

4-2010

The New Writing Series - Fall 2010

English Department

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

GRANT APPLICATION

I. Applicant/Organization: English Department & National Poetry Foundation

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: Steve Evans

b. Title: Associate Professor, New Writing Series Coordinator

c. Campus Address (include Email and Telephone): 313 Neville Hall; steven.evans@maine.edu; 1-3818

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date(s):

The New Writing Series • Fall 2010

Featuring eight writers in six CA/DLS-supported events: Ann Lauterbach (poet, essayist, and artwriter); John Tipton (poet, translator); Rick Snyder (poet, editor, translator); Joanna Fuhrman (poet); Sharon Mesmer (poet, performance artists); Lance Olsen (novelist, publisher); Jessica Anthony (fiction writer); and winner of the first annual Millay Prize in Poetry (tba in May 2010).

Most events take place on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 in the Soderberg Center Auditorium, Jenness Hall.

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached. *Please see attached Excel Spreadsheet.*

Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA EMAIL TO:

wanda.maddencarr@maine.edu

For questions regarding the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series, please contact Wanda Madden-Carr at 1-1516

\$4,000
1 amp down

March 25, 2010

Dear Members of the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Committee,

I write to request the Committee's support for the fall 2010 New Writing Series, an innovative literary arts program sponsored by the English Department and the National Poetry Foundation. The Series marked its tenth anniversary in 2009-2010 and our fall 2010 programming seeks to capitalize on the momentum generated by the programming that we were able to offer in part through the generosity of the Committee.

The amount we request, **\$4,000**, is less than one-half of the projected operating budget for the fall Series of **\$10,635**. The majority of the financial support for the Series will be provided by the English Department through its Elliott Fund (\$4000) and Ellis Fund (\$635). The Honors College has graciously agreed to provide co-sponsoring support for one event (\$1000 for the reading by poet and Sophocles translator John Tipton). The detailed budget appended to this letter provides an overview of projected expenses and revenue sources.

I am happy to report that the NWS will grow this fall to include a new regular event that will pair the winner of our newly established Edna St. Vincent Millay Prize for Poetry with the nationally-recognized poet who selects the winning manuscript. This year's judge will be Ann Lauterbach (a finalist in 2010 for both the National Book Award and the National Book Critic Circle Award and a keynote poet at the most recent NPF conference). A major donation by Frank and Helene Crohn enabled us to create the prize and will eventually cover all expenses associated with administering it. In this inaugural year, however, it has been necessary to embed some support for the celebratory reading into the NWS budget because the fund—like so many others—is “under water” (i.e. not yet paying out).

I would also like to inform the Committee that the New Writing Series is playing a significant part in the College of Liberal Arts & Science's major development effort of the academic year, an substantial NEH challenge grant that seeks to establish a Maine Center for the Humanities here at UMaine. The Series also features in an independent development initiative on the part of the National Poetry Foundation that is currently being crafted in direct consultation with Eric Rolfson (in the Office of University Development) and with the support of the upper administration. These are the most aggressive attempts we've yet made to raise monies that would enable the Series to become more self-sustaining in the future. I hope to have more to report on the outcome of these efforts in the fall.

The fall line-up is projected to feature eight writers in six CA/DLS-supported events. As I've mentioned, major poet Ann Lauterbach will anchor our four poetry-related events, and be joined over the course of the semester by the poets Joanna Fuhrman, Rick Snyder, John Tipton, and Sharon Mesmer (whose name you may recall from last year: a blizzard in New York forced the cancellation of her planned appearance in March 2010). We'll also be welcoming the widely-read and highly-regarded fiction writer Lance Olsen, who

directs the Fiction Collective 2 (FC2) from his academic post at the University of Utah, and Portland-based author Jessica Anthony, who has published in *McSweeney's* and other venues for innovative fiction. These writers have all earned national, and in some cases international, recognition for multifaceted careers that blend poetry, fiction, memoir, translation, art writing, and small-press publishing. Their presence on campus promises to increase the linguistic, artistic, sexual, and social diversity of our community. Brief biographies of the featured writers can be found below.

New Writing Series programming has always been guided by the principles of innovation, collaboration, interdisciplinarity, and diversity. From the start we have also worked hard to maximize the impact of real-time events within the rapidly-changing new media context. For example, the NWS blog has received 38,000 page views since its creation in fall 2006. Our Facebook group, created in the fall of 2007, has nearly 125 members and reaches many more people with event and Series information. The Flickr page on which we document events has received roughly 5000 views. And we have been making NWS content (sound and video files) available both through our blog and through UMaine's iTunes U since April of 2008. (A list of the URLs for these projects is appended to this application.) The real-time event in front of a live audience remains our Series' anchor point, but using the web to extend brief visits into lasting on-line presences is an effective way of maximizing the return on the investment it takes to bring people to campus.

Some other reasons for supporting the NWS:

- **A cutting-edge research university with an institutional commitment to innovation deserves literary arts programming that is diverse, daring, and original.** The New Writing Series is such a program. While all modes and methods of writing fall within its ambit of curiosity, we take care to ensure that writers whose work departs from, and perhaps even challenges, dominant commercial and aesthetic assumptions are given a fair hearing. Our programming is consistently among the most diverse on the campus (and by extension in the region), foregrounding ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, and sexual diversity (see the appended document "About the New Writing Series" for details). And our programming is original: no other institution in Maine, and only a few others in the country, have shown the kind of commitment the New Writing Series has toward the full-range of contemporary literary practice. We seek to confer recognition with our programming, not just to ratify judgments made somewhere up the literary food chain.

- **The New Writing Series does a lot with a little.** For what would be a modest honorarium if paid in a lump sum to a single celebrity on campus for one evening, the New Writing Series creates a coherent sequence of events that adds a distinctive dimension to the intellectual and artistic climate on campus and in the region. The honoraria we offer are low (between \$250 and \$1000) and we economize in every way we can on other expenses (see appended budget). Because the Series has an established identity—in terms of time (Thursday afternoons), place (the Soderberg Center Auditorium), and "look" (MaJo

Keleshian's bold designs, echoed in our electronic publicity)—we get more out of each individual event. This has been a key to our successful audience development. Inertia is the enemy of artistic creation: the New Writing Series creates momentum around the act of literary creation, stirring up lively conversations that resonate beyond the cube-like walls of the Soderberg Auditorium.

- **The New Writing Series has a strong local audience, but it also brings national visibility to the University of Maine.** The off-campus publicity for the New Writing Series always spotlights UMaine (rather than the English Department or the NPF): our goal is to keep Orono on the national map when it comes to the literary arts, and to emphasize that the UMS flagship campus is at the leading edge of literary artistic practice. No other college in the state or campus in the UM system can demonstrate the depth of commitment and ongoing excellence that the New Writing Series, with the Committee's support, has achieved.

- **Literary culture is an important piece in the "creative economy" puzzle.** A university campus that fails to stay in touch with contemporary literary practice is depriving itself of access to the fresh thinking that writers, often in advance of their colleagues in other disciplines, bring to the world around us. The literary arts are essential to the creation of an atmosphere of free exploration of any and all aspects of contemporary existence, an atmosphere as decisive in the sciences as in the humanities.

- **The "New" in New Writing Series.** We have been fortunate to receive Committee support for the NWS in the past and we are deeply grateful for it. But the enduring institutional framework of the Series should not mask the fact that we bring new voices and visions to campus with every fresh season of the NWS. We are, in other words, offering "new programming" for the Committee's consideration, programming that will disappear from the cultural calendar without your support.

I have included an itemized budget (using an Excel spreadsheet in lieu of the standard form) for the fall 2010 New Writing Series. In keeping with CA/DLS policy, we strive to offer the lowest honoraria compatible with a writer's reputation and standard fee. I will note that our typical "ceiling" of \$1000 (being offered to just one writer in the fall) is well below what most successful fiction writers (and their agents) will consider. Our travel policy allots to invited writers "up to \$500 for travel" and we work with individuals to minimize that expense whenever possible. Accommodations are provided by University Inn in Orono and are estimated at the appropriate seasonal rates. Meal and reception expenses **do not** factor into our request for Committee support: they are included here for informational purposes only. In those cases where scheduling or other difficulties preclude a proposed writer from participating in the Series, we seek replacements of comparable rank and reputation to fill the slot.

The proposal you are considering has received unanimous approval from the English Department's Speakers and Special Events Committee on March 22, 2010 and is fully supported by Department Chair Naomi Jacobs. I believe that the other items should be self-explanatory, but I am more than happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steve Evans

Associate Professor of English
New Writing Series Coordinator
Graduate Program Coordinator
National Poetry Foundation

Brief biographical and bibliographical profiles (in alphabetical order)

Jessica Anthony novel *The Convalescent* was published by McSweeney's Books in 2009. Her fiction has appeared in *Best New American Voices*, *Best American Nonrequired Reading*, *Future Dictionary of America*, *Cutbank*, *La Petite Zine*, *McSweeney's*, *Mid-American Review*, *New American Writing*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Phoebe*, *Pindeldyboz*, *Rattapallax*, and *So to Speak*.

Joanna Fuhrman is an American poet and professor. She is the author of four collections of poems, including most recently *Pageant* (Alice James Books, 2009). Her poems have appeared widely in literary magazines and journals, including *New American Writing*, *Fence*, *Conduit*, *American Letters & Commentary*, and *The New York Quarterly*, and in anthologies. Fuhrman is a member of the Alice James Books Cooperative Board, and poetry editor for *Boog City*, a community newspaper for the Lower East Side in New York. She is a graduate of the University of Washington MFA program, and teaches creative writing at Rutgers University and in public schools and libraries through Poets House and Teachers & Writers Collaborative. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband, the playwright Robert Kerr.

Ann Lauterbach was born and grew up in Manhattan, where she studied painting at the High School of Music and Art. She received her BA from the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in English Literature, and went on to graduate work at Columbia University on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. Deciding to forego further academic degrees, she moved to London, where she lived for seven years, working variously as an editor (Thames and Hudson), a teacher (St. Martin's School of Art), and as curator of the Literature Program at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Her early poems were published in England.

Returning to New York in 1974, Lauterbach worked in art galleries, including Max Protetch, Rosa Esman, and Joan Washburn. In the mid-1980s, she began to teach in the Writing programs at Brooklyn, Columbia, Princeton, Iowa, and at The City College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and, starting in the 1990s, at Bard College. She has had residences at Yaddo, The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and at the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Orlando, Florida. Lauterbach has published seven collections of poetry: *Many Times, But Then* (1979), *Before Recollection* (1987), *Clamor* (1991), *And For Example* (1994), *On A Stair* (1997), *If in Time :Selected Poems 1975-2000* (2001) and *Hum* (2005), several chapbooks and collaborations with visual artists, including *How Things Bear Their Telling* with Lucio Pozzi and *A Clown, Some Colors, A Doll, Her Stories, A Song, A Moonlit Cove* with Ellen Phelan for the Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum, New York. She has written on art and poetics in relation to cultural value, notably in a series of seven columns for the *American Poetry Review* entitled "The Night Sky"; essays on sculptor David Smith's writings and drawings, a collaborative work for sculptor Ann Hamilton's "Whitecloth" catalogue for the Aldrich Museum, and the introductory essay to Joe Brainard's "Nancy" drawings for *The Nancy Book*, published by Siglio Press (2008). Lauterbach is currently at work on a new collaboration for Ann Hamilton's "Tower" at Steve Oliver's ranch in Geyserville, California. This work-in-progress was the subject of a talk for the Beineke Library's exhibition and conference "Metaphor Taking Shape: Poetry, Art, and the Book"

at Yale in March 2008. A new book of poems, *Or To Begin Again*, was published in April 2009 by Penguin and short-listed for the National Book Award and National Book Critic Circle's Award in 2010.

A collection of Lauterbach's prose writings, *The Night Sky: Writings on the Poetics of Experience*, published in 2005 by Viking, was re-issued as a Penguin paperback in spring 2008.

Lauterbach has been, since 1991, Co-Chair of Writing in the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts and, since 1997, Ruth and David Schwab II Professor of Language and Literature at Bard College. She is the recipient of Guggenheim, New York State Foundation for the Arts, Ingram Merrill and John D. and Catherine C. MacArthur fellowships. She is a Visiting Core Critic (Sculpture and Painting) at the Yale School of Art.

Sharon Mesmer was born in Chicago. In the 1980s she was active in that city's literary scene, co-founding and -editing the publications *B City* and *letter eX*. Since making New York her home in 1988, she received a MacArthur Scholarship from Brooklyn College (by recommendation of Allen Ginsberg), and was a featured performer in "Words In Your Face," the 1991 season premiere of the public television series *Live From Off Center*. A chapbook, *Crossing Second Avenue*, was published in Japan in 1997, coinciding with her reading tour of three cities there. During two residencies at the MacDowell Colony and one at Hawthornden Castle, Scotland, she completed her first novel. In 1998 she collaborated with Prix de Rome-winning composer Barbara Kolb on an a capella libretto (in Latin) for the Indiana University of Pennsylvania's festival honoring the 900th birthday of medieval composer Hildegard von Bingen. Currently, she teaches fiction writing and literature at the New School in Manhattan and is English language editor of the Japanese literary magazine *American Book Jam*. Her first collection of poetry, *Half Angel, Half Lunch* was published by Hard Press; a collection of stories, *The Empty Quarter* appeared with Hanging Loose Press. Her most recent title is *The Virgin Formica* (Hanging Loose, 2008). Recent work appears in *Poetry*, *New American Writing*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Traffic*.

Lance Olsen teaches innovative fiction, fiction-writing, and narrative theory at the University of Utah and serves as Chair of the Board of Directors at FC2 (Fiction Collective Two). He is the author of numerous novels, critical books, hypermedia, poetry, and textbooks. Among his novels are *Live from Earth* (1991), *Tonguing the Zeitgeist* (1994), *Burnt* (1996), *Time Famine* (1996), *Freaknest* (2000), *Girl Imagined by Chance* (2002), *10:01* (2005), *Nietzsche's Kisses* (2006), *Anxious Pleasures: A Novel After Kafka* (2007), and *Head in Flames* (2009). He has also published four volumes of short stories (between 1993-2003) and four scholarly monographs on experimental fiction.

Rick Snyder's chapbooks include *Blueprint* (811 Books, 1999), *Double Ear* (811 Books, 1999), *Forecast Memorial* (Duration, 2002), *Flown Season* (Portable Press, 2004), and *Guestbook* (Dusie, 2007). His poems have appeared in print and online journals such as *606*, *Aufgabe*, *Barrow Street*, *Dusie*, *Hanging Loose*, *jubilat*, *LIT*, *LVNG*, *Lungfull!*, *Milk*, *Open City*, *The Poker*, *Radical Society*, *Readme*, *Skanky Possum*, and

TheEastVillage. His poem “How Are You Doing?” was recently featured in the syndicated column American Life in Poetry.

In 2003, Situations published his translations of Catullus’s poems 1-30 as This Charming New Chapbook. His review-essay of English-language versions of Paul Celan appeared in Radical Society and was included in a collection of critical writings on translation published online by Duration in 2005. His essay on Flarf and Dada was published in Jacket in 2006. He formerly edited the poetry journal Cello Entry and programmed and curated book fairs, poetics lectures, and a translation-based reading series at the Dactyl Foundation in New York. He currently lives in New York, where he is wrapping up his work as a doctoral candidate in comparative literature at the University of Southern California.

John Tipton had an itinerant childhood in Indiana, Florida, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Illinois. After a three-year stint in the U.S. Army, he attended the University of Chicago on the GI Bill and earned an A.B. in philosophy. He is the director of the Chicago Poetry Project and author of Surfaces (Flood Editions, 2004) as well as a translation of Sophocles' Ajax (Flood Editions, 2008). His poems have appeared in LVNG, Poetry New York, Nedge, and elsewhere. His “52 surfaces” was published as a broadside in the LVNG Supplementals series and Cello Entry Chapbooks published clause automata.

About the New Writing Series — A Brief History

The New Writing Series was formally inaugurated in the spring of 2000 when a proposal drafted by Steve Evans in consultation with Benjamin Friedlander and Burton Hatlen received unanimous approval from the English department's Speaker and Special Events Committee, then chaired by Welch Everman. In the eighteen semesters of its existence, it has served as an instrument for investigating the state of contemporary writing here in Maine, in the U.S. and Canada more broadly, and to some extent the world (Nigerian, Australian, Jamaican, English, Chilean, and other writers have come to Orono through the Series). The Series receives primary funding through the English Department's Lloyd H. Elliott fund and has received consistent administrative support from the National Poetry Foundation, matching funds through the Cultural Affairs Committee, and co-sponsorships from a wide variety of departments and programs (the Honors College, Art, Multicultural Programs, Women in the Curriculum, Wilde Stein, Modern Languages & Classics, and others).

The primary objectives of the New Writing Series are (i) to make contemporary poetry and fiction a valued part of the cultural life at the University of Maine, (ii) to broaden the University's local, national, and international reputation as a site of vibrant cultural exchange and creativity, and (iii) to cultivate links within the University as well as between the University and area secondary schools that foster imaginative approaches to thinking about contemporary literary practices. Whereas developing an audience for individual events can be difficult, a Series creates an ongoing context for the exploration of contemporary writing and signals a more serious level of commitment to the inclusion of the literary arts in the cultural repertoire of campus and community life.

Since 2000, the Series has hosted more than 160 events, featuring more than 210 individual writers, and it has earned a loyal local audience (typical event attendance ranges between 40 and 150 people) as well as a strong national reputation. Extended residencies by Robert Creeley (between 2000-2003) and Alice Notley (2004) have been coordinated in conjunction with the Series, as has a Libra Professorship that brought four African American poets—Jay Wright, Jayne Cortez, Lorenzo Thomas, and Amiri Baraka—to campus in 2001.

A Series weblog was created in the fall of 2006 and a substantial archive of materials of research and pedagogical value (countless hours of sound recordings, videotapes of live readings, forty professional quality digital-video "Poet Profiles" of NWS participants) has been carefully gathered and organized over the years.

The New Writing Series on the Web

The New Writing Series blog (main source for NWS news)
<http://nwsnews.wordpress.com/>

The New Writing Series on Facebook (registration required)
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2511086192>

The New Writing Series on Flickr
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/thirdfactory/>

The New Writing Series on UMaine's iTunes U
<http://www.umaine.edu/itunesu/>
(click "Open Umaine on iTunes U" in upper right, then scroll to
"Courses—English—New Writing Series")

The New Writing Series on YouTube
<http://www.youtube.com/user/npfvideo>

The New Writing Series on LibraryThing Local
<http://www.librarything.com/venue/18404/UMaine-New-Writing-Series>

New Writing Series

Proposed Budget

for Fall 2010 programming

I	Event Expenses							
	writer	honorarium	travel by	travel from	trav allotment	accommod	meals	
	Sharon Mesmer	\$500	Air	NYC	\$250	\$188	\$100	\$1,038
	Jessica Anthony	\$500	Surface	Portland, ME	\$100	\$94	\$100	\$794
	Lance Olsen	\$500	Air	Salt Lake City	\$750	\$188	\$100	\$1,538
	Ann Lauterbach	\$1,000	Air	NYC	\$500	\$188	\$100	\$1,788
	Millay Prize Winner (TBA)	\$0		(TBA)	\$500	\$188	\$100	\$788
	Rick Snyder	\$300	Air	NYC	\$500	\$188	\$100	\$1,088
	Joanna Fuhrman	\$300	Air	NYC	\$500	\$188	\$100	\$1,088
	John Tipton	\$500	Air	Chicago	\$500	\$188	\$100	\$1,288
								9410
	Fixed Expenses							
II	agent	expense						
	MaJo Keleshian/Alternative	\$250	Poster Design					
	Furbush-Roberts	\$225	Poster Printing					
	University Relations	\$750	Digital Archive					
	Pulp & Paper Foundation	donated	Room Rental	(\$300 value)				
		\$1,225						
	Total Series Expenses							
III	Event Expenses	\$9,410						
	Fixed Expenses	\$1,225						
	Total Expenses	\$10,635						
	Overview							
IV	English Dept (Elliott Fund)	\$5,000						
	English Dept (Ellis Fund)	\$635						
	Honors College (Gift Fund)	\$1,000						
	CA/DLS Request	\$4,000						

Cultural Affairs Committee
and
Distinguished Lecture Series
c/o Wanda Madden-Carr
201 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

April 9, 2010

To: Steve Evans

From: Dorothy Croall & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, Fall 2010 New Writing Series, has been awarded \$4,000.00.

Please contact Wanda Madden-Carr at 1-1516 to discuss the procedures in place for the submission of financial expenses related to this award at your earliest convenience.

The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: *This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.*

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

cc: Stella Santerre