

GENEVA WRITERS' CONFERENCE 2023

WORKSHOPS

A FUNNY WAY - COMEDY SCRIPTWRITING FOR TV

Emmy Abrahamson

Anybody can write a dramatic scene that can make a TV audience cry. Become one of the few that can make a TV audience cry with laughter instead. And isn't it so much more fun to write comedy than drama? Learn some practical tips how to make your scriptwriting stronger and funnier: it's all about having a rich starting point, high stakes and having fun with it. Making yourself laugh should always be a priority. Making yourself laugh and getting paid for it makes that priority even more fun.



[Emmy Abrahamson](#) is an internationally bestselling author whose books have been translated into over 20 languages. In 2012 she was nominated for Sweden's highest literary award and she has even been called "a comedy genius" on TV (and by someone who was not related to her). She has also written episodes for several TV shows. Emmy lives in south Sweden with her first husband and 12-year-old twins.

FRAGMENTATION & WHITE SPACE

Alycia Pirmohamed

In this workshop, we will look at poetry that gestures toward absence through structural elements like fragmentation, erasure, and the use of white space. With an emphasis on poems that explore memory and recollection, we will look at the effect of leaving something unsaid, and why you might choose to include gaps and fragmentation in your own work. The workshop will include writing and reading exercises, and group discussion.



[Alycia Pirmohamed](#) is a Canadian-born poet based in Scotland. She is the author of the award-winning collection *Another Way to Split Water* and she currently teaches on the Creative Writing master's at the University of Cambridge. Alycia has held post-doctoral positions at the University Edinburgh and at the University of Liverpool, and she received an MFA from the University of Oregon and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. She is the recipient of several awards, including a pushcart prize, the 2019 CBC Poetry Prize, and the 2020 Edwin Morgan Poetry Award.

THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLISHING

April Eberhardt

This workshop provides a thorough, lively and interactive review of today's current publishing environment and the many choices authors have at their disposal to publish their work. It addresses the pros and cons of each publishing approach, including traditional, self-publishing, and hybrid publishing, and pinpoints the questions authors need to ask themselves to choose the path that will work best for them individually and for their projects, taking into account their goals, dreams, timelines and budgets.



[April Eberhardt](#) has been engaged in the international literary community for the past 12 years. In addition to working with authors to conceptualize, write and publish their stories, she has interviewed authors at literary events, and speaks regularly at conferences to help authors better understand the evolving publishing landscape. She serves on the Advisory Council for The American Library in Paris, and is a reader for the Best American Short Stories series published annually by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Each summer she hosts a series of writers' retreats at a private chateau in France.

WRITING YA FANTASY: A FOCUS ON WORLDBUILDING

Bronwyn Eley

Don't let the blinking cursor defeat you. In this 90-minute workshop, YA Fantasy author Bronwyn Eley will explore the art of worldbuilding. But don't expect to just sit back and listen. Come ready with your ideas, your novels, and your open minds. From finding an entry point to your world to the elements of creating one, how to focus in on an idea to when to stop, get ready to explore worlds with fellow writers at GWG.



Bronwyn Eley has been writing fantasy her whole life. Even as a child, her stories for class were always weird and wild. In 2019, her debut YA fantasy book *Relic* was published by Australian indie publishing house Talem Press. Her subsequent books in the series *Riven* (2020) and *Rising* (2021) make up The Relic Trilogy. Born in Sydney, Bronwyn now lives in Edinburgh, working in the travel industry. Prior to that, she spent around 7 years working in the book and publishing industry, where she met and interviewed many authors. Bronwyn's other passions include martial arts, travel, photography, and everything Scottish. <https://bronwyneley.com/>

MAKING PRIVATE STORIES PUBLIC

Colin Grant

Historians do not write history; they curate it. Similarly writing a memoir or biography requires you to select facts and conjure memories. But how do you shape these recollections and events into a story? How do we write about those we know, and whose experiences we might want to protect? Should family secrets be kept secret? We will consider the various ethical questions around writing on these themes and offer strategies to work with them. Colin will also share his experience of employing artefacts, such as diaries, letters and official correspondence to enliven your writing.



Colin Grant is an author of six books including *I&I*, *The Natural Mystics*, a group biography of the Wailers, and his memoir, *Bageye at the Wheel*, which was shortlisted for the Pen/Ackerley Prize, 2013. As a BBC producer, Grant wrote and directed several radio drama documentaries including *A Fountain of Tears: The Murder of Federico Garcia Lorca*. Grant is director of WritersMosaic, a division of the Royal Literary Fund. He also writes for newspapers and journals including the Guardian, Observer, Granta and New York Review of Books. Grant's latest book is *I'm Black So You Don't Have to Be*. <https://colingrant.info/>

STORY MAKING: AN INSIGHT INTO CREATING A DRAMA

Jonathan Myerson

This workshop is an inside look at the invention of an entire story. Jonathan will take participants through the notebook he kept while creating THAT WAS THEN, a 15-part podcast series for the BBC. His notes reveal the questions asked and the answers found in order to generate each step. He will investigate his process for building a story which is complex and intriguing while remaining credible. Gain insight into one writer's methodology for creating each step of a functioning story, from first idea through to dénouement. Participants will be invited to listen to the serial prior to the workshop.



Jonathan Myerson is an Oscar-nominated, BAFTA-winning dramatist, author and director. From 2008-18, he led the highly-regarded Creative Writing MA at City, University of London. He has written and directed three major podcast series for the BBC: THAT WAS THEN (2018), NUREMBERG (2021) and THE NAZIS: ROAD TO POWER (2023). He has also written many series for BBC Radio 4, including THE CLINTONS, THE REPUBLICANS, THE PRICE OF OIL, IT'S YOUR COUNTRY NOW TOO and THE WAY WE LIVE RIGHT NOW. He has also written for TV series, including THE BILL, EASTENDERS and HOLBY CITY.

TAKING YOUR NON-FICTION PROJECT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Clare O’Dea

Most aspiring non-fiction writers already write as part of their work. They have strong ideas and expertise but are uncertain about taking the leap into a book-length project. In this workshop, Clare O’Dea demystifies the process by taking participants through five steps that will add shape and substance to their concept. Find out what you need to do before, during and after the writing process to get your book ready for the outside world.



Clare O’Dea is the author of two non-fiction books, *The Naked Swiss: A Nation Behind 10 Myths* (Bergli Books, 2016 & 2018) and *The Naked Irish: Portrait of a Nation Beyond the Clichés* (Red Stag Books, 2019), Clare O’Dea published her first novel, *Voting Day*, with Fairlight Books in 2022. Formerly an Irish Times journalist, Clare moved to Switzerland from Ireland in 2003. She spent a decade working for swissinfo.ch. Clare coaches aspiring writers and has translated literary works from French and German. She is the founding director of the Irish Festival Fribourg/Freiburg. <https://clareodea.com/>

FLESHING OUT THE FLASH: THE NOVELLA IN FLASH

Slawka G. Scarso

If you love writing flash but feel that some stories require more space, then a Novella in Flash (or NiF) is probably what you’re looking for. NiFs are more than a collection of flash: they are real novellas, with flashes united by a narrative ark. During this workshop, we’ll talk about the main types of novellas-in-flash and cover the writing process from initial idea to full development. Starting from a single flash we will flesh it out into a content list that you can develop into a complete manuscript – with final notes about where to submit the work once ready.



Slawka G. Scarso is a copywriter, translator and lecturer. She has published flash and micros in *Fractured Lit*, *Ellipsis Zine*, *FlashBack Fiction*, *Ghost Parachute* and others. Her debut novella in flash “All Their Favourite Stories” was commended in the 2022 Bath Novella in Flash Award and is available from Ad Hoc Fiction. She has received two Pushcart Prize nominations and two of her stories will be featured in the 2023 Best Microfiction Anthology. She lives between Rome and Milan with her husband and her dog, Tessa. More words on Twitter and Instagram as @nanopausa.

DEEPENING YOUR VOICE THROUGH JOURNALING

Susan M. Tiberghien

“And you know, over time you get enough practice that you then can trust your own voice.” - Barack Obama

The workshop will have three parts. First, why and how do you journal? (excerpts from Marion Woodman, CG Jung). Secondly, what is voice? How do you deepen your voice? (excerpts from Stephen King, Terry Tempest Williams). Thirdly, how can our voices contribute to the world around us (excerpts from Rainer Maria Rilke, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Margaret Atwood) There will be handouts and writing exercises after each part.



Susan M. Tiberghien, American author and teacher living in Geneva, brings together spirituality, psychology, and the arts in her work. She has written four memoirs and two writing books: *One Year to a Writing Life* and *Writing Toward Wholeness*. For over 25 years, she has taught at C.G. Jung Societies, International Women’s Writing Guild, and writers’ centers in Europe and USA. Recently she recorded courses on different Jungian platforms. She is the founder and past director of the Geneva Writers Group. Active in International PEN, she continues to take small steps towards a more peaceful world. www.susantiberghien.com/

MYTH AND MAGICAL REALISM IN SHORT STORIES

Sarah Tinsley

Want to write bewitching stories? From Atwood to Woolf, writers have drawn on the mythic and magical to embellish and enrich their stories. The short story in particular is especially suited to using these elements as it allows more freedom and experimentation. In this workshop, Sarah will explore the different ways fantastical elements can be used in short stories and how to include them in your own. Through practical exercises and discussion, you'll leave with a blueprint of a brand new, magical story you'll be able to develop using techniques explored in the session.



Sarah Tinsley is a British writer drawn to societal issues and magical realism in her writing. Her short stories have been published widely, including *Msexia* and *Litro*. She was third in the Bristol Short Story Prize in 2021 and won the Segora International Short Story Prize in 2015. She has an MA from City University, London, and her first novel *The Shadows We Cast* won the Bookouture/Spread The Word Prize in 2021, and was published in 2022. <https://sarahtinsley.com/>

HARNESSING ARTEFACTS' NARRATIVE POTENTIAL

Valeria Vescina

Discover the narrative potential of artefacts in this 90-minute workshop. Learn why they hold more compelling creative-writing possibilities than ordinary objects do, and explore techniques for harnessing them. Valeria will demonstrate how several authors have tapped into this rich creative resource: for inspiration; for emotional resonance; for vivid, memorable imagery; to hint at character, relationships, inner states and character development; for a strong sense of time and place; to suggest key themes... You'll leave with the fruitful beginning of a story. Valeria's session draws on her MA research and on her practice as a novelist, tutor and reviewer.



Valeria Vescina is a graduate of the Goldsmiths Creative & Life Writing MA, Valeria debuted at the FT Weekend Oxford Literary Festival with a work of literary fiction, *That Summer in Puglia*. Her upcoming second novel is a story of women, inspired by events in 16th-century Italy. Valeria has delivered workshops and lectures since 2013, including: to Creative Writing BA and MA classes at UK universities; at NAWE conferences; at the Literaturhaus Zentralschweiz; for Geneva Writers' Group. Her retreats in the Swiss Alps are on the Write Life's list of *25+ Incredible Writers Retreats to Attend*. She is the Hampstead Arts Festival's Literary Director. <https://valeriavescina.com/>

WANDERLUST: DISTANCE AND INTIMACY IN POETRY

Yun Wei

Trek across the many landscapes of poetry and explore the worlds that inhabit the spaces of the page. How do you make the reader experience both the familiar and the unknown? Through readings and writing exercises, we will learn techniques to create intimacy, distance and lustful metaphors. Guided by poets such as Natalie Diaz, Jenny Xie, Ada Limon and Adrienne Rich, your work will travel to unexpected places.



Yun Wei received her MFA in poetry from Brooklyn College and studied at Georgetown University and London School of Economics. She has been awarded second place in the Boulevard Poetry Contest and first place in the Geneva Literary Prizes. Her work appears in over 15 journals, including Brooklyn Rail, Michigan Quarterly, Shenandoah, Identity Theory, Poetry Northwest, Wigleaf, and Word Riot. Her debut novel is represented by Levine Greenberg Rostan Literary Agency. She works in global health in Switzerland, where she relies on chocolate and tears to survive mountain sports. Find her at: pomegranateway.blogspot.com

GETTING MAGAZINE-PUBLISHED IN THE MODERN WORLD

Zoë Wells

Making the leap to getting your poems and stories published can be a daunting one, with thousands of magazines and anthologies to choose from, and countless missteps waiting to happen. In this practical workshop, we'll be covering how to maximize your chances as you make your first few steps into the wider world of publishing: from perfecting that opening paragraph, to writing professional cover letters and bios.



Zoë Wells is a short story writer and novelist whose work has been longlisted for the Bridport, White Review Short Story Prize, and the BBC National Short Story Award. She founded and was head editor at Kamena Magazine, during which time it was shortlisted for a STACK award, and has worked as an editor and proofreader for a number of publications. She is currently working on her first novel. <https://zwells.com/>

WHERE HISTORIANS FEAR TO TREAD, WRITERS MUST GO

Tim Leach

Where the historical record grows thin and leaves us with more questions than answers, it's time for writers of historical fiction to get to work. Recreating the past in fiction is a daunting task but not an insurmountable one, and this practical workshop will look at some of the unique challenges and opportunities of the historical fiction genre, exploring common tactics for research, narrative structuring, and character development.



Tim Leach is a writer of historical fiction, specialising in the ancient world, unreliable source texts, and the crossover points between myth and history. His six published novels include *The Last King of Lydia* (shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize in 2013), and *A Winter War* (shortlisted for the 2022 HWA Gold Crown). He is a graduate of the Warwick Writing Programme, where he teaches fiction writing as an Associate Professor. Originally from Essex, he now lives in Sheffield. www.tim-leach.co.uk/

WHAT CAN YOU DISCOVER ABOUT VOICE IN 90 MINUTES?

Wallis Wilde-Menozi

Participants will work with something they have written or plan to write as memoir or creative non-fiction. By looking at examples, and the story you plan to tell, we will identify shadows, other characters in the story, other points of view. There will be a few chances to try your discoveries out by writing. The aim: to move the piece to a more inclusive voice.



Wallis Wilde-Menozi's memoirs have a devoted following: *Silence and Silences* (FSG, 2022); a new edition of *Mother Tongue, An American Life in Italy* (North Point Press, 2020); *The Other Side of the Tiber* (FSG, 2013). Her novel, *Toscanelli's Ray* (Cadmus Editions, 2014) poetry, essays and translations (Granta, Kenyon Review, Agni) map original frontiers. A veteran GWG instructor, the new directions in words are central to her teaching mission. Working with Nigerian women waiting for their papers or Masters students at Columbia she treasures imagination crying to be found, courage struggling to be released into a world looking for new order. www.walliswilde-menozi.com/

RULES AND TOOLS FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Katie Hayoz and Olivia Wildenstein

Co-writing can be a rewarding experience, whether it be a duo or a team of authors. Among other things, collaborative writing opens opportunities, helps divide the writing workload, and enhances our creativity. Yet if one goes into it unprepared, writing collaboratively can become frustrating, unwieldy, or even impossible. In this workshop, Katie and Olivia will give you some of the pros and cons of collaborative writing, as well as the essentials for making sure it stays a fun experience. You'll also get the chance to try a few co-writing exercises with others.

INDIE PUBLISHING AND MARKETING ROUNDTABLE

Olivia Wildenstein and Katie Hayoz

Have you been wondering if indie/self-publishing is right for you? Does it all seem overwhelming when you research what indie publishing might entail? If so, this roundtable discussion can help. Join Olivia and Katie as they detail their own publishing journeys, both indie and traditional, and their varying successes and frustrations. Each woman has had different approaches and experiences, offering attendees more than one perspective on the methods and resources of indie publishing and marketing. Come with your questions!

USA Today bestselling author **Olivia Wildenstein** is the byproduct of a meet-rude in a Parisian discotheque that turned into an epic love story spanning several decades.

Naturally, this shaped the way she viewed romance. After meeting her own Prince Charming—in a Parisian discotheque of all places—she decided to put fingers to keyboard and craft love stories for a living. None of her characters have ever met in a Parisian nightclub... as of yet. <http://oliviawildenstein.com>



Katie Hayoz writes for children, young adults, and adults. Her work has placed in international contests, including the Mslexia International Children's Novel Competition and the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) Undiscovered Voices Competition. She's published picture books, activity books, and

novels, and has written video scripts for the international market. Her essays and stories have appeared in magazines, anthologies, and online. Having worked on seven different co-written or team-written projects in the past four years, she's an avid supporter of collaborative writing. www.katiehayoz.com

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATE, AND WHEN IS IT APPROPRIATION?

Colin Grant, Susan Tiberghien, Valeria Vescina, Wallis Wilde-Menzozi

Our panel will discuss the ethics of using other people's stories when telling our own in memoir, non-fiction, and historical fiction. As John Donne famously said, "no man is an island," so no matter the level of involvement in our personal narratives, our writing will invariably include representations of others. How do we ensure their stories are handled as deftly as possible?



*See bios above

UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF PUBLISHING

Michelle Bailat-Jones, April Eberhardt, Julie Meyerson, Kate Walsh

For years, many authors have fixated on a physical book printed by one of the dominant houses in the industry as the only metric that matters when it comes to publishing. Come hear our panel discuss how and why this is no longer the case, and how the myriad other forms of publishing play into this new business landscape.



Michelle Bailat-Jones is a writer and literary translator. Her first novel, *Fog Island Mountains*, won the 2013 Christopher Doheny Award from The Center for Fiction in NYC and Audible, and her second novel, *Unfurled* was selected by the Women's National Book Association in the US for its Great Group Reads. She has translated work by C.F. Ramuz, Corinne Chaponnière, Claude Cahun, Julia Allard Daudet, Laure Mi-Hyun Croset, Timba Bema, and Clarisse Francillon. Her short fiction, translations, poetry, and literary criticism have appeared in a variety of journals, both online and in print.



April Eberhardt has been in the international literary community for the past 12 years. In addition to working with authors to conceptualize, write and publish their stories, she has interviewed authors at literary events, and speaks regularly at conferences to help authors better understand the evolving publishing landscape. She serves on the Advisory Council for The American Library in Paris, and is a reader for the Best American Short Stories series published annually by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Each summer she hosts a series of writers' retreats at a private chateau in France.



Julie Meyerson is the author of eleven novels, including the bestselling *Something Might Happen*, and three works of non-fiction, including *Home: The Story of Everyone Who Ever Lived In Our House*, which was dramatised on BBC Radio 4, and *The Lost Child*. As a critic and columnist, she has written for many newspapers including the Guardian, the FT, Harper's Bazaar and the New York Times, and she was a regular guest on BBC TV's Newsnight Review. She lives in London with her family. Photo: Barnaby Jones.



Kate Walsh joined United Agents in 2015 and, alongside assisting Robert Kirby with his list, is actively building her own predominantly non-fiction list. She's on the lookout mainly (although not exclusively) for commercial non-fiction, with a particular interest in music titles, history and broad-spectrum popular science, and anything that feels like a fresh and original way of looking at the world. She is especially drawn to 20th and 21st century affairs, and welcomes anything from anyone willing to speculate on what comes next.