

EVENT TITLE: From Slush to Sale: Literary Agents Explain it All

Event Description: Literary agents are often called "gatekeepers" of the publishing industry, but we prefer to think of ourselves as "gate-openers." This panel aims to demystify the most opaque parts of traditional book publishing, beginning with the "slush pile" (unsolicited manuscripts) and ending far past "on-sale" (when a book is published). Literary agents wear many hats, but one of our most important jobs is to translate the industry for writers at every stage of their career, starting here.

EVENT CATEGORY: Agents, Contracts, Contests

Event Moderator:

Danya Kukafka (she/her) is the author of the bestselling novels *NOTES ON AN EXECUTION* and *GIRL IN SNOW*. She works as a literary agent with Trellis Literary Management, where she represents authors like Erin Swan, Sara Sligar, Asha Thanki, and Yeji Y. Ham. She is looking for literary fiction with propulsive storylines, literary suspense, speculative fiction, experimental fiction, and social horror. An agent with a dual career, her own writing has been reviewed favorably in outlets like *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post* and has been translated into over a dozen languages worldwide. *NOTES ON AN EXECUTION* is currently in development as a television series.

Event Organizer:

Stephanie Delman (she/her) co-founded [Trellis Literary Management](#) in the fall of 2021, following 10 years at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates. She is focused on adult fiction: literary/upmarket, maximalist storytelling, high-concept suspense, historical fiction by and for those who have been pushed to the margins, and novels that play with genre. A small part of Stephanie's list is nonfiction: specifically, braided, bold, and/or speculative memoir projects by authors with diverse perspectives. Stephanie considers herself a "hands-on" agent, both editorially and as an advocate. Her clients include Zakiya Dalila Harris, Julia Fine, Jenny Tinghui Zhang, Vanessa Chan, and many more. Stephanie was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, studied Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, and now lives in Brooklyn.

Event Participants:

Iwalani Kim (she/her): Iwalani Kim is an associate literary agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates. She is seeking adult upmarket and literary fiction and select narrative nonfiction. In fiction, she loves coming-of-age narratives, family dramas, and stories that challenge systems of power. She gravitates toward lush prose, wry humor, irreverent characters, and a sense of yearning. In nonfiction, she is looking for literary memoir and cultural criticism. She is particularly drawn to narratives about identity, deep dives into subcultures, food writing, and writing that complicates the idea of ‘paradise’ or explores progressive social movements. She is passionate about championing the work of underrepresented authors and would especially love to work with Pacific Islander writers.

Iwalani joined Greenburger in 2018 and, in addition to building her own list, serves as a foreign rights liaison and senior assistant to agency president Heide Lange. She was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai’i and graduated from Vassar College with degrees in Political Science and German Studies.

Annie Hwang (she/her): Before joining Ayesha Pande Literary, Annie began her career at Folio Literary Management where she had the pleasure of working with debut and seasoned authors alike. As a former journalist, Annie possesses a keen editorial eye which she brings to her approach to agenting, taking an active role in the careers of her clients. Annie represents voice-driven literary fiction and select nonfiction. In particular, she gravitates toward subversive and irreverent literary fiction and impactful mission-driven narrative nonfiction that grapples with the complexities of our world. A fierce champion of underrepresented voices, Annie is always on the hunt for gifted storytelling that stretches its genre to new heights.

Opening Remarks: Welcome everyone! We’ll begin by having our panelists introduce themselves, then I’ll ask a few questions, and we’ll have a longer than usual question and answer session to guide the panelists in further conversation.

Moderator Questions:

- 1) What do you consider your role in working with authors?
- 2) How do you find new writers that you'd think you'd like to work with?
- 3) What does your typical workday look like?
- 4) How do you prepare a debut manuscript for submission?
- 5) How much of your job happens before the book is sold, and how much happens after?
- 6) Tell us about the literary community or communities you consider yourself a part of, and how they relate to your work (either official organizations or casual groups).

We will break for a 30-minute Q&A session to focus on audience-directed discussion among the panelists.