AWP 2019 PANEL OUTLINE

EVENT TITLE: The Role of Women Editors with Small Presses and Literary Journals
(Patricia Killelea, Pam Uschuk, Kristina Marie Darling, Jennifer Franklin, Mimi Khúc)

EVENT DESCRIPTION:
Small presses and literary journals offer women editors democratization of publishing, roles as female gatekeepers, and greater control over product. Four women editors at small presses and literary journals will discuss their own experiences, focusing on their roles in promoting and supporting feminist and underrepresented voices. They will also discuss the type of submissions they are looking for, their editorial process, and best practices for editors and writers.

EVENT MODERATOR:
Patricia Killelea is the author of Counterglow (Urban Farmhouse Press, 2019) and Other Suns (Swan Scythe Press, 2011). Her poems appear in cream city review, Quarterly West, Barzakh, Waxwing, As/Us, The Common, and Spiritus. She is the Poetry Editor at Passages North, and an Assistant Professor of English at Northern Michigan University. She holds a Ph.D. in Native American Studies and an M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of California, Davis. She also produces digital poetry films, which have been screened and shortlisted internationally.

EVENT ORGANIZER:
Pam Uschuk’s six books include Blood Flower, which was translated into 12 languages. She is also the author of Crazy Love, Wild in the Plaza of Memory, and her book Scattered Risks was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. She has received an American Book Award, Best of the Web, & Dorothy Daniels Writing Award from the National League of American PEN Women. She’s finishing Of Thunderlight and Moon: An Odyssey Through Ovarian Cancer. Her next collection, Refugee, is due out from Red Hen Press. She is the editor of Cutthroat: A Journal of the Arts, and has also edited several anthologies.

EVENT PARTICIPANTS:

Kristina Marie Darling is the author of 27 books, most recently Ghost / Landscape with John Gallaher (BlazeVOX Books, 2016), and Je Suis L’Autre: Essays & Interrogations (C&R Press, 2017). Her awards include three residencies at Yaddo, a Hawthornden Castle Fellowship; a Fundacion Valparaiso Fellowship; and residencies at the American Academy in Rome. Her poems appear in New American Writing, the Harvard Review, the Mid-American Review, Poetry International, Passages North, Nimrod, and many other magazines. She has published essays in Agni, the Gettysburg Review, the Los Angeles Review of Books, the Iowa Review, the Literary Review, the Kenyon Review, and elsewhere. She is editor-in-chief of Tupelo Quarterly, associate editor-in-chief at Tupelo Press, and a contributing writer at Publishers Weekly.

Jennifer Franklin is the author No Small Gift (Four Way Books, 2018) and Looming (Elixir Press, 2015). Her poetry has appeared in Blackbird, Boston Review, Gettysburg Review,
Guernica, The Nation, Paris Review, “Poem-A-Day” on poets.org, and Prairie Schooner, among others. She holds an AB from Brown University and an MFA from Columbia University where she was the Harvey Baker Fellow. She teaches poetry workshops and seminars at Hudson Valley Writers Center, where she serves as Program Director and co-editor of Slapering Hol Press. She lives in New York City.

Mimi Khúc, PhD, is a writer, scholar, and teacher of things unwell. She is an adjunct professor of Asian American studies, American studies, religious studies, and women+gender studies, and Managing Editor of The Asian American Literary Review. Guest editor of Open in Emergency: A Special Issue on Asian American Mental Health, an arts and humanities intervention that works to rethink and decolonize Asian American un/wellness, she oversees the Open in Emergency Initiative, a multi-year national project that connects universities and community spaces to think together about the shape and scope of Asian American mental health.

OPENING REMARKS

Good afternoon, and welcome to The Role of Women Editors with Small Presses and Literary Journals.

It is an honor to be here in Yanaguana, the Land of the Spirit Waters, traditional homelands of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation.

Thank you for attending our panel. We hope that you'll leave this discussion with a renewed sense of excitement and urgency when it comes to promoting women’s voices in publishing. As the late great author Carolyn See once said, "Every word a woman writes changes the story of the world, revises the official version." I think it’s safe to say that we are living in a time where we cannot afford to write, or publish, in isolation— every word counts, and it’s critical that we come together and support each other’s words, not in the interests of careerism or for the sake of another publishing credit, but rather in the spirit of affirming connections, revising our world’s story so that it is one of resilience instead of tragedy.

Today, our panelists will discuss their experiences in a publishing world that statistically continues to value men’s voices more than women’s. According to the latest Women in Literary Arts VIDA count (2017), women still make up less than 40% of writers published in the major literary journals. And according to the MFA Research Project, spearheaded by writer Seth Abramson, between 1990-2013, 65% of first and subsequent poetry book contests resulting in full-length publication were awarded to male writers, and 70% of full-length single-author book reviews were devoted to collections by men. One of the most critical interventions, then, in remedying this gender disparity in publishing comes down to editorial decisions. But what does this look like in practice?

To start, let’s hear from each of you— if you could give us some background on your work promoting feminist and underrepresented voices.
MODERATOR QUESTIONS

1. Can you talk about your editorial process, how it’s changed throughout the years, and especially lessons you’ve learned along the way? Additionally, what might your advice be for other women who might pursue this path in the publishing world?

2. From where you’re sitting, what do you consider "good writing?" When you receive submissions, what is it exactly that you're looking for? What are some of the things that writers can do to increase their chances of catching an editor’s eye without playing into gimmicks or nepotism?

3. You are all accomplished writers in your own right. How do your own writing practices inform your editorial processes?

4. How has the shifting socio-political climate impacted your editorial decisions, if it has at all? Do you find there’s more at stake? Has this current historical moment in time impacted submissions in any way?