Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Best Laid Plans

Chiwan Choi · Thursday, December 13th, 2012

My editor/publisher is probably very annoyed about now because I'm turning in this piece so late. Excuse? None, really. I crashed. I just crashed on Monday. I ended up curling up in the dark with a bag of potato chips and watching episodes of the *Battlestar Galactica* reboot, Season 2.5. Fortunately, today (Wednesday) I feel better. Unfortunately, this piece was due Monday.

It's been a huge year for me personally, with the release of *Abductions,* my second book, and for Writ Large Press (relatively speaking). It was the first time we managed to publish more than one book: *Abductions* and Khadija Anderson's *History of Butoh.* There was even supposed to be a third title we were going to squeeze in before the end of the year, *Eulogy to an Unknown Tree* by Billy Burogs, but with holidays and spaces that we wanted being booked, we decided to not rush it and wait until January.

And that's just the beginning of it. In the past few months, the Writ Large team has been holed up in our secret lab (ok, coffee shop…and bar sometimes) and daring ourselves to think big, bigger than it seems possible. To our amazement, all of our wild ideas have been picking up considerable steam.

Such as? Well, here you go:

• Since early this year, I've been dreaming of putting together a *lit crawl* in downtown Los Angeles. The only logical place in Los Angeles to do an event like this, where it involves walking, community, bars, galleries and diversity, is downtown. We have already been talking to local businesses, getting them on-board, and we're shooting for the end of May 2013. We are not going through Litquake to make this an LA chapter of it (although there's a North Hollywood version being planned through Litquake) because we want to do it our own way and – well, this is downtown, this is Los Angeles, and *this* is how we do things.

• The Indie Press Cartel that I tossed out there has officially (unofficially) begun! I can't think of a better partner-in-crime than the incredible Kaya Press. An opportunity to collaborate, share and hang out with a company that has published the likes of Sesshu Foster and Ed Lin? C'mon! We are not exactly sure what we'll be doing together (because there's so much we can do!), but we are looking forward to more indie presses wanted to join our gang so we can take over the world! The first thing WLP is going to assist Kaya with is in the release of their newest title, *Magnetic Refrain,* by Nicky Sa-eun Schildkraut.

• The biggest and most ambitious plan of all is Project LA Writ Large. One night some months, I woke up around 3AM and started talking, shaking Judy awake to tell her that I had an idea for a

pop-up bookstore. In this dream, we'd rent one of the many empty storefronts in DTLA and sell our books in it. And each month, we'd invite a different indie press to come in, set up shop, put on events, and sell books. This idea has sort of grown, hopefully not out of control. We are not thinking of a pop-up bookstore anymore, although selling our own books will be a component of it. We are now looking at a couple of spaces that are at 4000 sq feet in downtown. LA Writ Large is going to be much more than that – a think tank for indie publishers, writers, artists, musicians, educators, urban planners; an event space for book releases and art exhibits; a salon and workshop space; and so on. Watching what Write Bloody is doing down in Austin, TX that this is not only possible, but inevitable.

We've been spending the past few weeks meeting with various companies and individuals, trying to find partners and also trying to get a pulse on what people we respect think of what we're doing. It's been pretty unanimously well received so it's exciting.

But on Monday, I crashed. It's December and we're all running on fumes. I am genuinely afraid of losing momentum in the coming weeks, that we'll all wake up one morning and realize it's too risky to invest time and money into such endeavors when we all have our own businesses to run and family to care for.

We have already been met with shady dealings and deflating change of directions. I am antsy, wishing we could find a space already. Because we have 6 more books to put out in 2013 and it all seems impossible to accomplish.

We want so much. But what does that matter? What happens next?

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