Event Title: A new canon: 5 writers remaking the American West

Event Description: The myth of the American West - a place to be tamed, dominated by narratives centering white men - is one of our most stubborn national fantasies. But 5 novelists are correcting the record. Their West is peopled with Black, Mexican, Asian, Indigenous, and Queer characters whose untold stories and unheard voices create a rich and complicated landscape that reflects the real American frontier as it was and is. We'll discuss research, resisting tropes, and fitting new stories into the canon.

Category: Fiction Craft and Criticism

Event Organizer and Moderator
Elizabeth Gonzalez James: Elizabeth Gonzalez James is the author of the novels, Mona at Sea (SFWP, 2021) and The Bullet Swallower (Simon & Schuster, 2024), and the chapbook, Five Conversations About Peter Sellers (Texas Review Press, 2023).

Event Participants
Tom Lin: Tom Lin is the author of The Thousand Crimes of Ming Tsu, which won the 2022 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction and was a finalist for the New York Public Library's Young Lions Award, among others. He is a doctoral candidate in English literature at the University of California, Davis.

Lauren Francis-Sharma: Lauren Francis-Sharma is the author of "Book of the Little Axe," a Hurston Wright Award finalist, and "'Til the Well Runs Dry." She is the Assistant Director of Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, a MacDowell Fellow, and serves on the board of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation.

Robin McLean: Robin McLean's debut collection Reptile House won the BOA Editions Fiction Prize and was noted as one of the best books of 2015 in The Paris Review. She splits her time between the high plains desert of central Nevada and western Massachusetts where she teaches writing at Clark University.

Claudia Cravens: Claudia Cravens grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. She has a BA in Literature from Bard College and is a graduate of Catapult's Twelve-Month Novel Generator. Lucky Red is her first novel.

Event overview: The moderator will begin by welcoming attendees, introducing the panelists, and reading their short biographies. The 4 panelists and the
The moderator will give a brief introduction of their own work and read for 5 minutes each. The moderator will then ask a list of prepared questions, sparking discussion among the panelists about how they reimagined the West in their work, their research methods, and where they see their work fitting into the canon. The panel will end with a 10-15 min audience Q&A.

**Moderator questions:**

1) First I’d like to hear a little from each of you about how you came to write a western. Was that always your intention?
2) What is the American West to you?
3) I want to talk about tropes and how writers can use or resist them. Are there any standard western tropes – the gunfight, the saloon, the man (or woman) against the elements – that you included in your novels?
4) Can you tell us how you researched your novel?
   a. What was the most surprising thing you encountered in your research?
5) Have you received any pushback from readers or critics?
6) Do you have any advice for people in the audience who might want to trouble established canons? Any books to recommend?
7) Now that you’ve written a western, would you do it again? Are you hooked?