Event Outline

Event Title
Supporting Small-Press Authors

Event Description
It can be challenging for small-press books to find their way to readers. Five small-press authors will share why supporting other small-press authors is important to them and how they do it, but the bulk of the event will provide participants with a chance to connect and to brainstorm generous, creative ways to support small-press authors. For the purposes of this event, we’re defining “small press” as anything other than Big 5 or self-publishing.

Event Category
Discussion Room

Event Organizer
Chrissy Kolaya

Event Participants
Seth Brady Tucker, Jessica Alexander, Jason Koo, Chrissy Kolaya
10:35-10:45 a.m.
Opening Remarks and Housekeeping

Welcome to Supporting One Another as Small-Press Authors. A few reminders before we begin:

- For those needing or wishing to follow along to a written text, please let me 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 an accommodation while at the conference, including for chairs reserved for those with disabilities.

Event Roadmap

I'll begin by introducing our facilitators for today’s event, who will each share a quick 5 minute presentation on their strategies for supporting small-press authors and why this is important to them.

After that, we'll break into groups of 4-5 people with the goal of having you all share your best ideas for supporting small-press authors. We’ll ask you to jot down your best ideas on the paper you’ll find on each of the tables. (20 minutes)

In the final 30 minutes, we’ll come back together to share all of our best ideas with the larger group and to answer any questions.

Following the event, all of your ideas will be collected and shared here: link TBD

Introductions

I’d like to start by introducing those of us you’ll hear from in the opening few minutes of this event.

My name is Chrissy Kolaya. I am a poet and fiction writer, author of Charmed Particles: a novel published by Dzanc and two books of poems: Any Anxious Body and Other Possible Lives both published by Broadstone Books. My work has been included in a number of anthologies and literary journals, and has been supported by grants, fellowships, and awards from the Fiction Meets Science Program, the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, the Loft Literary Center, and the Minnesota State Arts Board. I teach in the MFA program at the University of Central Florida.

Seth Brady Tucker is the award-winning author the of the books, "Mormon Boy" (Elixir) and "We Deserve the Gods We Ask For"(Gival). He executive directs the Longleaf Writers Conference and
he teaches creative writing and literature at the Colorado School of Mines and the Lighthouse in Denver.

Jessica Alexander co-authored the novella, None of This Is an Invitation, with Katie Jean Shinkle (Astrophil Press, 2023), and co-authored That Woman Could Be You, with Vi Khi Nao (BlazeVox, 2022). Her story collection, Dear Enemy, was the winning manuscript in the 2016 Subito Prose Contest.

Jason Koo is a Korean American poet and the author, most recently, of More Than Mere Light and coeditor of the Brooklyn Poets Anthology. He is the founder and executive director of Brooklyn Poets and an associate teaching professor of English at Quinnipiac University.

Participant Opening Remarks (5 minutes each)

The idea for today’s event grew out of gatherings of fellow Dzanc authors I organized for several years at AWP. The idea was then and is today that while we, as small-press authors, don’t have the promotional resources one might have as a Big Five author, we do have the power of community.

- I knew, for example, that as an annoyingly curious person who loves to ask people questions, I could interview small press authors and publish those interviews in places that would allow readers to find their way to these books.

- I knew, for example, that I could put the good work of my fellow small-press authors in front of an audience by teaching these books in my classes and inviting the authors to zoom in to talk with my students.

- I knew, for example, that as the director of my university's visiting writers series, I could use the series as an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the work of small-press authors I admire.

- And more important than shining a spotlight on the work of any one particular writer, I knew that all of these things could contribute to the greater good of ensuring that my students and members of our various literary communities were aware of the good work happening at small presses: this vital part of the publishing ecosystem and our larger literary tradition.

So today, let’s connect. Let’s build community. Let’s share the ways we can be of service to the greater good that is small-press publishing!

10:45-11:05 a.m. PANELIST PRESENTATIONS (5 MINUTES EACH)

11:05 a.m.
Thank you to Seth, Jessica, and Jason. We’re now going to move into the brainstorming part of the event.

Please introduce yourselves to your fellow table-mates and use the paper and pens you find there to keep track of the things you can do or are already doing to shine a light on the work of small-press authors.

These can be ideas large or small, but the goal is to think about the kind of thing that feels do-able and comfortable for you in particular.

Seth, Jessica, Jason and I will be circulating to answer any questions and help you get started if you need us. After you’ve all had a chance to talk, we’ll come back together to share some of the best ideas and inspiration we’ve come up with in our groups.

Please designate someone with reasonable handwriting to keep track of these ideas, as we’ll be collecting your best ideas and archiving them here in the days following the conference: http://tinyurl.com/spsupportawp23

no later than 11:30 a.m.: come back together to share what we’ve come up with

11:30 a.m.
Thanks to all of you for coming today and helping to build connections across the small-press community! If you need a written reminder of where to find the archive of resources we’ll build from this, I have copies of our flyer which includes the link at the bottom. I’ll also leave copies of any of our business cards if you’d like to keep in touch and talk further!

And before we go, a word of energy and inspiration for us all:

When we come to a gathering like this, it can be easy to feel lost in the cacophony, freaked out by just how many people there are trying to accomplish all of the same difficult goals we all share. But we have a choice:

We can see all of those other people as competition, or we can see them as community. Thanks to you all for being part of the effort to build and strengthen that community!

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