

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Finding Direction

Chiwan Choi · Wednesday, April 24th, 2013

The LA Times Festival of Books has come and gone. Writ Large Press took part in the Smokin' Hot Lit Lounge put together by Kaya Press. And we debuted our new mobile bookstore!



I had to miss all the fun down here, because I was up in Seattle for a few days to take part in readings I'd committed to a while back. The readings were great fun and I got to meet terrific writers. Actually, the Kaya Press crew was up there for the AAAS conference and I ended up hanging out with them a lot. I even went to visit Bruce Lee's grave with them, and we paid our respects by eating and drinking wine while standing in the rain.

There was quite a bit going on Seattle during the weekend. As mentioned, there was the [AAAS \(Association for Asian American Studies\)](#) happening at the Westin. I snuck into a couple of panels, hung out with old and new friends drinking (By the way, the hell you thinking, bar inside the Westin Seattle hotel? A hotel full of Asians and you close the bar at midnight? Do you not want to make money???), pretended I was smart enough to know what everyone was talking about.

I also got to spend a bit of time (not enough) with my friend Soya Jung and the incredible group of social justice activists and organizers that her organization, [ChangeLab](#), had gathered for a weekend of discussion, sharing, and planning.

In my life, I have never been overtly involved in activism. It is a personal thing that has to do with my fear/rejection of being boxed in, of being in a club. Yes, it's probably trust issues. Who knows. Maybe it's a cocktail of many issues.

But as I sat at dinner listening to them talk about race and history and current events and the way people are constantly fighting oppressive established systems, I felt something. I felt a sense of pride.

It made me look at what we are doing, or at least trying to do, with all the various stuff I've been happily yammering on about in this column and to anyone and everyone who is willing to listen. The mobile bookstore. [The book fest](#). The Indie Press Cartel. [Our unfortunate incident with Beyond Baroque](#). And so on. Thinking about all of this in the context of what I was learning from the people at the dinner table, I realized that in our own ways, Writ Large Press and our friends are really fighting to subvert and overturn an old system that benefits too few.

Some moments both humble you and make you feel powerful at the same time. This is one of them.

Writ Large Press is so small that we're insignificant. And we have every plan to change *everything*.



So, in that spirit, here is the a bit of the Writ Large Press mission statement we've been working on:

Writ Large Press is an independent publisher based in downtown Los Angeles. We publish well-crafted writing of honesty and depth in all forms, genres and styles.

We believe that good writing pulls no punches and that the specificity and richness of the writer's vision unites readers in the experience of literature. Yes, literature is meant to be experienced, to be lived, to be shared—by all of us.

We believe that the act of writing is more collaborative than most of us would like to admit. Writing, editing and bookmaking are at their best when working in conversation with each other. We relish these conversations and look for every opportunity to expand the conversation past the bindings of a book and into the realms of art, music, performance, pop culture, social media, classrooms, afternoons in the park, train stations at rush hour, and graffitied walls.

Writ Large Press has been praised for organizing accessible, inclusive and entertaining events such as a pop-up bookstore at the Grand Park BookFest, a Butoh dance performance, and book launch events with packed audiences.

And about LA Writ Large:

We have this idea that the literary arts can and should be a visible and vital part of Los Angeles' cultural and economic landscape. We have this even crazier idea that independent writers, publishers and literary organizations have a pivotal role to play in the economy of Los Angeles literary arts. Furthermore, by supporting, sharing resources and knowledge, and finding opportunities to collaborate, we can increase our individual and collective visibility, sales and readership, all while making high-quality literature more accessible to Los Angeles' diverse population.

Easier said than done. But isn't there some value to even saying these things aloud? We think so.

Top photo by Neil Aitken.

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