the use of literary contests to fund publishing and the

normalization of unpaid internships, as well as the high risk of burnout and exhaustion for underpaid cultural works, particularly women of colour. Conversation also addressed the pivot from print- to digital-first publishing models, tactics for bringing in contributions from writers with diverse backgrounds, barriers to accessibility and inclusivity, building platforms for new writers, and expanding review culture.

Panel 4: Intergenerational Mentorships and Other Practical Models for Change featured Laura Moss, Adèle Barclay, Phoebe Wang, and Léonicka Valcius. The speakers remarked on shifting funding models and their impact on established publishing ventures, the need to openly address the power dynamics in our professional relationships and mentorships, and the particular need for more women of colour to mentor those starting in the publishing industry. Conversation also turned to accessibility and the need to increased support for publishers who want to prioritize accessibility at their events.

The event concluded on Sunday with an open discussion of what to do next. The organizers emphasized that we would like to see similar such events in the future, but that we are aware of our limitations and believe future iterations should be organized by others. Participants wanted to stay in touch and continue to collaborate, connect, and share resources to mitigate the sense many have of working in isolation. They discussed the desire to build a “culture of care” in publishing in which exhaustion and burnout are not the norm. They also emphasized the need not to think of this event as decisive or final; the issues discussed over these three days are far too complex and will need many more such discussions. In addition to future iterations of similar events, concrete suggestions included information guides for event organizers (including lists of accessible venues and checklists for organizing an accessible event), a shared code of ethics, an accessible hub of resources on related topics, and a platform for sharing resources.

Other Outcomes

In addition to this report and the experience of the event itself, **Publishing Unbound** has produced or will produce three additional concrete outcomes:

- 1) An annotated bibliography of relevant sources, gathered on the Zotero online citation tool and shared publicly on publishingunbound.ca.
- 2) A closed Google Group for participants, where they might continue to exchange information and resources as well as brainstorm possible future iterations of similar events.
- 3) A recording of the public component of the event, posted to publishingunbound.ca and released as a special episode of the podcast *Secret Feminist Agenda* to increase engagement.

Recommendations for Future Iterations

We are committed to helping Publishing Unbound to serve as part of an ongoing conversation, rather than the final word on the state of Canadian publishing. To that end, we offer the following recommendations for future iterations of similar events:

1) Try to ensure the organizing committee includes representation from communities impacted by the topics being addressed at the event.

2) Prioritize giving speakers honoraria in recognition of the value of their time.

3) Prioritize the inclusion of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of colour) participants and others who are significantly underrepresented in the publishing industry.

4) Prioritize the inclusion of disabled participants and ensure full accessibility of the event, including all-gender washrooms, ASL interpreters, etc.

5) Establish protocols of information-sharing with participants in advance; be transparent and open about how information is being recorded and what will be done with it.

6) Establish norms of discussion facilitation at the beginning of the event. Clarify how people will be called upon to speak. If possible, have experienced facilitators who are prepared for difficult conversations.

7) Communicate your decision-making processes as clearly as possible to participants and to the public.

8) To reduce budget costs, consider focusing on the local publishing industry while using social media, video conferencing, or other methods to disseminate conversations more widely.

9) Expand available resources through partnerships between organizations, e.g. colleges and universities, professional associations, and so on.

10) If there are concrete outcomes planned, either make time to accomplish them during the event or make sure there is money in the budget to hire someone--preferably someone from one of these underrepresented groups to complete them after the fact; participants are likely to be overtaxed and unable to contribute additional unpaid labour.

Areas for Future Research

A number of viable areas for future research emerged from the discussions at Publishing Unbound:

- 1) A survey of funding models for independent publishers including cooperative funding, crowd-funding, institutional support, etc.
- 2) An examination of existing professional codes of conduct and systems of accountability in cultural industries as possible models for the publishing industry.
- 3) A survey of current funding models for digital-first magazine publishing, including changes to the Canada Council funding models.
- 4) Surveys of diversity in Canadian publishing industry and in publishing output.
- 5) An investigation into best approaches to gathering and disseminating existing information on inclusivity, accountability, and accessibility in the Canadian publishing industry.

Appendix A: Event Program

Friday, February 9

9:30am–4:00pm Emerging Leaders (all participants welcome to attend; schedule to come)

7–9pm Public Reading and Reception

Chair: Erin Wunker

Jordan Abel, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, David Chariandy

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.

Saturday, February 10

9:00–10:30am Session 1: Activism and Small Presses in Canada

Chair: Hannah McGregor (SFU)

Participants: Hazel Millar, Hope Nicholson, Ashley Opheim, Cynara Geissler

11:00am–12:30pm Session 2: Indigenous Publishing in the Wake of the TRC

Chair: Heidi Waechtler (ABPBC)

Participants: Gregory Younging, Jordan Abel, Deanna Reder, Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm

12:30–1:30pm LUNCH

1:30–3:00pm Session 3: Magazines, Communities, and Social Change

Chair: Sylvia Skene (MagsBC)

Participants: Shazia Hafiz Ramji, Fazeela Jiwa, Leanne Johnson, Karla Comanda, Jónína Kirton

3:30–5:00pm Session 4: Intergenerational Mentorships and Other Practical Models for Change

Chair: Erin Wunker (Dalhousie/CWILA)

Participants: Laura Moss, Adèle Barclay, Phoebe Wang, Léonicka Valcius

7:00–9:00pm DINNER

Sunday, February 11

9:30–11:30am Wrap-up and Next Steps

Appendix B: Participant Bios

Organizers

Hannah McGregor is an Assistant Professor of Publishing at Simon Fraser University, where her research focuses on podcasting as scholarly communication, systemic barriers to access in the Canadian publishing industry, and magazines as middlebrow media. She is the co-creator of *Witch, Please*, a feminist podcast on the Harry Potter world, and the creator of the weekly podcast *Secret Feminist Agenda*.

Originally hired in 2011 as the Magazine Association of BC's Executive Director, **Sylvia Skene** has also worked as Project Coordinator for the association and as Interim Executive Director for the Western Magazine Awards Foundation. Again Executive Director as well as Internship Coordinator for MagsBC, Sylvia is working towards rebuilding MagsBC's reputation as an effective association, responsive to its members and innovative in its approach.

Heidi Waechtler is the executive director of the Association of Book Publishers of BC, which works to support the long-term health and success of the Canadian-owned book industry in British Columbia. She was previously the managing editor at Coach House Books, a literary press based in Toronto, where she was engaged in all aspects of the press's publishing program, including editorial, production, sales and marketing, and digital publishing. She has been invited to speak to publishing classes at Simon Fraser University, Ryerson, the University of Toronto, and Concordia, and at Book Summit. Heidi completed the coursework in SFU's Master of Publishing program and an editorial internship at McClelland & Stewart. She holds a BA in English Literature from the UBC as well as a Certificate in Editing from SFU.

Erin Wunker is deeply committed to interdisciplinary, nomadic thinking in her work. This is perhaps partly due to her nomadic life growing up between the Southern United States and Southern Ontario. Crossing borders has become practice and praxis for her in her research and her teaching. Broadly, her research falls under the designations poetics & poetry, culture & theory, and critical race & gender studies. Put more specifically, in her work she considers how cultural production can be—and has been—transformative. She locates her work within a Canadian context but, like the subjects and texts she studies, she understands the Canada in transnational contexts. She's been interested in the loosely connected concepts of collaboration, cultural production, and the intersections between academia and the multiple publics of our cultural landscape.

Participants

Jordan Abel is a Nisga'a writer from BC. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD at Simon Fraser University where his research concentrates on the intersection between Digital Humanities and Indigenous Literary Studies. Abel's creative work has recently been anthologized in *Best Canadian Poetry* (Tightrope), *The Land We Are: Artists and Writers Unsettle the Politics of Reconciliation* (Arbiter

Ring), and *The New Concrete: Visual Poetry in the 21st Century* (Hayword). Abel is the author of *Injun*, *Un/inhabited*, and *The Place of Scraps* (winner of the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize and finalist for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award). Abel's third collection of poetry, *Injun*, has just been shortlisted for the 2017 Griffin Poetry Prize. Abel's work as an Indigenous literary scholar, activist, and poet, with its attention to racism in Canadian literature, is central to this project.

Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm is an Anishnaabe writer of mixed ancestry from the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation. Her writing has been published in various anthologies, journals, and magazines in Canada, the U.S., Aotearoa/New Zealand, Australia, and Germany and in the collection *my heart is a stray bullet*. She is also the founder and managing editor of Kegedonce Press. Kegedonce Press is one of only three established Indigenous publishers in Canada, and one of only two that publishes Indigenous writers as general practice, and they are the only Indigenous publishing company in Ontario, the only Indigenous publisher committed to publishing poetry, and the only one with a commitment and experience in developing international markets.

Adèle Barclay is a writer, scholar, and literary critic whose work addresses themes of gendered and sexual identity, belonging, and dislocation in Canadian culture. Barclay's work has appeared in key literary journals such as *The Fiddlehead*, *The Puritan*, *PRISM*, and *The Literary Review of Canada*. She is the recipient of the 2016 Lit POP Award for Poetry and the 2016 *Walrus* Readers' Choice Award for Poetry and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her debut poetry collection was nominated for the 2015 Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry and is currently a 2017 finalist for the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Award. She was named 30 Under 30, a Vancouver-based literary event that showcases the work of poets under the age of thirty. She is the Interviews Editor at *The Rusty Toque*, a poetry ambassador for Vancouver's Poet Laureate Rachel Rose, and the 2017 Critic-in-Residence for Canadian Women In Literary Arts. She holds a PhD in English from the University of Victoria and researches modern and contemporary American poetry.

David Chariandy, who will be participating only in the Friday evening panel, is a professor of English literature at Simon Fraser University and a very promising creative writer. His first novel, *Soucouyant* (2007), received the attention of prestigious awards committees and enthusiastic critical reviews. Most notably, *Soucouyant* was longlisted for the 2009 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the 2007 Scotiabank Giller Prize and was shortlisted for the 2007 Governor General's Award for Fiction. His second novel, *Brother*, is forthcoming. Chariandy's academic research and creative pursuits have made him one of the most prominent voices in discussions of contemporary black Canadian literature. As a scholar of black diasporic and black Canadian literature, Chariandy has been an important contributor to the growing but still-neglected field of Black Studies in Canada.

Karla Comanda is the Fiction Editor of *Ricepaper Magazine*. Comanda, who is originally from the Philippines, recently graduated with an MFA in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. Poet, playwright, and translator, her works have most recently appeared in *Cha* and *Room*. Comanda's writing, editing, mentorship, and teaching centre on the intersection of history, cultural identity, and belonging.

Cynara Geissler is the marketing manager at Arsenal Pulp Press (a leading Canadian independent

book publisher in Vancouver, BC) and the co-host of *Fatties on Ice*, an independent feminist podcast about pop culture and media. She has worked in the creative and literary arts community for over a decade as a publicist, writer, editor, event coordinator, typesetter, proofreader, social media consultant, and non-profit administrator. She speaks regularly to the students of the Simon Fraser University Master of Publishing program about the publishing industry and book marketing. She also writes about feminism and size acceptance for venues such as *The Establishment*, *Geez Magazine*, and *Shameless*.

Shazia Hafiz Ramji received the 2017 Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry and was a finalist for the 2016 National Magazine Awards. Her writing has recently appeared in *Quill & Quire*, *Vallum*, Metatron's *ALPHA*, *The Puritan*, and *Hamilton Arts & Letters*. Her first chapbook is *Prosopopoeia* (Anstruther Press, 2017) and her debut book of poetry, *Port of Being*, is forthcoming from Invisible Press in spring 2018. She lives in Vancouver, BC, where she teaches creative writing, is an interviews editor for CWILA, poetry and reviews editor at *PRISM international*, and designer at Rahila's Ghost.

Fazeela Jiwa is a writer, editor/indexer, and educator. Her work hinges around the intersection of race and gender in the context of official and alternative art, politics, activism, and histories. She writes and edits for various venues and projects, including CWILA: Canadian Women in the Literary Arts and *Jaggery: A DesiLit Arts and Literature Journal*, and provides facilitation and educational services by contract to several clients across the country. Jiwa has worked in co-operative and transitional housing, popular and public education, sexual assault crisis work, radio, and facilitation. She has an MA from Concordia University in Montreal and a B.Ed from University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and she has taken several professional courses in Simon Fraser University's editing certification program. She is an affiliate member of the Editors' Association of Canada and the Indexing Society of Canada.

Leanne Johnson is a text-based artist, editor, publisher, and educator. She began her publishing career writing for *Kinesis* (Canada's only national feminist magazine in its time). She went on to co-direct/curate the Publication program at the Western Front Society, which produced *FRONT Magazine*. She was a director of the Magazine Association of BC, and worked as a publishing consultant to the Banff Centre Press. Published under "leannej," her work has been described as "hovering between writing and conceptual art," and has been displayed in galleries, online, magazines, and books. Her books include *Long-Range Forecast Variable* (2002), *Re-reading the Riot Act* (2011), *Staying Beauty* (2013), and *Monument* (2014). Her most recent texts explore the form of animated and interactive digital narratives. She also teaches publishing management and magazine publishing in Simon Fraser University's Master of Publishing.

Jónína Kirton is a prairie-born Métis/Icelandic poet, author, and facilitator. She currently lives in Vancouver, on the unceded territory of the Salish people. Kirton graduated from Simon Fraser University's Writer's Studio in 2007 and is a member of its Advisory Board as well as the liaison for its Indigenous Advisory Board. Kirton is also a member of the Room Magazine Editorial board. In 2016, Kirton received Vancouver's Mayor's Arts Award for an Emerging Artist in the Literary Arts category. Nominated by her mentor Betsy Warland, Kirton is excited to be Warland's apprentice at the 2017 SFU Writer's Studio. She brings her experience as a sacred circle facilitator to her writing

and teaching.

Hazel Millar is the co-founder, publicist, and head of marketing and public relations for the independent publishing house BookThug. Known for publishing contemporary and avant-garde poetry and fiction which expands the boundaries of literary production, BookThug has recently begun a new non-fiction series focused on publishing politically-engaged and provocative ideas about race, gender, sexuality, and identity. In addition, Millar and co-founder Jay MillAr have recently revised BookThug's mission and mandate to invite submissions written by voices that have been traditionally marginalized by mainstream literary presses.

Laura Moss teaches, researches, and writes in the fields of Canadian Literatures. In 2015, Moss became the Editor of the journal *Canadian Literature*, having served as Associate Editor (Reviews) since 2004 and Acting Editor of the journal (2008, 2013-14). Since 2011, she has also been a contributing editor to the Canlitguides.ca project. Further, she has served on the advisory/ editorial boards of *Studies in Canadian Literature*, *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* (France), *Postcolonial Text*, and *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*. From 2006-10 she also sat on the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS) Aid to Scholarly Publications Committee. Since its founding in 2012, Moss has been an active member of CWILA, serving on its board of directors (2012-14) and as manager of the jury for the Inaugural Critic-in-Residence in 2012. In 2013-14, Moss led the UBC Gender Race and Social Justice-CWILA Research Network.

Hope Nicholson is an editor, researcher, producer, publisher, and passionate fangirl. Her aim in life is to help create space for stories to be told, that aren't commonly told but are highly desired. Community building and helping others succeed is the aim of the company she has developed, Bedside Press. Bedside Press is a Winnipeg based publisher dedicated to making comics that bring back attention to forgotten works of history, and encourage the growth of new content and creators. Nicholson's work as an editor and publisher advocates for diverse representation; she is passionate about the inclusion and safety of women in the comics industry and fandom, and facilitates that inclusion through innovative approaches to funding projects, particularly crowdsourcing. Nicholson is also the author of *The Spectacular Sisterhood of Superwomen*, a history of female characters in comic book history forthcoming from Quirk Books.

Ashley Opheim is the Managing Editor of Metatron, an independent publisher based in Montreal that specializes in contemporary literature by new and emerging authors. Opheim and her editorial collaborators are devoted to publishing perspectives that reflect the experiences and sensibilities of our time. Under Opheim's management Metatron seeks out emotionally resonant work that challenges and informs a new direction and style of contemporary, Canadian writing. Metatron began as an effort to fill a gap that was perceived in Canadian publishing, particularly in English-language publishing in Montreal. Metatron's mandate is to invest in new and emerging authors; to make their work widely available both online and in print; and to give them the tools and resources they need to advance their literary careers. Metatron has focused on providing opportunities for authors at the very beginning of their literary careers. Metatron's authors are often 20 - 30 years old, and are usually publishing their first book.

Deanna Reder (Cree-Metis) is Associate Professor in the Departments of First Nations Studies and

English at Simon Fraser University. For the 2016-2018 term she is the MATE Director based at SFU Surrey. She is Principal Investigator, in partnership with co-applicants Dr. Margery Fee and Cherokee scholar Dr. Daniel Heath Justice of the University of British Columbia, on a five-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded project for 2015-2020 called "The People and the Text: Indigenous Writing in Northern North America up to 1992" (www.thepeopleandthetext.ca). She is President of the newly formed Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) and is the Series Editor for the Indigenous Studies Series at Wilfrid Laurier University Press. As a scholar at the forefront of Indigenous publishing history in Canada, she brings vital expertise to this event.

Vivek Shraya, who will be participating only in the Friday evening panel, is an artist whose body of work includes several albums, films, and books. Vivek's 2017 album with Queer Songbook Orchestra, *Part-Time Woman*, was included in *Now Magazine's* Best Toronto Songs of 2017. Her first book of poetry, *even this page is white*, won a 2017 Publisher Triangle Award and was longlisted for CBC's Canada Reads. Her debut novel, *She of the Mountains*, was named one of *The Globe and Mail's* Best Books, and her book *I'm Afraid of Men* will be out in Fall 2018 (Penguin Canada). Vivek has read and performed internationally at shows, festivals and post-secondary institutions, including sharing the stage with Tegan & Sara. She is one half of the music duo Too Attached and the founder of the publishing imprint VS. Books. A four-time Lambda Literary Award finalist, Vivek was a 2016 Pride Toronto Grand Marshal, and has received honours from the Toronto Arts Foundation and The Writers' Trust of Canada. Vivek is currently an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Calgary.

Léonicka Valcius is a Toronto-based publishing professional. She blogs about various topics, including diversity in the publishing industry, at www.leonicka.com. Follow her on Twitter at @leonicka.

Phoebe Wang is writer and educator in Toronto. Her work has appeared in journals such as *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Canadian Literature*, *Maisonneuve*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *This Magazine*. Her debut collection of poetry, *Admission Requirements*, was published with McClelland and Stewart in 2017. She has also facilitated professional development for writers of colour in partnership with the Ontario Arts Council and currently works as a writing tutor at Seneca College and OCAD University.

Greg Younging is a Member of Opsakwayak Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba. He has worked for The Assembly Of First Nations and The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. From 1990 to 2004, he was the Managing Editor of Theytus Books, a leading North American publisher of Indigenous voices. Located in Syilx territory on the Penticton Indian Reserve in British Columbia, Theytus Books is proudly First Nations-owned and operated in partnership with the En'owkin Centre, a dynamic institution that puts into practice the principles of self-determination and the validation of cultural aspirations and identity. Greg Younging is a former Member of the Canada Council Aboriginal Peoples Committee on the Arts and the British Columbia Arts Council. He is the former Assistant Director of Research for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and is the Indigenous Studies Program Coordinator at University of British Columbia.