

**POETRY & POETICS OF THE 1990s**

**NATIONAL POETRY FOUNDATION  
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT ORONO**

**June 28-July 1, 2017**

**ROUNDTABLES & PERFORMANCE EVENT**

**Thursday, June 29****DPC 117****10:00-11:30 am****Roundtable: *New Narrative*****Kevin Killian (organizer), Jason Mitchell (chair)****Dodie Bellamy, Kaplan Harris, and Kevin Killian (participants)**

Until the summer of 2008, and the National Poetry Foundation Orono Conference on the Poetry of the 1970s, little academic attention had been paid to New Narrative, a writing movement born in the late 1970s in New York and San Francisco, but that summer a panel of scholars including Rob Halpern, Kaplan Harris, and Robin Tremblay-McGaw triggered a measurable change in critical, popular, and academic interest into what had been considered a failed avant-garde. Interest continues to build: 2017 marks the publication of a couple of new anthologies on the subject. Halpern and Tremblay-McGaw are editing a forthcoming collection of essays (*From Our Hearts to Yours: New Narrative as Contemporary Practice*), while Dodie Bellamy and Kevin Killian have released *Writers Who Love Too Much: New Narrative 1977-1997* (Nightboat Books), a historically-based gathering of original documents—stories, poems, essays, interviews, and ephemera—from the movement’s first twenty years. In addition, in October 2017, UC Berkeley will host *Communal Presence: New Narrative Writing Today*, the first full-scale academic conference devoted solely to this field. Today, our roundtable will explore the origins of New Narrative, its past and contemporary practice, and its contested legacy.

**Friday, June 30****DPC 117****10:00-11:30 am****Roundtable: *Format Américain*****Juliette Valéry (organizer), Jennifer Moxley (chair)****Jena Osman, Rod Smith, and Elizabeth Willis (participants)**

*Format Américain* was one of the defining transatlantic translation projects of the 1990s. In this roundtable discussion, director Juliette Valéry, who founded the series in 1993, talks with some of the poets whose work has been featured in its distinctive photocopied editions, including Jena Osman, Rod Smith, and Elizabeth Willis. Jennifer Moxley will chair the roundtable in remembrance of her friend and *Format Américain* contributor Helena Bennet.

**Friday, June 30****IMRC Center, Stewart Commons****4:30-6:00 pm****Feminist Superhero: Adrienne Rich and Jayne Cortez****Laura Hinton (curator and organizer)****Jennifer Bartlett, Carla Billitteri, Erika Jo Brown, Marty Ehrlich, Laura Hinton, Erica Hunt, Janelle Poe, Susan Schultz, and Qinghong Xu (participants)**

One a lyric poet and essayist, the other a jazz poet, Adrienne Rich and Jayne Cortez were American poetry superheroes who produced extensive bodies of work—revealing overlapping visions of social equality in radically distinct aesthetic modes. This multi-media event brings together both poets' historical works to champion their literary-political engagement. It highlights their feminist voices of resistance, their fight for social justice and global peace. Based upon the recent collaborative book *Jayne Cortez, Adrienne Rich, and the Feminist Superhero*, this event celebrates the words of such powerfully political and moral evocation in these women's writings with academic talks, music, and poetry performances. Like the poets themselves, the event will critique the distorted lenses through which Americans still regard gender, race, ethnicity, sexualities, and disability.

**Saturday, July 1****DPC 105****10:00-11:30 am****Roundtable: *Word Ocean Distance Language: An Opening of The Bounty*, by Myung Mi Kim****Charles Alexander (chair and organizer), Myung Mi Kim (respondent)****Genève Chao, Saba Syed Razvi, and Andrew Rippeon (participants)**

The work of Myung Mi Kim in the 1990s, and *The Bounty* in particular, is evidence of three paths through which American poetry widened and deepened during this decade. First, as a part of the Asian diaspora which has had a major impact on American poetry, through the work of Kim, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, and many others. *The Bounty* is one of the most daring and compelling works of this wave, presenting an opening not only of subject matter and authorship, but also of language dispersal, and language divination, through the investigation into both Korean and American languages in the book. Second, Kim participates in an "open field" poetics that was originally articulated by Charles Olson, and is associated, in San Francisco (where Kim lived in the 1990s) with the work of Robert Duncan, Kathleen Fraser, and several other poets. The "field" of Kim's practice within this tradition impacts the "field" of the poem.

Third, Kim was a fundamental part of a women's poetry movement in San Francisco that investigated the nature of poetry and the important participation therein by women, expressed most persuasively in the issues of the journal *HOW(ever)*, first edited by Frances Jaffer, Beverly Dahlen, and Kathleen Fraser, before Kim took over the journal in the 1990s. The community around this journal shared a commitment to innovative poetry and poetics by women. Chax Press encountered the work of Kim in the pages of *HOW(ever)*, and in 1996 published her second book, *The Bounty*. Chax director Charles Alexander has gathered poet-scholars here to discuss *The Bounty*, as poetry and as evidence of a deep poetic investigation of space, language, and the possibilities of person within such a nexus. Each panelist will present a brief foray into the nature of the poetry in *The Bounty*. Panelists will converse with each other and open up the discussion to the assembled audience. We want the panel to be as open as the poems of Kim, and as inclusive of people who attend. The purpose of any book of poetry, any press, any panel, and any symposium, is in part to build community. The poetry of our time, from the 90s until now, forms a community of which Kim's work is an essential part.

**Saturday, July 1**

**10:00-11:30 am**

**Roundtable: *The Collected Explosive Magazine***

**Katy Lederer (organizer and chair)**

**Lee Ann Brown, Jennifer Moxley, Susan Schultz, Rod Smith, Prageeta Sharma, Elizabeth Willis, Mark Wallace, and Dale Smith (participants).**

Starting in 1997, Katy Lederer edited the mimeo stapled magazine *Explosive*. Borne of the varied and rich aesthetic conversations taking place in the Bay Area, Iowa City, and New York through the '90s, the journal anticipated conversations about poetry and aesthetics that would dominate discussions of poetics through the late '90s and 2000s. It asked questions: what does an experimental lyric look like? Is it possible to write lyric poetry in a time when the concept of self has been called into question (e.g. "the death of the author")? What about epic poetry? What happens when authors who have developed their aesthetic sense within the confines of a coterie or institutional pedagogical culture are published alongside others who may share their formal or compositional techniques but not their underlying politics? How much of a generation's aesthetic sensibility is determined by politics, the wider culture, and professional or institutional mores? And what do poets owe to their own coterie and cultures? This year—the twentieth anniversary year of the publication of the first issue—Lederer will be bringing out a perfect-bound anthology of the collected edition of the magazine. In anticipation of the anthology's September publication date, several of the magazine's original contributors will take part in a roundtable discussion. Featuring Lee Ann Brown, Jennifer Moxley, Susan Schultz, Rod Smith, Prageeta Sharma, Elizabeth Willis, Mark Wallace, and Dale Smith.