

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

The Dirty Truth About LA's Literary Scene

Chiwan Choi · Thursday, August 1st, 2013

This Saturday, August 3rd, one of our authors, [Billy Burgos](#), will be taking part in the newest installment of [Dirty Laundry Lit](#) and will be, as always, reading his powerful poetry. He'll be part of a line-up featuring [Joseph Lapin](#), [Antonia Crane](#), [Ru Freeman](#), Stephanie Green Smith, [Eric Layer](#), and Amanda Fletcher. We are very excited for Billy that he gets to be on this stage and excited for the packed house that will get to hear him read.

In addition, this is a first for us. It is the first DLL that Writ Large Press will be co-sponsoring (along with PEN USA who has been the main sponsor of the event). It is also the first time we have joined a successful existing event like this. I imagine it will take a couple of go arounds to figure out how best we can support the venue, but I am also sure it will be fruitful for everyone involved.



Back in February of this year, during Valentine's Day Week, I got to take part in Dirty Laundry Lit, a quarterly literary event created and curated by Natashia Deon. I'd seen their promo videos before (very beautifully made by Heather Simons and Danny Corey) and seen the list of authors that had taken part, so I jumped at the chance to be part of it.

I have to say, it is one of the most organized, well thought out, and best attended readings in which I've been involved. There's even a meeting of volunteers (*meeting of volunteers!*) before the reading starts. The writers are incredibly well taken care of. The host, Jeff Eyres, is not only funny, but it is obvious how much he loves supporting all the writers that come up on stage. He should host every reading in the city. All of them.

And on the night in which I read, The Virgil was jam packed. I sold all the books I brought. Drank a few of the special cocktails they had for the night. It was just a wonderful night.

Which begs the question, what does Natashia and Dirty Laundry Lit need from us?

Well, what we *will* be doing (whether they *need* us to or not) is:

- Selling books for the writers who have books. We'll have copies of books by Billy and Ru.
- Bring some books that will be given away during the event to first time literary event attendees.
- Provide another layer or promotion, perhaps to people who they haven't reached quite yet.

It doesn't seem like much. But we're extremely happy to be associated with Dirty Laundry Lit and with PEN USA.

Ultimately, what it comes down to is the chance to work with people that you respect, not for any accomplishments, but for their vision and their goals. I've been lucky to not only read for Natashia, but to hear her read from her novel and to be part of a panel with her on writers of color, and most

importantly, to be able to count myself among her friends. The thing is, we have never gotten involved with an established and *successful* project before because the words “established” and “successful” has meant nothing to us.

This partnership is all about the people involved. The best part (by far) about the journey that Writ Large Press has been on has been the opportunity we’ve had to work with people who we *want* to work with, not ones we think or we are told that we *need* to work with. Natashia and Michelle Meyering (of PEN USA and also editor of *The Rattling Wall*) are two of the very best in the Los Angeles literary world. And I’d agree to pretty much anything they wanted to do. Together, I think we can make a *big* impact.

Dirty is such a great word. It’s a great word to describe what we need. I don’t mean dirty as in sex (although there’s nothing wrong with that). I mean *dirty* as in messing up the establishment, flipping power structures, vandalizing the ivory tower. Dirty like putting some color into an embarrassingly homogeneous arts culture.

Dirty in the best way, kind of like Los Angeles.

Dirty Laundry Lit: Clothing Optional – Saturday 8/3 – 7:30PM @ The Virgil, 4519 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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