

1) Event Title: Building Banyan: Asian Americans Writing for Visibility and Social Change

2) Event Description:

Banyan: Asian American Writers Collective is a grassroots organization in the Chicago area. The founder and core organizers of the group discuss how its readings, workshops, and critique sessions foster the innovation of Asian American writing in the Midwest, when often this literature is perceived as concentrated on the two coasts. Furthermore, Banyan provides a model for building literary and arts organizations in minority communities that promote visibility, awareness, and education.

The panel importantly discusses how to build a racial minority-focused literary organization from the ground up and to sustain it. The organization connects various ethnic communities and creative, academic, and activist environments. Largely composed of Asian American women, Banyan innovates on a woman of color literary tradition that mixes and crosses genres through its members' work in such areas as children's literature, mystery and fantasy, creative nonfiction, and poetry.

3) Event Category: Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

4) Event Organizer: Jane Hseu

5) Event Moderator: Jane Hseu

6) Event Participants & short bios:

Jane Hseu is Associate Professor of English at Dominican University outside Chicago. She teaches and publishes in the areas of Asian American and Latinx literature, in such venues as *Kartika Review*, *riksha*, and *Asian American Literature: Discourses and Pedagogies*.

Samina Hadi-Tabassum is an associate professor at Erikson Institute in Chicago. Her first book of poems, *Muslim Melancholia* (2017), was published by Red Mountain Press.

Karen Su writes children's picture books presenting the life stories of Asian Americans and artists of color. She was chosen to be a mentee with Reflection Press (Maya Gonzalez) and with We Need Diverse Books. She teaches in the Global Asian Studies Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Mary Grace Bertulfo has written for *Chicago Wilderness*, *Sierra*, and *CBS*. Her work has appeared in *City of Big Shoulders: An Anthology of Chicago Poetry*, and *Growing Up Filipino II*. She founded the Banyan Asian American Writers Collective to promote the visibility of Asian American stories in the Midwest.

Isabel Garcia-Gonzales is a Chicago-area writer and educator. She has received support for her writing from Hedgebrook, VONA, Bread Loaf, and others. Her work has appeared in publications including *Kuwento: Lost Things*, *An Anthology of New Philippine Myths* and *Riksha: Asian American Arts in Action*.

7) Event Outline

Jane introduces what panel is and the disability accommodations announcements. Power Point slides will start (will upload an accessibility document for slides) (5 mins.)

- Invocation by MG and acknowledge native land and people (5 mins.)
- Round of brief self-intros to identify who we are (5 mins., 1 min. each)
- Banyan: Who We Are (20 mins.)
 - Formation, goals, and impetus
 - M.G. Bertulfo reads the prologue from her novel *Magellan's Cross* which retells the story of Magellan's invasion of the Philippines from the POV of Liso, a 16th century woman shaman.
 - Building community, visibility, and awareness around Asian American literature and issues
 - Jane Hseu reads from *Growing Up Evangelical, Chinese and Depressed: Fractures of Race and Mental Illness* (memoir)
 - Our location in Chicago and the Midwest
 - Isabel Garcia-Gonzales reads "St. Louis, 1904" from novel *Listen for Instructions*
- Banyan: What We Do (25 mins.)
 - Creating a space to support creativity and work by and about Asian Americans
 - Public community events
 - Karen Su reads from picture book on Yuki Llewellyn, who was incarcerated at Manzanar as a child and moved to Cleveland after the war, and from *Aiyaboo, a board book about saying "I Love You"*
 - Samina Hadi-Tabassum reads from *Muslim Melancholia*, a book of poems published by Red Mountain Press
 - Monthly generative writing sessions
 - Seasonal critique sessions
 - Aspirations for the organization
- Q and A (15 mins.)