

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Trapped in a Small World

Chiwan Choi · Thursday, October 11th, 2012

On Friday morning, the Writ Large crew got together for our second ever staff meeting at our unofficial official think tank, Brite Spot on Sunset Blvd. We had our Moleskines and our yellow notepads and a couple of laptops brought out. So what if our man in charge of booking had a broken hand! Who cares that there was no wifi! We were having a meeting, dammit!

We spent most of the hour going over details for our October 20th event: [the book release party for *History of Butoh*](#), the debut poetry collection from Khadija Anderson. There will be a reading, a DJ, a butoh performance, and limited edition woodcut prints by Melora Walters. Oh and books. There will be books. So there are many factors we need to make sure are in order. It's the most ambitious and complicated poetry book release we've been involved in, that's for sure. It's exciting and it's an event we couldn't have put together at Writ Large Press even a few months ago when WLP was just Judeth and myself.

We are now four people, four equal partners. Each of us have strong personal connections to the Los Angeles creative communities. We are like the new look Lakers! (OK, not really...until we find ourselves a Meta World Peace of the publishing world. And the Lakers totally copied our blueprint. Totally.)



The idea to take on partners for our press was born one night in May of this year, upstairs at the Grand Star Jazz Club in Chinatown. As the band was cleaning up, Peter Woods, the Event Director of The Last Bookstore, and I were finishing the last of our whiskeys for the night and chatting about how we were possibly going to handle a high profile international author we were set to publish in 2013, that we'd probably need to hire outside PR help.

"Man, don't hire outside," Peter said. "Let me work with you guys on it."

That night, Judy and I discussed what it would be like to have partners, if Peter did work with us not on a specific event, but in all events as an equal partner. Then we wondered what it would be like to have Conrad Romo, who's been running Tongue & Groove for over 8 years join us. And we couldn't think of one negative thing, other than splitting up, you know, [all that cash money we were going to make](#) between four of us instead of two. Oh and this: I've never been very good working on a team.

The things I've learned over the years making my own books, crashing readings, hustling copies for cash and drinks have all been important in getting Writ Large Press off the ground. But I picked up lot of bad habits too over the years working alone, in isolation. More than once I've been accused to being a bully and lacking in communication skills. But the fears I have had about my own shortcomings as a team player have been mostly kept in check. I've only driven Judeth nuts a

few times.

We're less than two weeks away. There have been RSVPs and pre-orders and PR material have gone out. We'd never have been able to breathe probably around this time, let alone start working on other projects on our schedule. But I started reading Mike Sonksen's (Mike the Poet) new manuscript today and even reaching out to authors that I've admired to ask about new manuscripts. Judeth is already developing design ideas for Billy Burgos's book. All while Khadija's book release is less than two weeks away. It feels like we are slowly letting go of the weight of the word "small" in "small press." I believe the weight of that one word, small, more than anything was keeping us from extending ourselves, from making risky decisions, from thinking that we can actually do things that could change our community and beyond, from approaching it as a way to make a living doing something we love. It has forced us to do something we hadn't done before regarding our "small press":

Think big. Think scary, life altering big.

Photos: Top, by Krista Simmons/LAist; below, from basketwallpapers.com.

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