



**For
Immediate Release**

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New Hugo House Series Claims a Space to Discuss Queer Issues in Literature

Event Dates

C. Davida Ingram with Rebecca Brown: Oct. 5

Vivek Shraya with Chase Joynt: Nov. 2

Randa Jarrar with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha: Dec. 7

Sarah Galvin with David Schmader: Jan. 4

Jennifer Natalya Fink with Wendy C. Ortiz: April 5

SEATTLE, WA—Hugo House announced a new series to begin this fall, hosted and curated by Lambda Literary Award-winning writer Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore. The series, **CONTAGIOUS EXCHANGES: Queer Writers in Conversation**, will feature dynamic writers and artists representing a range of genres, styles, and sensibilities. Cross-pollinating spoken word with literary fiction, poetic experimentation with creative nonfiction, hybrid work with narrative prose, **CONTAGIOUS EXCHANGES** seeks to explode boundaries so that critical engagement can thrive.

“If you’re out at a literary event and you see Seattle author Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, you know you’ve made the right choice for the evening. Her taste is impeccable and her politics are righteous,” writes Paul Constant in *The Seattle Weekly* and *The Seattle Review of Books*. “Now she’s finally launching a reading series to create a much-needed space to discuss queer matters.”

“But more than just a promising reading series, what Bernstein Sycamore is doing with **CONTAGIOUS EXCHANGES** is claiming a space to discuss queer issues in literature. She’s taking back some of the public conversation and claiming it in the name of her cause [...] **CONTAGIOUS EXCHANGES** is proof that there’s more to be said,

written, and discussed about the state of queer writing in America in 2016.”

In its inaugural 2016–2017 season, CONTAGIOUS EXCHANGES will feature artist **C. Davida Ingram** with novelist and nonfiction writer **Rebecca Brown**; artist, songwriter, and short story writer **Vivek Shraya** with filmmaker and writer **Chase Joynt**; writer and translator **Randa Jarrar** with poet and writer **Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha**; poet and nonfiction writer **Sarah Galvin** with nonfiction writer and playwright **David Schmader**; and novelist **Jennifer Natalya Fink** with poet and writer **Wendy C. Ortiz**.

Featured writers and artists will perform recent works followed by a Q&A with Bernstein Sycamore. All events are free and open to the public and will begin at 7 p.m. The bar will be open.

About the Authors & Artists

“Startlingly bold and provocative” (Howard Zinn) and “a gender-fucking tower of pure pulsing purple fabulous” (*The Stranger*), **Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore** is the author of a memoir and two novels, and the editor of five nonfiction anthologies. Her latest title, *The End of San Francisco*, won a 2014 Lambda Literary Award. Her most recent anthology, *Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?: Flaming Challenges to Masculinity, Objectification, and the Desire to Conform*, was an American Library Association Stonewall Honor Book. She just finished a third novel, *Sketchtasy*.

C. Davida Ingram received the 2014 Stranger Genius Award in Visual Arts. She is an artist who combines writing and curating to create counter-narratives about Otherness and identity. She is the co-founder of the Seattle People of Color Salon and has been involved with many community-based arts organizations including Video Machete, Women in the Director’s Chair, and Insight Arts. Her recent projects include *I Wish a Motherf***** Would*, *stereoTYPE*, and *The Deeps* (with composer Hanna Benn). She is Public Engagement Programs Manager at Seattle Public Libraries.

Rebecca Brown was Hugo House's first Writer-in-Residence. Brown has made significant contributions to gay and lesbian literature through essays, short stories, and her novel, *The Gifts of the Body*.

Vivek Shraya is a Toronto-based artist whose body of work includes several albums, films, and books. She is a three-time Lambda Literary Award finalist. Her first novel, *She of the Mountains*, was named one of *The Globe and Mail's* Best Books of 2014. Her debut collection of poetry, *even this page is white*, was released this spring.

Chase Joynt is a Toronto-based moving-image artist whose work is exhibited internationally. His most recent film projects are *Between You and Me* and *Genderize*, both from CBC Docs.

Randa Jarrar's work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Utne Reader*, *Salon*, *Guernica*, *The Rumpus*, *Oxford American*, *Ploughshares*, *Five Chapters*, and others. Her first novel, *A Map of Home*, was named one of the best novels of 2008 by the *Barnes and Noble Review*. Her new book, *Him, Me, Muhammad Ali* (Sarabande Books) will be published in October 2016.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha is a queer disabled femme writer, performance artist, and educator. The author of the Lambda Award-winning *Love Cake*, *Dirty River*, *Bodymap*, and *Consensual Genocide* and co-editor of *The Revolution Starts At Home: Confronting Intimate Violence in Activist Communities*, her writings on femme of color and Sri Lankan identities, survivorhood, and healing, disability and transformative justice have appeared in the anthologies *Octavia's Brood*, *Dear Sister*, *Letters Lived*, *Undoing Border Imperialism*, *Stay Solid*, *Persistence: Still Butch and Femme*, *Yes Means Yes*, *Visible: A Femmethology*, *Homelands*, *Colonize This*, *We Don't Need Another Wave*, *Bitchfest*, *Without a Net*, *Dangerous Families*, *Brazen Femme*, *Femme* and *A Girl's Guide to Taking Over The World*.

Sarah Galvin—widely known as “The Champagne of Queers”—is a poet and author of *The Three Einsteins*. Her blog, *The Pedestretarian*, is devoted to reviews of food found on the street. She has an MFA in poetry from University of Washington. Her poems and

essays can be found in *iO*, *New Ohio Review*, *Pleiades*, *Pinwheel*, *Vice Magazine*, and *The Stranger*.

David Schmader is a writer, performer, and author of the solo plays *Straight*, *Letter to Axl*, and *A Short-Term Solution to a Long-Term Problem*, which he's performed in Seattle and around the country. Between 1999 and 2014, Schmader served as a writer, editor, and columnist of Seattle's Pulitzer-winning newsweekly *The Stranger*. In his spare time, he's the world's foremost authority on the brilliant horribleness of Paul Verhoeven's stripper drama *Showgirls*, hosting annotated screenings around the country and supplying the commentary for the bestselling *Showgirls* DVD. More recently, he's become a spokesmodel for marijuana, writing the book *Weed: The User's Guide* (Sasquatch Books).

Jennifer Natalya Fink is a professor of English at Georgetown University and a literacy activist. She is the author of three award-winning novels, *The Mikvah Queen* (Rebel Satori Press), *Burn*, and *V* (both from Suspect Thoughts Press), and a short story collection, *13 Fugues* (Dark Coast Press). She is the founder and Gorilla-in-Chief of The Gorilla Press, and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, National Jewish Book, and National Book Award.

Wendy C. Ortiz is the author of *Excavation: A Memoir* (Future Tense Books), *Hollywood Notebook* (Writ Large Press), and the forthcoming *Bruja* (Civil Coping Mechanisms). Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, *Hazlitt*, and *Vol. 1 Brooklyn*, among other places. She lives in Los Angeles.

About Hugo House

Hugo House is a place to read words, hear words, and make your own words better. Offering readings, classes, teen programs, consultations with professional writers, and more, Hugo House opens the literary world to everyone who loves books or has a drive to write.

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Open hours: Monday through Saturday, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.