



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Koffler Centre of the Arts Announces Fall 2020 Books & Ideas Series

A series of online literary events highlighting themes of youth activism, food culture and politics, environmentalism, and more

Toronto, ON, September 18, 2020 – The Koffler Centre of the Arts is delighted to announce its Fall 2020 **Books & Ideas** series.

The year-round Books & Ideas series spotlights provocative writers, novelists and thinkers, celebrating literary excellence and fostering critical dialogue through compelling book launches, author talks and in-depth interviews.

This fall, in conjunction with programming across the Koffler's multidisciplinary art streams, Books & Ideas takes up themes of **youth activism, food culture and politics, and environmentalism**, presenting a series of virtual events on our online platform.

The season opens with three events highlighting youth activism, spotlighting the writers featured in **Penguin Teen Canada's *Pocket Change Collective*** collection. *Pocket Change Collective* is a series of small books with big ideas by some of today's leading youth activists and artists.

The Koffler is thrilled to present virtual conversations with all six *Pocket Change Collective* contributors: **Adam Eli & Alok Vaid-Menon** on **September 29**, **Kimberly Drew & Xiuhtezcatl Martinez** on **October 6**, and **Amyra León & Hannah Testa** on **October 21**. The texts explore issues surrounding sexuality, gender, race, class, environmentalism, in addition to contemporary art practices. The *Pocket Change Collective* events are presented in partnership with Penguin Random House Canada Young Readers.

On **October 26**, the Koffler presents an online conversation with African-American and Jewish food writer, culinary and cultural historian, and educator **Michael W. Twitty**. Mr. Twitty will discuss such themes as food justice, cultural appropriation, global Diasporic foodways and how Black and Jewish people have mediated otherness and oppression through what they eat.

Michael W. Twitty is a recognized historical interpreter, independent scholar, and the founder of afroculinaria.com, the first website/blog devoted to the preservation of historic African-American foods and foodways. Twitty's book, *The Cooking Gene: A Journey Through African-American Culinary History in the Old South*, won two James Beard Awards in 2018 for Food Writing and Best Book and his piece in *Bon Appetit*, "I Had Never Eaten in Ghana Before. But My Ancestors Had" was nominated for a 2019 James Beard Award and was selected to be included in The Best American Food Writing 2019. In 2020, *The Cooking Gene* was named on Book Authority's List of 100 Best Food Books of All Time. Twitty's next book, ***Kosher Soul***, is slated for publication in 2021.

On **November 5**, the Koffler is pleased to present the official launch of **Shani Mootoo's** latest novel, ***Polar Vortex***. The four-time Scotiabank Giller Prize-nominated writer and visual artist will appear in an online conversation with another of Canada's best-loved writers, **Jane Urquhart**. The event is co-presented by Diaspora Dialogues.

Books & Ideas concludes its Fall 2020 season on **November 30** with bestselling, *New York Times* Notable Book author **Catherine Bush (*Blaze Island*)** in conversation with award-winning, Montreal-based writer, **Saleema Nawaz (*Songs for the End of the World*)**, reflecting on human connectivity amidst world-changing events. Both writers will speak about their timely novels, which incorporate largely realistic fictional narratives to reimagine the contemporary global threats of climate change and pandemic.

All events are FREE. Online registration required.

Books & Ideas was launched with the generous support of Dorothy Shoichet & Family and the Estate of Joseph Koenig. Books & Ideas Media Partner: The Toronto Star.

Fall 2020 Books & Ideas Event Details:

Pocket Change Collective 1: Adam Eli and Alok Vaid-Menon in Conversation with Seth Day

Tuesday, September 29, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details & Registration: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Pocket-Change-Collective-1-Adam-Eli-and-Alok-Vaid>

Pocket Change Collective 2: Kimberly Drew & Xiuhtezcatl Martinez in Conversation

Tuesday, October 6, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details & Registration: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Pocket-Change-Collective-2-Kimberly-Drew-Xiuhtezca>

Pocket Change Collective 3: Amyra León & Hannah Testa in Conversation

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details & Registration: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Pocket-Change-Collective-3-Amyra-Leon-Hannah-Testa>

Michael W. Twitty in Conversation

Monday, October 26, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Michael-W-Twitty-in-Conversation>

Shani Mootoo & Jane Urquhart in Conversation

Thursday, November 5, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Shani-Mootoo-Jane-Urquhart-in-Conversation>

Catherine Bush & Saleema Nawaz in Conversation

Monday, November 30, 2020 | 7 PM | FREE | Details: <https://kofflerarts.org/Events/Books-Ideas/Catherine-Bush-Saleema-Nawaz-in-Conversation>

ABOUT THE KOFFLER

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a cultural platform that explores critical ideas and concerns of our time through a year-round program of exhibitions, publications, performances, literary events, digital initiatives and arts education programs. We examine complex issues through transformative art experiences that stimulate intercultural dialogue and promote social change. Through our in-gallery and off-site programs, the Koffler engages thousands of visitors each year. From school children and teens, to newcomers and seniors, we provide vital opportunities for self-expression and community connection, including to those in greatest need.

As a Jewish organization, we value – and aim to foster – social justice and equality while nurturing a passion for learning and understanding. We position Jewish identity in conversation with diverse perspectives and global voices to examine complex issues in a respectful, constructive way. These principles support the Koffler's engagement with the best contemporary creative minds in producing and presenting art that provides common ground for experiences shaping our shared cultural life and defining our social values.

Visit us online at kofflerarts.org

- 30 -

For further information or media inquiries, contact:

Tony Hwer, Director of Marketing, Communications and Archives

647.920.2398 | thwer@kofflerarts.org

Samantha Devotta, Associate Publicist, Penguin Random House Canada

647.746.2131 | sdevotta@penguinrandomhouse.com