EVENT TITLE: How to Do Your Debut Author Year

EVENT DESCRIPTION: Both thrilling and bewildering, your first book’s publication year is a crash course in the hustle, strategy, and luck it takes to launch a writing career. In this high-pressure period, how do you best advocate for your book, connect to potential readers, and maintain your sanity? The five 2019 debuts on this panel discuss the professional, creative, and emotional impacts of transitioning from “writer” to “author,” and share practical advice for navigating your own debut.

EVENT CATEGORY: Artistic & Professional Stewardship

5 MINS: OPENING REMARKS:

Welcome to “How to Do Your Debut Author Year.” A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let us know, and a printed copy of the presentation will be delivered to you.
- Please make sure that spaces marked for wheelchairs remain clear of chairs or other barriers.
- Treat service animals as working animals and do not attempt to distract or pet them.
- Be aware of those with chemical sensitivities and refrain from wearing perfume.
- Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone’s use of an
accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

- Please refrain from using an accessible restroom stall unless you require such accommodation. Please also be aware family restrooms are reserved for those with disabilities or those wishing to use a single-stall restroom.

- If you have any questions or concerns regarding conference accessibility, please call or text the Accessibility Hotline at (503) 455-4127 or email events@awpwriter.org.

Now let me introduce you to our brilliant panelists. They are:

**Kali Fajardo-Anstine:** Kali Fajardo-Anstine's story collection, *Sabrina & Corina*, and novel, *Woman of Light*, chronicle the lives of Chicanas in the Southwest. Kali has received fellowships from Yaddo, MacDowell Colony, and Hedgebrook. She has an MFA from the University of Wyoming.

T Kira Madden: T Kira Madden is a lesbian, APIA writer living in New York City. She is the author of Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls (Bloomsbury), and serves as the founding editor-in-chief of No Tokens.

Maurice Carlos Ruffin: Maurice Carlos Ruffin is a novelist, essayist, and short story writer. He writes on the subjects of family, race, economics, and art.


Now, by a show of hands, how many people here today have their first book coming out in 2020? How about in 2021? We’re glad you’re here.

Our discussion today is intended to do two things: first, share our own experiences of publication so you might feel less alone, and, second, offer practical advice that might make the process a bit easier for you. About 15 minutes before this panel is scheduled to end, we’ll open up the discussion to a Q&A.

50 MINS: PANEL DISCUSSION:
1. First, let’s talk about the pre-pub period. After your publisher bought your book, you worked for some amount of time on the manuscript with your editor. Once you reached a final version of the manuscript that you and your editor were satisfied with, the book was whisked away into copyedits, proofreading, design, etc. Let’s begin our discussion with what happens after that. We’ll focus on the six months or so before your book came out, when the manuscript was out of your hands and the publishing house was turning its attention to publicity and marketing.

   a. What were those six months pre-pub like for you? What were you doing in that period that was helpful for your book and yourself, and what were you doing that wasn’t so helpful?
   b. What advice do you have about the publicity/marketing meeting?
   c. What advice do you have about writing and placing pub-related essays?

2. Finally, pub day arrives! It’s the big moment you’ve dreamed of for so long. How did the reality of your release measure up to the fantasy?

   a. What was the immediate publication period like for you? In your experience, how long did the pub excitement last – a day, a week, a few months, a year? What were you doing in that period that was helpful for your book and yourself, and what were you doing that wasn’t so helpful?
   b. What advice do you have about book events and book tour?
c. What advice do you have about reading reviews and tracking sales?

3. And now let’s talk about how to navigate the six months or so after your book comes out. The book is out in the world, finding its readers, and the publishing house has turned its attention to other titles. You’re officially an author. Maybe that role feels a little different than you expected it would during pre-pub anticipation or pub-day excitement.
   a. What were those six months post-pub like for you? What were you doing in that period that was helpful for your book and yourself, and what were you doing that wasn’t so helpful?
   b. What advice do you have about moving on to the next project? Writing the second book?
   c. What advice do you have about handling success and disappointment?

4. What’s your one biggest piece of advice for folks heading into the publication of their debut book?

15 MINS: AUDIENCE Q&A:

We’re going to open it up to your questions. Tell us, what else would you all like to know?
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Pub-year-specific social media groups for debut authors
  - 2020 Debuts Facebook group: facebook.com/groups/1888529587899412
  - 2020 Debuts Twitter: twitter.com/2020Debuts

RECOMMENDED READING:

- *Before and After the Book Deal* by Courtney Maum
- *What to Do Before Your Book Launch* by M.J. Rose and Randy Susan Meyers
- *Behind the Book* by Chris Mackenzie Jones
- The “How I Book” series by Miranda Beverley-Whittemore: medium.com/@mirandabw
- “Debut Author Lessons” by Mary Robinette Kowal: maryrobinettekowal.com/series/debut-author/
- Jane Friedman’s blog: janefriedman.com/blog