

Grid 3

Title	Description	Type
Are there heroes anymore?	<p>In much of western literature, the hero archetype is cut and dry or right and wrong. This isn't a new concept but, increasingly, it has become more commonplace to see protagonists who are morally ambiguous and positioned as the hero. Is everyone an anti-hero? Are there any real villains anymore? Does it matter? What happens when you start rooting for the bad guy? Is he even the bad guy anymore?</p> <p>examples: The Boys, American Gods, Good Omens, The Gentlemen Bastard Series by Scott Lynch, the Grimdark genre, X-Men, Joe Abecrombie's First Law series, Lestat from Anne Rice's Vampire series.</p>	In-Person
Fantasy as the (Thin) Mask of Reality	<p>Sometimes an allegory is just that, a dusty mirror that no one cares to look at. Sometimes, an allegory is a clever and immersive fantasy that only becomes clear to us at the end, but an allegory can also gloss over, flatten, or misrepresent elements in the real world, erasing the actual experiences of real life people. What is the threshold for fiction being too close to reality? When does the fantasy become something else?</p> <p>Examples: Lovecraft country real life horror and reality in fiction, Watchmen, P. Djèlí Clark - Ring Shout, Man in the High Castle</p>	In-Person
Don't judge a book by it's movie	<p>Don't judge a book by it's movie. The reverse is also true. Often we assume that the first iteration of a work of literature or media holds some sort of unquestionable value for being the original. Is that really the case? What about the value of the individual works themselves? Why are we always trying so hard to compare something new to something old?</p>	In-Person
Speculative Fact	<p>Science fiction is often called the precursor to science fact. A fiction that looks to the future of technology, discovery and more. But fantasy often looks to the past to set up a world, to tell the stories of magic, royalty and war. Can fantasy also help us understand our future? Panelists discuss the ways that fantasy literature handles contemporary topics that affect the present and the future.</p>	In-Person
Exploring YA Themes	<p>YA literature often explores taboo, horrific, and other tough topics but is often dismissed due to the audience for which it is written. From Mental Health, to Global Warming and all states of unrest and fearfulness in between. While Adult fiction touches on these topics, there is something about YA fiction that puts these feelings and fears into sharper focus.</p> <p>Are kids more resilient? Can they take a harder punch when it comes to tough topics? Panelists take a deeper look at common themes and topics in YA literature and the reasons why teens can "handle" harder topics than adults.</p> <p>Unwind (Gross), Hunger Games (Political Involvement/Responsibility), The Lioness Rampant (Gender Roles)</p>	In-Person
What you should be reading in YA	<p>What you should be reading in YA. Each panelist will share their three favorites and why they are important.</p>	In-Person

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That didn't work	We've all seen it. A brilliant idea that didn't execute on the paper as planned, a secondary character that took over the narrative, a lack of chemistry between characters that ruined the plot. In theory, the author has the ability to mold and change the characters, the plot, the world to make them work, but despite best efforts, that doesn't always work. Panelists discuss their own work -- what didn't work and why. Was it the character, the environment? What was it that broke the spell?	In-Person
The Rules of Fantasy	What have been the long standing rules of Fantasy and how have they evolved over the years? What can you get away with in Fantasy that you can't in other Genres and what are the consequences of not following the rules (confusion by reader, buyer, placement on shelf, etc.)	In-Person
Plot Structure: What has worked and what hasn't	How does one decide which plot structure should be the backbone of the story? Authors discuss plotting structures and frameworks that they have used to build their stories as complex, cohesive and believable at every twist and turn. How did it affect the natural flow of their story? What plotting structures were their favorite and why they worked.	In-Person
Around the Fantastical World in 50 minutes	Fantasy has a long tradition of rich and colorful settings based on places all across the globe. Panelists discuss globally inspired aspects of settings such as unusual calendar systems, unique geographies, non-feudal political systems, and other details.	In-Person
What Does Small Press Mean Anyway?	Small presses have been a staple in the publishing world for some time. As the big publishers condense, the big question in the air is, are small presses more important than ever? Without much argument, the answer is a resounding yes. What defines small versus large and what makes landing at a small press desirable? Panelists discuss the joy of small presses, the best and brightest coming out of small presses in the last year and more.	In-Person
Staging the Psychology of YA Characters	Ursula K. Le Guin once noted that fantasy is best suited as a medium for describing coming of age, because exploring the subconscious is difficult using the language of rational daily life. Every adult was once a teen but how accurately can an adult write the mind and daily turmoil of adolescent youth? When crafting teen characters, should we augment our personal life experiences with conclusions drawn from recent scientific studies?	In-Person
Blurring Lines Between Middle Grade and YA	Young Adult has crushed the fiction market for nearly two decades. Some are saying YA is done, and that Middle Grade fiction is the tsunami coming. Is there really that much of a difference between the two? when we think about these categories, some works have run long enough that the readers who started with the series have grown up along with the main characters. Where are the lines blurred between the age categorizations, and do they even matter?	In-Person
Fantastic Beasts, Horrific Creatures, and Other Wonders	Fantasy and horror are brimming with amazing and horrific creatures. These can draw upon mythology but also raw imagination. Panelists discuss their favorite creatures and speculate how they were created and their origins.	In-Person
Judges Panel		In-Person

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Beneath Magazine Skies: Fantasy Short Fiction to Read	<p>There is a plethora of short fiction on the market. The average person can only read so much and may wonder: What to read? Where to read it? What stands out?</p> <p>Panelists help guide the audience through the pages of literary magazines to the best gems of the short fiction world.</p>	In-Person
Short and Collected Terrors: Horror Short Fiction to Read	A panel on short horror fiction. What to read? Where to read it? What stands out?	In-Person
Feedback Panel		In-Person
The Wild World of Speculative Poetry (In-Person)	Speculative poetry is an underrated form of fantastical writing. Yet, it is versatile, rich in language, and able to dig deep into the human condition in its own unique way. From limmericks to free form works, speculative poetry has much to offer. What are some standout examples of the form? Where are some of the best writers getting published today? Panelists discuss what makes speculative poetry a favored field and share some of their favorite works and collections.	In-Person
First-Person Dead	Death is intrinsic to horror and weird fiction. So much so, that we scarcely bat an eye when a first-person narrative ends with a look into the gaping maw of an attacking monster. But is the imminent demise of the narrator an effective device or an annoying trope? Should there be a "reason" behind a first-person narrative? What are the advantages of epistolary vs. non-epistolary first-person narratives? What is the compact between author and reader in terms of the "reality" of the story? Can an ambiguous ending leave a stronger sense of doom than one which is "seen"? What stories break the rules and make us like it?	In-Person
Bugs, Bees, and Other Creepy Crawlies	A world cannot exist without bugs--and yet, so many stories feature them as creepy monsters. No one is scared of a butterfly, but plenty of people consider spiders and centipedes the stuff of nightmares. What about insects scare people so much, and can they also be sources of good? Children's books often portray bugs as benevolent, but at some point as adults, the script gets flipped. Panelists discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly of bugs, bees, and other creepy crawlies in fantasy and horror literature.	In-Person
Fantasy Fight Scenes: Medieval Combat and Weaponry	<p>There have been magnificent and hilarious ways in which Medieval combat and weaponry have been portrayed in fantasy literature. A character understanding the difference between a hand-and-a-half sword and a Claymore is equally as important as understanding that you can't just plunge a sword into the earth to clean it. As we learn more about the past, we develop a better understanding of combat techniques and weaponry, and, more importantly, who actually practiced them.</p> <p>Panelists discuss when fantasy gets it right and when it gets it hilariously wrong.</p>	In-Person
Works in Translation	The world of fantasy has many languages and translation is an important part of making literature available to a larger audience. The panel will discuss the challenges of translating a work from one language to another.	In-Person

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Powerful Voices in Fantasy and Horror (In Person)	Fantasy is a wellspring and it knows no limits. Our fantasy worlds are as endless and complex as we are. We are seeing an explosion of diverse voices in Fantasy and Horror with new entries into the genre over the last decade from writers like NK Jemison, Nnedi Okorafor, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Tochi Onyebuchi, Rebecca Roanhorse, R.F. Kuang, and Eden Robinson. Panelists will examine recent works and how these new stories break through the genre's reliance on Eurocentric baseline fantasy worlds to discover new magic systems, alternate timelines and grounded in reimagined worlds.	In-Person
The Power of Speculative Non-fiction: Essays (In Person)	Speculative nonfiction is potentially under-looked but most speculative markets, including SFWA qualified ones publish essays and articles. Panelists discuss speculative essays, and their role in speculative fiction.	In-Person
Kill the Parents	Do we really have to kill the parents? So many stories in YA and children's literature have absent or deceased parents in order to give the child agency. Is this necessary for the stories we want to tell for and about children? (All of the) Rick Riordan, Hunger Games?, A Series of Unfortunate Events, Even Frodo in LOTR, Screw it - just say Batman, Spiderman, Ironman pretty much every superhero ever	Virtual
One More Chapter Please	If we had the chance to rewrite a page, an ending, maybe a sagging middle - whether you love it or hate it - what would you have done it? For example, some older fantasy and horror might have been missing full stories for female characters or have an ending that doesn't quite satisfy. Now is your chance to correct the wrongs that, in your professional opinion, have been written. Panelists discuss what you would do differently if you had been the writer of a story?	Virtual
How did it hold up: Older Works Viewed by Contemporary Standards	When we look back at the significant works of the past, we'll inevitably find works full of content that conflicts with our present sense of ethics and morality. Indeed, many foundational works of fantasy and horror may contain brutal racism, sexism, and other harmful views. But these works are often still important. They're studied, taught, and still read by fans new and old. So how should we approach these works as readers, writers, and scholars? How do we decide what should remain in our genre conversations? Panelists address the question of how those readings produce different meanings. What value do we get when we read works such as Frankenstein or Dracula when you take the context of the era in which it was written? And what do we get when we read the text through a contemporary lens?	Virtual
Possession is 9/10ths of the law	"Ownership is a storytelling battle. My story of possession versus your story of attachment." (99% Invisible Podcast) Can you possess (own, trademark, copy write, etc.) story plots that give you the sole right to a setting, a type of character or even a name? We know the answer is no. So how do you stake your claim? What happens when estates get involved, and how do you IP the fantastic? Who does the law side with? Who gets the book? Who gets the revenue?	Virtual
What's new in Canadian Fantasy/Horror	Panelists discuss who you need to know in Canadian Fantasy and Horror art and fiction.	Virtual

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Powerful Voices in Fantasy and Horror (Virtual)	Fantasy is a wellspring and it knows no limits. Our fantasy worlds are as endless and complex as we are. We are seeing an explosion of diverse voices in Fantasy and Horror with new entries into the genre over the last decade from writers like NK Jemison, Nnedi Okorafor, Silvia Moreno-Garcia, Tochi Onyebuchi, Rebecca Roanhorse, R.F. Kuang, and Eden Robinson. Panelists will examine recent works and how these new stories break through the genre's reliance on Eurocentric baseline fantasy worlds to discover new magic systems, alternate timelines and grounded in reimagined worlds.	Virtual
Gendering Genre	As a genre, adult and YA fantasy has had a long history of presenting gender in its myriad forms, from male chosen ones to an increasingly wider range of presentations of non-binary, trans, and women heroes. How has fantasy typically explored gender, and in what ways have writers subverted some of these expectations? How has publishing played a role in the presentation of these stories and expectations? And what new explorations are on the horizon? Panelists discuss the traditions and subversions of gender in contemporary fantasy.	Virtual
Imagineering the Fantastical	Disney invented the word imagineering for the way it created and devised its stories and their magical kingdoms. This isn't a new concept to creators, though the process of building and imagining a world in which a character lives is deeply personal. Panelists discuss the nuances, the drawbacks and why they built it the way they did.	Virtual
Brandon's Open Mic	Come one, come all. This casual open mic night hosted by Guest of Honor Brandon O'Brien will be open to all attendees. Come share your poetry, fiction, and other literary work in a no pressure, share-the-love environment. You don't need to be published or even want to be published. Whether you write for fun or to one day have it see the printed page, all are welcome here!	Virtual
Where do we go from here?	<p>The ultimate question in genre fiction - Where do we go from here? What happens when a genre plateaus? How does it evolve or how does it die?</p> <p>Panelist explore current and upcoming trends in fantasy literature and explore what happens when readers stop engaging with subgenres and other trends.</p>	Virtual
The Moral Dilemma	Readers are drawn to a story that makes them ask, "What would I do?" So when characters are put into a situation where they have to make a moral choice, readers are automatically drawn into the dilemma with them. What draws us into these moral dilemmas, and what lessons are learned by grappling with the complicated decisions those characters have to make? Panelists discuss works across adult and YA fantasy and horror which explore the morally complex decisions of their characters.	Virtual
Creatures as Heroes or Villians	Whether they have 2 legs, 4 legs, 8 legs, more legs--fantasy creatures and cryptids are being deployed in new and interesting ways. Often the creature or the human are not necessarily what they appear to be. Panelists discuss examples of the monster as the hero--when it works well and when it didn't quite convince the reader-- and the monster as the villain--when it's brilliantly executed and when it's over done.	Virtual

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Covid-19 and the Book World - Effects and Consequences	<p>At the last WFC in Salt Lake City, although we were in the middle of a Covid-19 pandemic, there was no mention of the effect of the pandemic on the industry. This seems like a crazy oversight. The effects should be massive - bookstores were closed for months on end, normal book distribution channels were thrown for massive loops and the effects worked out unevenly. Printers shut down for extended periods, and when they started, there were massive logjams and back ups for books. Advertising, promotion, marketing schedules, publishing and printing schedules, everything has been thrown into disarray, an industry that operated on coordination of multiple departments, facets, and operators has completely desynchronized, there are financial shortfalls.</p> <p>We don't have a good picture on the consequences of the Pandemic for our industry and our genre, but the effects are huge, and they're continuing to unfold, and will likely continue to unfold for year, with massive effects on writers already unstable careers, on small presses, on major publishers, on printers, supply chains, on bookstore chains and independents, marketing, ebooks and audiobooks, just... everything.</p>	Virtual
The Power of Speculative Non-fiction: Essays (Virtual)	Speculative nonfiction is potentially under-looked but most speculative markets, including SFWA qualified ones publish essays and articles. Panelists discuss speculative essays, and their role in speculative fiction.	Virtual
Is it in the Trope or the Telling?	Why do we have tropes? Are they really something evil, to be avoided by authors? Or can they be comforting to readers and help move the story along? And when do they cross the line into stereotypes? When does perpetuating them become harmful? Or, is the validity of the trope wrapped up in the telling?	Virtual
Stereotyping in Fantasy	The stereotypes of made up races have been a mainstay of the fantasy genre, both in print and multimedia applications, from movies to merchandise to video games. Is it necessary? Is there an underlying human psychology of fear of the other? and if so, does employing it perpetuate the problem of real racism? Or is it a useful tool to expose the flaws of racially motivated interactions?	Virtual
The Gothic in Horror and Fantasy	<p>Panelists discuss the gothic tradition in horror and fantasy and its continued significance today. Discuss Mexican Gothic, etc.</p> <p>Clive Bloom (if he is attending)?</p>	Virtual
Dreams, the Fantastic, and Graphic Narratives	Dreams are a common plot device used in speculative fiction. The use of a dream world creates a situation whereby a character (or group of characters) is placed in a marvelous and unpredictable environment and must overcome several personal problems to leave it. Dream logic and the portrayal of dreams can vary widely from fantasy, horror, and in the graphic form. How are dreams represented in the various forms and how do they differ? What do we learn from the portrayal of dreams?	Virtual
The Rules of Horror	What have been the long standing rules of Horror and how have they evolved over the years? What can you get away with in Horror that you can't in other Genres and what are the consequences of not following the rules (confusion by reader, buyer, placement on shelf, etc.)	Virtual

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Fantasy Down Under: Past & Present	Fantasy writing from Australia and New Zealand is little known outside the region. Individual writers (Margaret Mahey, Garth Nix) are celebrated, but the history of fantasy writing in these two countries and the range of fantasy writing that comes from them deserves to be better known. From The Burlesque of Frankenstein and The Magic Pudding to The Swan Book and The Absolute Book ... there's a lot to celebrate.	Virtual
Interview André-François Ruaud	Join Ellen Kushner as she interviews Guest of Honor André-François Ruaud about his career as an author and editor and more.	Interview
Interview with Brandon O'Brien	Join Shaun Duke as he interviews Guest of Honor Brandon O'Brien about his career and latest poetry collection.	Interview
Interview with Lifetime Achievement Winner: Megan Lindholm/Robin Hobb	<p>Megan Lindholm (a.k.a. Robin Hobb) has written some of the most celebrated works of fantasy in the genre. These have included the massive Realms of the Elderlings series, the Soldier Son trilogy, the Windsingers series (as Megan Lindholm) several standalone novels, and short stories.</p> <p>In this interview, [INTERVIEWER] will talk to Megan Lindholm/Robin Hobb about her long career as a fantasy, including some of her most celebrated works and her approach to the genre.</p>	Interview
Presentation by the Merril Collection	Presentation by the Merril Collection	Presentation
The Art of John Picacio	John Picacio is one of the most celebrated artists of the fantastic today. His work has adorned the covers of books by Michael Moorcock, Joe R. Lansdale, and even a calendar for George R.R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire, among many others. It has likewise earned him numerous awards, including the World Fantasy, Chelsey, and Locus Awards. Come join Guest of Honor John Picacio on a magical tour of his portfolio, from some of his favorite works and beyond!	Presentation
John Picacio's Inspiration Station	John Picacio discusses his favorite past and upcoming artists.	Presentation
SFFRA Awards Ceremony	<p>Science Fiction and Fantasy Rosetta Awards are initiated and organized by a group of SFF enthusiasts with faith to promote and recognize the SFF works of literature from various cultures and languages along with the efforts of those authors and translators.</p> <p>As English is the Lingua Franca quo, and serves as the bridge and channel for most culture exchanges, also SFFR Awards use English translation of various eligible works to make it comparable.</p> <p>Join us Thursday evening as we present the SFFRA awards for 2021.</p>	Event
Fantasy Awards Ceremony	Doors at 2:15. Ceremony starts promptly at 2:30	Event

Title	Description	Type
Mass Signing		Event
Artist Open House		Event
Opening Ceremonies		Event
Banquet	Doors open at 12:30. Food service begins promptly at 1 pm	Event
Emphasis on the void	Isolation informing stories. In the last two years we have all experienced some version of the void, the abyss, the isolation. Considering the sublime horror of this idea has been an archetype of the nameless anxiety and of the enemy you cannot comprehend or contain. What have we learned about the void and why it resonates with us?	Hybrid
Alternate Histories and Alternate Futures	Alternate History - Beyond the Civil War. The Alternate History genre is most closely identified with the Confederate and Nazi victories in the American Civil War and WWII. But the genre has spread further and wider into mainstream fantasy and science fiction, with works exploring fantastic futures or magical realms originating from turning points in the past. What are the potentials and pitfalls of reimagining pasts and reimagined futures, the restrictions, the opportunities. Who or what are the bold new works we should watch out for, the crazy ideas waiting to take flight.	Hybrid
Foldering Fantasy: A Conversation on Archiving Literary Collections	<p>During the writing process, we know that more than just the final book is created. What happens to the notes, manuscripts, proofs, and other literary materials that are produced along the way? How does one go about the process of identifying an institution of interest and partnering with them to ensure that the history of their work will be preserved into the future?</p> <p>Panelists will discuss the process of depositing material, and the ongoing relationship between libraries and creators.</p>	Hybrid
Law in Fantasy, and Why It Matters	Law drives a world as much as economy, religion, and magic systems. But how does law affect fantasy worlds, and in what ways do we see that presence in these worlds? Panelists explore how the legal systems in speculative fiction worlds shape everything the characters do and how to make and identify conscious choices in legal system world building.	Hybrid
Morbid Fascination	Cate Tiernan once said that "there is beauty and darkness in everything. Sorrow in joy, life in death, thorns on a rose." Fantasy and horror artists have given us visions of these myriad and seemingly contradictory beauties: macabre terrors that entice and repulse, decayed landscapes that capture the wonders of nature, and more! How does the macabre, the decayed, and the morbid find a home with beauty? How does darkness accentuate beauty? Panelists discuss the beautifully macabre in dark fantasy and horror art and graphic narrative, how it works, and more.	Hybrid

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The Evolution of Fantasy Art	The fantastic and the fine arts have gone hand in hand for generations, presenting us with visuals from centuries-old myths and legends, literature spanning the ages, and even concept art and original creations. Fantasy art feeds our imaginations, fills us with wonder, makes us think about ourselves and the other, and even terrifies, and it is as important an art form today as it was generations ago. But what about fantasy art allows it to endure? How does it evolve both artistically and conceptually? And how does it help us think about the current state of our world while still letting us glimpse something beyond? Panelists will discuss the history and influence of fantasy art, the power it still has today, and more!	Hybrid
What's on the Horizon in French Fantasy and Horror	Join professionals in the industry as they discuss the trends are in French literature and what is up and coming.	Hybrid