Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Ad Hoc Committee Update on ALOUD

Cultural Daily · Wednesday, October 31st, 2018

Cultural Weekly has committed to covering matters surrounding the Library Foundation of Los Angeles's ALOUD series. The Ad Hoc Committee, which formed after Louise Steinman and Maureen Moore were fired, has released the following update, which we publish in full below. We will also publish any statements or updates from the Library Foundation, as we have done previously, and we have invited the Foundation's leadership to join in this conversation.

Dear Friends and Supporters of ALOUD,

We wanted to update you on events in the wake of the August 27, 2018 firings of Louise Steinman and Maureen Moore from the ALOUD series by the Library Foundation. Thank you again for your involvement in signing the petition. Many of you have also taken the time to write individually to the Foundation and to rescind your membership in the Library Associates; we appreciate your efforts.

Thursday, September 12
The Petition in Support of ALOUD is delivered to Gwen Miller, the Chair of the Library Foundation Board, and to the Mayor's office. At the time it contained over 800 signatures of writers, readers and other members of the literary community. The number of signers is now up to 1,038. To date, the Library Foundation has never acknowledged the Petition. Neither has the Mayor's Office, any of the 15 City Councilmembers, or the City Librarian.

Thursday, September 12-Monday September 16
The Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Downtown News and Madeline Brand's "Press Play" on KCRW all report on the Petition protest.

Tuesday, September 17
Protests greet the opening event on ALOUD's fall season. Armed guards escort protestors from the building. This was documented on Facebook by Adolfo Guzman-Lopez and others. Following that event, guards are present at each event, events are no longer live-streamed, and the audience is no longer permitted to ask live questions.

Thursday, October 4
Rigoberto Gonzalez publishes "What is Happening at ALOUD?" in The Los Angeles Times. He describes the bizarre experience of conducting a conversation with author Tommy Orange during the second ALOUD event of the fall season. Neither he nor Orange were given an advance notice of the personnel changes at the Library Foundation. He particularly notes his disturbance at the

visible presence of armed guards.

Thursday, October 11
The Library Foundation issues a statement on public programming. The statement does not address the firings or the petition, and does not respond to the petition signers' requests for transparency or a voice in its future literary programming.

Tuesday, October 16
Adam Leipzig publishes an investigative piece, "What Happened at ALOUD?" in Cultural Weekly. He attempts to get to the bottom of many unanswered questions, but the Foundation remains impenetrable.

Tuesday, October 16
Protestors stage another action, outside the library, before an ALOUD event. They point out issues of gender and age discrimination in the firings of Steinman and Moore.

Wednesday, October 17
The Library Foundation announces the hiring of Jessica Strand, as new Director of Public Programs. Ms. Strand has spent the past decade in New York.

Wednesday, October 17
Author and academic Rubén Martínez publishes an Open Letter to Foundation President Ken Brecher, calling upon him to resign for mismanagement of this matter. Initially posted on Facebook, his letter was published the following day on the blog of the Los Angeles Review of Books.

Thursday, October 18
Daniel Hernandez, writing for LA Taco, decries the plan to hire an out-of-towner to curate programming at the library.

Thursday, October 25
Founder of Community Arts Resources (CARS) and CicLAVia, Aaron Paley, publishes an Op-Ed, "Speaking Up for ALOUD at the Central Library" in The Los Angeles Times.

The Library Foundation, a private nonprofit entity with a mission of providing financial support to the Los Angeles Public Library, demonstrates through its actions and silences that it feels no accountability to the public or to the Los Angeles literary community. This ad hoc committee is continuing to explore ways to call the Foundation to account, and your continued assistance with this is much appreciated. There is a Foundation Board meeting on November 1, the first since the firings. If anyone has contacts with Board members or with the Foundation's funders, we would love to know that.

Other things you can do:

- Keep sending out the petition link and urging people to share it. It is bit.ly/aloudpetition.
- Feel free to share this update since it is one-stop source of info about what's happened.
- Write a short letter to the editor at The Los Angeles Times or comment online in response to Aaron Paley's Op-Ed.
- Use the hashtag #WeAreAloud.

Sincerely,

David Ulin and Hector Tobar, spokespersons
Donna Frazier, Lynell George, Reed Johnson, Terry Wolverton
Ad Hoc Committee in Support of ALOUD

Photo: Howard Bryant, Dr. John Carlos, in conversation with Dr. Todd Boyd, Professor of Cinema and Media Studies, USC, June 19, 2018. Photo by Gary Leonard.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, October 31st, 2018 at 5:12 pm and is filed under Fiction, Discourse
You can follow any responses to this entry through the Comments (RSS) feed. You can skip to the end and leave a response. Pinging is currently not allowed.