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## The Koffler's Books & Ideas Series returns with rising American literary star, Bryan Washington

Washington's debut selected to *The New York Times* 100 Notable Books and included on Barack Obama's favourite books of 2019

**Toronto, ON, January 8, 2020** – The **Koffler Centre of the Arts** is thrilled to announce the return of its year-round **Books & Ideas** series for 2020 with Texas-based fiction writer and social commentator, **Bryan Washington**, in conversation with Toronto-based author **Adnan Khan**.

Washington's only Toronto appearance is on **Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 7 PM**, at the **Centre for Social Innovation (CSI Annex), 720 Bathurst St.**

Dubbed "the rising star of literary Houston" (*Literary Hub*), Bryan Washington is a National Book Foundation 5 Under 35 Recipient, the recipient of an Ernest J. Gaines Award, and the recipient of an O. Henry Award. His stories and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *BuzzFeed*, *Vulture*, *The Paris Review*, *Tin House*, *One Story*, *GQ*, among others.

**Lot**, Washington's critically-acclaimed first collection of linked short stories, was released in 2019. Set in Houston

– a sprawling, diverse microcosm of America – the book traces the coming-of-age of a young man growing up Black, Latino and gay. *Lot* captures Houston’s culturally-rich yet gritty urban landscape, revealing the vulnerable existence of communities living under the shadow of poverty and violence with raw power and tenderness. Offering rare insight into what makes a community, a family, and a life, *Lot* explores trust and love in all its unsparing and unsteady forms.

*The Guardian* called *Lot* a “bruising, enthralling debut collection of interlinked tales portray[ing] precarious lives in Houston.” *The New York Times* called it “a profound exploration of the true meaning of borders, written very much for and about our current cultural moment.”

Bryan Washington will be in conversation with Toronto-based writer **Adnan Khan**, author of the novel *There Has to Be a Knife* (2019).

Koffler Centre of the Arts’ **Books & Ideas** series spotlights provocative writers, artists and thinkers, celebrating literary excellence and fostering critical dialogue through compelling book launches, author talks and on-stage interviews. With a thematic focus on **counter-narratives**, the series features books that employ **fiction, memoir, and photography** as tools of resistance. Full details on the upcoming Winter/Spring Book & Ideas events will be announced shortly.

“Our Winter/Spring Books & Ideas series continues the Koffler’s longstanding interest in presenting cutting-edge writers and thinkers who are tackling some of the most urgent issues of our time,” said Executive Director, **Karen Tisch**. “Foregrounding authors and books that explore the complexities of gender, race, sexuality and the diasporic experience, the 2020 line-up promises to challenge, provoke and entertain. We are thrilled to open the season with the debut Toronto appearance of Bryan Washington, a writer whose fresh and startling voice offers a rare and intimate view of life in a vibrant American metropolis, while celebrating the power of love and community.”

Tickets for Bryan Washington are **Pay-What-You-Can**, \$0 to \$15. Tickets are available online at <https://kofflerarts.org/>

Books & Ideas is presented in partnership with Ben McNally Books, with generous support from Dorothy Shoichet & Family, the Estate of Joseph Koenig, the Koffler Family Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council, and CIBC Wood Gundy. Thanks to our Books & Ideas Media Partner, the Toronto Star.

For more information, bios and details on Koffler’s Winter/Spring 2020 programs, please visit [kofflerarts.org](https://kofflerarts.org)

### **Listing Information:**

#### **Bryan Washington**

**Tuesday, February 4, 2020 | 7 PM | CSI Annex, 720 Bathurst St, Toronto**

**Tickets: Pay-What-You-Can**

The rising American literary star’s only Toronto appearance, presented as part of the Koffler’s Books & Series. In conversation with Toronto-based author Adnan Khan.

### **ABOUT THE KOFFLER CENTRE OF THE ARTS**

The Koffler Centre of the Arts is a cultural platform that explores critical ideas and concerns of our time through exhibitions, publications, performances, literary events and digital initiatives. We examine complex issues through transformative art experiences that stimulate intercultural dialogue and position Jewish identity in conversation with diverse perspectives and global voices. The Koffler Gallery and its administrative offices are located at Artscape Youngplace, in Toronto’s vibrant West Queen West art and design district.

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**For further information and high resolution images for media use, contact:**

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