“Is this where the Literary Festival reading is?”
“In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible. ... political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness.”

—George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”

Politics, as someone once remarked, is the art of the possible. Art, on the other hand, is where the possible and the improbable meet, where realities get checked and dreams gain probability. Art and politics? Strange bedfellows, surely, but it seems fitting that in this year—in which America will elect a new president—we gather with writers of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction who have attempted to make sense and art out of political actualities.

Michael Pearson and Katherine Jackson
2016 Festival Directors
Elmaz Abinader is a poet, memoirist, playwright, and novelist. Her first memoir, *Children of the Roojme, a Family's Journey from Lebanon*, chronicles three generations of immigrants battling dislocation and tradition. Her most recent poetry collection, *This House, My Bones*, earned the Willow Press/Aquarius press Editor's Selection. She has won the PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Poetry award, a Goldies Award for Literature, and two Oregon Drama awards. She has been a Fulbright Senior Fellow to Egypt and is one of the founders of the Voices of Our Nations Arts Foundation. She currently teaches creative writing at Mills College.

Presidential Lecture Series speaker Douglas Brinkley is a professor of history at Rice University and CNN Presidential Historian. His recent book, *The Nixon Tapes*, is an exploration of Nixon's hubris, paranoia, and political genius. Brinkley also has written books on Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Rosa Parks, Henry Ford, and Walter Cronkite; additional books cover topics ranging from the Vietnam War to Hurricane Katrina to the Alaskan wilderness. He has edited Jack Kerouac's diaries, a Woody Guthrie novel, Hunter S. Thompson's letters, and a Theodore Dreiser travelogue. Six of his books were selected as New York Times Notable Books of the Year, and he has received the Robert F. Kennedy Prize, the Benjamin Franklin Award, and the Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt Naval History Prize, among others. He is contributing editor for Vanity Fair and a frequent contributor to The New York Times, The New Yorker, and The Atlantic Monthly.

Born in Shanghai in 1961, Ying Chen studied language and literature at the University of Fudan and McGill University. She has published thirteen books of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, including her most recent book of essays, *The Slow Mountains*, which received the Gédéon-Moreau Award for Francophone Writing. She has received numerous other awards including a France-Canada prize, a Quebec Librarian prize, and Elle Magazine's Readers Prize. She was named Chevalière en Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture in 2003. She lives in Vancouver. Ying Chen will read in French with an accompanying translation by ODU Professor Peter Schulman.

Born in Iran, Farideh Goldin immigrated to the United States in 1975 in search of her imagined America. When political unrest in Iran intensified in 1979, her family was forced to flee Iran on the last flights to Tel Aviv. Her recent memoir, *Leaving Iran: Between Migration and Exile*, knits together her father's story of dislocation and loss with her experience as an Iranian
Jew in America. *Wedding Song: Memoirs of an Iranian Jewish Woman* is based on her struggle in balancing her opposing worlds in Iran. In essays and scholarly articles, Goldin explores issues of identity in her own life and the lives of Iranian women writers.

**Joyce Hoffmann**'s long interest in politics spans both her careers in journalism, when she covered presidential elections, and in academia, beginning with her doctoral dissertation, *Theodore White and Journalism as Illusion*, which explored the intersection of politics and journalism. More recently, her research interests have focused on the historic role of women in journalism with her 2008 book, *On Their Own: Women Journalists and the American Experience in Vietnam*, and in 2015, her edited collection, *Newswomen: Twenty-Five Years of Front-Page Journalism*, which spotlights the achievements of women in the profession over the past quarter century.

**Joe Jackson** is the author of one novel and six nonfiction books, including *The Thief at the End of the World*, one of Time magazine's Top Ten Books for 2008. Jackson holds an MFA from the University of Arkansas and was an investigative reporter for the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, covering criminal justice and the state's Death Row. His journalism resulted in the acquittal of a man wrongly convicted of murder and the recantations of two men whose testimony sent men to Death Row. His biography of Sioux holy man Black Elk will be released this fall. Jackson is currently the Mina Hohenberg Darden Endowed Professor of Creative Writing at Old Dominion University.

**Etgar Keret** is the author of *The Seven Good Years; Suddenly, A Knock on the Door; The Girl on the Fridge; Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God; Missing Kissinger*; and *Gaza Blues*. He has received the Book Publishers Association's Platinum Prize several times and the Chevalier medallion of France's Order of Arts and Letters. He also has been awarded the Prime Minister's Prize and the Ministry of Culture's Cinema Prize. His books are bestsellers in Israel and have been published in more than 30 languages.

**Karan Mahajan** was born and grew up in New Delhi, India. His first novel, *Family Planning*, was a finalist for the Dylan Thomas Prize and was published in nine countries. His second novel, *The Association of Small Bombs*, was published in the spring of 2016. His writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, NPR's All Things Considered, The New Yorker online, The Believer, n+1, The Paris Review Daily, and Bookforum. A graduate of Stanford University and the Michener Center for Writers, he lives in Austin, Texas.
Colum McCann is the author of six novels and three story collections. Born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, he has received many international honors, including the National Book Award, the International Dublin Impac Prize, a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres from the French government, election to the Irish Arts Academy, the Best Foreign Novel Award in China, and an Oscar nomination. His work has been published in more than 35 languages. He is the co-founder of the non-profit global story exchange organization Narrative 4, and he teaches in the MFA program at Hunter College.

Azar Nafisi is the author of numerous books including Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books, which has been translated in 32 languages; Anti-Terra: A Critical Study of Vladimir Nabokov’s Novels; and The Republic of Imagination: America in Three Books. Her work has been published in The New York Times, The Washington Post, and New Republic. She has received many literary and humanitarian awards including the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger; an American Immigration Law Foundation achievement award; a Persian Golden Lioness Award for Literature from the World Academy of Arts, Literature, and Media; and a Cristóbal Gabarrón Foundation International Thought and Humanities Award. She currently is a visiting fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC.

An award-winning pop music critic and culture journalist, Rashod Ollison has been a staff critic and feature writer for the Dallas Morning News, Philadelphia Inquirer, Journal News, Baltimore Sun, and The Virginian-Pilot. He also wrote a music column for Jet magazine. His recent memoir, Soul Serenade: Rhythm, Blues & Coming of Age Through Vinyl, was published by Beacon Press. A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, he lives in Virginia Beach.

Former journalist Rick Skwiot has authored four novels—Hemingway First Novel Award winner Death in Mexico, Willa Cather Fiction Prize finalist Sleeping With Pancho Villa, Key West Story, and Fail—as well as two memoirs: the critically acclaimed Christmas at Long Lake: A Childhood Memory and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico: Memoir of a Sensual Quest for Spiritual Healing. He has taught fiction writing at Washington University in St. Louis and served as the 2004 Distinguished Visiting Writer at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. He works as a feature writer and editor, and lives in Key West.
Anthony Swofford is the author of the memoir Jarhead as well as a novel Exit A. His writing has appeared in Harper's, the Guardian, Slate, The New York Times, The Daily Beast, and others. He has taught at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and Lewis and Clark College. His forthcoming book is a biography of Carlos Arredondo, a Gold Star Father and hero of the 2013 marathon bombing in Boston, and he will write an adaptation of this book for HBO Films.


PRESSing Matters: Cross-collaborations and Explorations in Literature, Art, and Politics

An exhibit of hybrid poems and prose, broadsides, postcards and other works on paper produced by Old Dominion University writers and artists out of their poetry workshop and studio art (letterpress) classes. On display at the Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries during the Literary Festival.
VENUES

Support the University Village Bookstore.
Titles available in the store as well as at all the readings and signings.

Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries
4509 Monarch Way

Chandler Recital Hall
in the F. Ludwig Diehn Center for the Performing Arts
corner of 49th St. and Elkhorn Ave.

ODU Virginia Beach
1881 University Drive, Virginia Beach

Webb University Center
49th St. and Bluestone Ave.

EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY
Free garage parking for all events.
Do not park in spaces marked reserved.

For more information, contact the Old Dominion University
English Department at 757-683-3991 or email mfagpdaassistant@odu.edu.
lib.odu.edu/litfest/39th/

★ SPECIAL THANKS ★

John R. Broderick and the
Office of the President
Office of the Provost
Office of the Dean, Arts and Letters
ODU Virginia Beach
Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries
Institute for Jewish Studies and
Interfaith Understanding
Department of Foreign Languages
and Literatures
Department of Women's Studies
Office of Leadership and
Student Involvement

Edith White and the
Forrest P. White Endowment
Jerri Fuller Dickseski
Clay McNutt and John Miller
Acoustical Sheetmetal Inc.
VADM David Architzel USN (Ret) on behalf
of his daughter Mary Westbrook (MFA-ODU)
The Muse Writers Center
LitFriends
Karen Vaughan and the Perry Library
Marc Katz and the University Village
Bookstore
SpringHill Suites by Marriott Norfolk
Borja Coffeehouse

This festival is made possible in part through sponsorship by the
City of Norfolk Commission on the Arts and Humanities.
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, Sept. 25
Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries
2 p.m. Anthony Swofford and Writers in Community
3 – 4:30 p.m. Opening Reception: PRESSing Matters: Cross-collaborations and Explorations in Literature, Art, and Politics

Monday, Sept. 26
Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries
1:30 p.m. Farideh Goldin and Joyce Hoffmann
4 p.m. Joe Jackson
8 p.m. Karan Mahajan

Tuesday, Sept. 27
Baron and Ellin Gordon Art Galleries
12:30 p.m. Ocean Vuong
4 p.m. Rashod Ollison and Rick Skwiot
8 p.m. Etgar Keret

Wednesday, Sept. 28
Chandler Hall
4 p.m. Azar Nafisi
8 p.m. Colum McCann

Thursday, Sept. 29
12:30 p.m. Elmaz Abinader, ODU Virginia Beach
4 p.m. Ying Chen, Chandler Hall
7:30 p.m. President's Lecture Series: Douglas Brinkley, North Cafeteria, Webb University Center