

Event Outline

AWP 2021 Conference & Bookfair

Event Title: Is My Writing Queer Enough?

Event Description: Writers from across genres, gender and sexual identities, educational and cultural backgrounds come together to share how they manage their talents, lives, and careers for success within the LGBTQ community. To both celebrate and voice queer experiences, they ask, is my writing queer enough?

Event Category:

Artistic & Professional Development

Event Organizer:

Ruben Quesada is a poet, translator, and editor. *Latinx Poetics: Essays on the Art of Poetry*, an edited anthology, will be published by the University of New Mexico Press. He is the author of *Revelations* and *Next Extinct Mammal*. His writing appears in *Harvard Review*, *Best American Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *Ploughshares*, and elsewhere. He has served as an editor and coordinator for *The Rumpus*, *Kenyon Review*, *AGNI*, *Pleiades*, Publishing Triangle Awards, and PEN America Literary Awards. He serves on the board of *Foglifter* Press and the National Book Critics Circle.

Event Moderator:

NICKY BEER is a bi/queer writer and the author of *REAL PHONIES AND GENUINE FAKES* (Milkweed 2022), *THE OCTOPUS GAME*, and *THE DIMINISHING HOUSE*. She is an associate professor at the University of Colorado-Denver, where she co-edits the journal *Copper Nickel*.

Event Participants:

CELESTE CHAN writes across genres and creates films. A Hedgebrook, Lambda, and VONA fellow, she facilitates creative writing workshops for LGBTQ youth. She's published in *AWAY*, *cream city review*, *The Rumpus*, and beyond.

FAYLITA HICKS (she/they) is the author of *HoodWitch* (Acre Books, 2019), a finalist for the 2020 Lambda Literary Award for Bisexual Poetry. They are a 2021 Shearing Fellow with Black Mountain Institute and currently serve as the 2021 Poet-in-Residence for the Civil Rights Corps.

VANESSA ANGÉLICA VILLARREAL is the author of the poetry collection *Beast Meridian* and a recipient of a 2019 Whiting Award. She is a 2021 National Endowment for the Arts Fellow and lives with her son in Los Angeles, where she is a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California.

DAVID WOO is the author of two books of poetry, *Divine Fire* and *The Eclipses*. His writing appears in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *The Threepenny Review*, and the Library of America's *American Religious Poems*. He is a reviewer at the Poetry Foundation.

Opening Remarks and Housekeeping Announcements (required):

"Welcome to IS MY WRITING QUEER ENOUGH? A few reminders before we begin: • For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let the moderator of the panel, Nicky Beer, know, and a printed copy 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 scented products. • Please be aware that your fellow attendees may have invisible disabilities. Do not question anyone's use of accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities."

Opening remarks, topic, or focus:

From the statement of value in the proposal: "How important is LGBTQ visibility and representation? Our identity forms who we are and what we value as artists and professionals. What value do we add to the LGBTQ community when we choose not to write about queer-focused experiences? Every year we celebrate LGBTQ pride and history, but how do readers recognize and acknowledge LGBTQ writers if they do not depict LGBTQ experiences explicitly in their writing?"

Introduce and identify all presenters in the order in which they are presenting:

Each panelist will speak for 5-7 minutes each. The moderator will then open the discussion with a list of questions prepared in advance for 30 minutes. The panel will end with a 10–15-minute audience Q&A.

NICKY BEER

The topics I'll be addressing will include bisexual erasure, as well as my decision to add "bi/queer" to my writer's bio.

VANESSA ANGÉLICA VILLARREAL

The presentation will focus on bell hooks' definition of queer as a mode of non-normative living, and how race, single motherhood as gender performance, and desirability politics render my body queer.

DAVID WOO

I'm interested in Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick's notion that art is inherently queer, that art, for Proust, "is something I am not." I'm also interested in the notion of queer sexuality as a "repairable illness" (William Cheng) from the standpoint of Asian immigrant parents, and of Michael Warner's idea that "shame is bedrock" and even the basis of queer camaraderie. I'll add and alter as my presentation coalesces.

FAYLITA HICKS

I'll be addressing how contemporary approaches to identity-driven narratives and language justice are transforming the way we craft legislation, ultimately impacting the way society recognizes and interacts with the queer community.

CELESTE CHAN

I'll talk about queer community arts organizing, queer/femme/Asian American identity, and the question of queer aesthetics. What are queer formal/structural choices?