



VCFA WCYA Alumni Mini-Residency Faculty June 15-18, 2017



MASTER CLASS INSTRUCTOR: René Saldaña, Ph.D.

Dr. René Saldaña, Jr., is the author of several books for children and young adults, among them *The Jumping Tree*, *The Whole Sky Full of Stars*, the bilingual *Mickey Rangel* mystery series, and the bilingual picture book *Dale, Dale, Dale: Una fiesta de números/Hit It, Hit It, Hit It: A Fiesta of Numbers*. He is an associate professor who teaches in the Language, Diversity, and Literacy Studies at a west Texas university. He currently also serves as the Program Coordinator for the LDLS program. His research looks at the use of culturally relevant literature in the largely underrepresented classrooms as a way to improve children's reading abilities. He is also conducting research on children's literacy success through the use of the weeklong, uninterrupted read-aloud model, a model he and a colleague, Dr. Ana Torres, have developed.

VCFA Faculty Members:



Alan Cumyn is the author of the beloved Owen Skye children's novels—*The Secret Life of Owen Skye*, *After Sylvia* and *Dear Sylvia*—which combined have either won or been short-listed for twelve national awards in Canada. He has also authored seven wide-ranging novels for adults including *Burridge Unbound*, a Giller Prize finalist, and *The Famished Lover*, longlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. His first YA novel, *Tilt*, was named one of the top works for young readers in 2011 in the U.S. by Kirkus Reviews and in Canada by Quill & Quire. *Hot Pterodactyl Boyfriend*, his latest release, was inspired by a talk given by Libba Bray at VCFA in 2012. The premise is unusual: a sexy and charismatic pterodactyl comes to high school and completely disrupts the well-planned graduating year (and love life) of student body chair Shiels Krane. Beneath the surface, this startlingly original book, which Maximum Pop in the UK has called “the most outrageous novel of the year”, is about how unconscious desires steer our lives in unknown ways. Alan lives in Ottawa, Canada. He taught English in China and Indonesia, ran a group home in Toronto, and for eight years wrote on international human rights issues for the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. He has an M.A. in Creative Writing from the University of Windsor, has taught at the Humber School for Writers and the Banff Centre, and he has served most recently as writer-in-residence at Berton House in Dawson City, Yukon. Alan is also a recent past Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada, and is currently the faculty chair for the MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults at VCFA. You can read more about Alan and his work at: www.alancumyn.com.



Louise Hawes is the author of two short fiction collections and over a dozen novels. Her work, for readers of all ages, has won awards from Banks Street College, the NJ Council on the Arts, the New York City Public Library, the Children's Book Council, the Independent Booksellers Association, and the International Reading Association, among others. *Black Pearls*, *A Faerie Strand* (Houghton Mifflin), a collection of retold fairy tales, earned the Gold Award, Hall of Fame at teenreadstoo.com. In 2012, Louise joined forces with four other authors to produce *A Flight of Angels* (DC Comics, Vertigo), a collaborative graphic novel named one of the Ten Great Graphic Novels of 2013 by the American Library Association. Most recently, her work has been included in the 2015 YA anthology, *Things I'll Never Tell; Stories of Our Secret Selves*. And in 2016, a multi-format novel (prose, poetry, and playscripts), *The Language of Stars*, was published by Simon & Schuster's Margaret K. McElderry Books.

Louise helped found and teaches at, the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults program. She has also served as a John Grisholm Visiting Author at the University of Mississippi, a Read in Common Author at the Mississippi University for Women, and a Writer in Residence at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. She has also guest lectured at UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, Duke University, Meredith College, Staten Island University, and the University of Southern Florida.



Julie Larios taught for seven years on the faculty of VCFA's MFA/Writing for Children and Young Adults program. She is the author of four prize-winning books of poetry for kids, and her poems have been widely anthologized. In addition, she is the winner of a Pushcart Prize and an Academy of American Poets Prize for her poems for adults, which have twice been chosen for the Best American Poetry series. More recently, she has been a contributing editor at the online international literary journal, *Numero Cinq*. She lives in Seattle.

Editors:



Jill Santopolo is the Editorial Director of Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group, where she edits many critically-acclaimed, award-winning, and best-selling books including *A Tangle of Knots* by Lisa Graff, *The Secret Sky* by Atia Abawi, *Proxy* by Alex London, *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going!* by Chelsea Clinton, the *Nightshade* series by Andrea Cremer, *A Dance Like Starlight* by Kristy Dempsey and Floyd Cooper, and *Peanut Butter & Cupcake!* by Terry Border. Jill is also the author of the *Alec Flint Mysteries*, the *Sparkle Spa* series, the *Follow Your Heart* books, and the forthcoming adult novel *The Light We Lost*. She holds a BA in English Literature from Columbia University, an MFA in Writing for Children from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and a certificate in Intellectual Property Law from NYU. When she's not writing or editing, Jill is a thesis advisor at The New School in their MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults and is on the faculty of the Columbia Publishing Course. She was formerly an adjunct professor at McDaniel College, where she helped develop the curriculum for their certificate program in Writing for Children. Jill has traveled all over the U.S.—and to Canada and Europe—to speak about writing and storytelling. She lives in New York City. www.jillsantopolo.com @



Joanna Cárdenas is an editor at Viking Children's Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House. Her list includes picture books, chapter books, and middle grade (including graphic novels). Among other projects, Joanna edited *Archie the Daredevil Penguin* by Andy Rash; *Snappy the Alligator (Did Not Ask to Be in This Book)* by Julie Falatko, illustrated by Tim Miller; *The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora* by Pablo Cartaya; and *Caveboy Dave: More Scrawny Than Brawny* by New York Times bestselling author Aaron Reynolds, illustrated by Phil McAndrew. Joanna is originally from San Diego, California, where she attended UCSD and worked as a bookseller. Outside of publishing, Joanna loves traveling, boxing, hiking, podcasts, dessert, live comedy, and dogs (especially her seven-year-old Chihuahua-pug mix).

Follow Joanna on Twitter @joannananamc and learn more about her taste in books at <https://www.pinterest.com/jomariecardenas/>.

Seeking: Humorous, clever, and unexpected picture books; breakout chapter book protagonists; and plot-driven middle grade novels that are both funny and poignant.



Photo Credit: Allison Stock

Kendra Levin was inspired to become a life coach by her experiences as a publishing professional and award-winning playwright.

A graduate of the Leadership That Works program in Coaching for Transformation, Kendra has been a certified life coach for writers and other creative practitioners since 2008, working with a wide range of one-on-one clients both in the U.S. and internationally. Kendra has run workshops for creative organizations including Theater Communications Group, and writers' groups including the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, the Connecticut Press Club, Children's Writers of the Hudson Valley, and Women Who Write. She has taught several classes for Mediabistro, including Get Over Your Writer's Block and Young Adult Novel Writing, and to female prison inmates through the Bard Prison Initiative. Since 2014, she has taught parolees with the Focus Forward Project.

Kendra has been a publishing industry professional since 2002. As an editor/coach, she has spoken at conferences, run workshops, and facilitated retreats for writers in twenty states. Follow her @kendralevin to find out where she'll be going next. Her home base is New York City.

Agents:



Miriam Altshuler began her career at Russell & Volkening and in 1994 established her own agency, which she ran for twenty-one years until she joined DeFiore and Company in early 2016. She is a graduate of Middlebury College and has always felt very much at home in Vermont. She focuses primarily on YA and middle grade fiction and strong nonfiction. She represents the late Walter Dean Myers, who served as the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature and has won or been nominated for every major award in field of children's literature; Jill Santopolo author of the *Sparkle Spa* series; Tod Olson, author of the *Lost* series; Lambda award-winning novelist Alex Sanchez; Leslie Connor, award-winning author of *All Rise for the Honorable Perry T. Cook* and *Waiting for Normal*; Donna Freitas, whose most recent books include *Unplugged* and *The Tenderness of Thieves*, and Coretta Scott King award-winning author Charles R. Smith, Jr. She also represents exciting new voices such as Ted Sanders (author of *The Box* and *The Dragonfly* and *The Harp* and *The Ravenvine*, the first two novels in his debut series *The Keepers*), Kathryn Siebel (*The Trouble with Twins*), Christine Kendall (*Riding Chance*), and Jenny McLachlan (the *Ladybirds* series). Miriam is particularly interested in finding new and interesting voices and loves reading and representing books that focus on diversity.



Linda Camacho joined Prospect Agency in 2015 after a decade in publishing. After graduating from Cornell University, Linda interned at Simon & Schuster and Writers House literary agency, and worked at Penguin and Random House before making the leap to agenting. She has an MFA in children's writing from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and in a nice turn of events, her first sale was for a VCFA classmate. She's so thrilled to be back on campus!

She's seeking graphic narratives, MG, YA, and adult fiction across all genres (particularly romance/women's fiction and upmarket), along with select picture book writer-illustrators. Diversity of all types welcome (ethnicity, disability, sexuality, etc.).



Photo Credit: Sam Bond

Erin Murphy is the founder and president of Erin Murphy Literary Agency, which is known for building careers rather than representing individual books, and for creating a community for its clients. Erin represents picture books through YA, including strong nonfiction. She was born and raised in Arizona, where she started EMLA, but has recently re-located to Maine. She is at her most relaxed when holding knitting needles, a kayak paddle, a dog leash, a cat, or (of course) a book.

Her client list includes bestsellers and award-winners Chris Barton, Phil Bildner, e.E. Charlton-Trujillo, Janet Fox, Lynda Mullaly Hunt, Robin LaFevers, Brian Lies, Laura Resau, Liz Garton Scanlon, Deborah Underwood, Susan Vaught, and Audrey Vernick.

Publicity:



Photo Credit: Sam Bond

Carmen Oliver is the founder of the Booking Biz, a boutique style agency that brings award-winning children's authors and illustrators to schools, libraries, and special events. She is also the author of picture book *Bears Make the Best Reading Buddies* as well as the forthcoming nonfiction picture book *The Favio Chavez Story*. She teaches picture book writing at the Writing Barn and loves speaking at schools, conferences and festivals. Growing up in Canada, she saw many bear species along the hiking trails but always kept a respectful distance. She and her family now call the wide-open spaces of Texas home.

Alumni Presenters:



Jacqui Lipton is a law professor at the University of Houston College of Law, as well as a recent graduate of the M.F.A. in Writing for Children and Young Adults at VCFA. Her legal scholarship and consulting focuses on commercial and intellectual property law with an emphasis on legal issues for authors and artists. She holds a Ph.D. in intellectual property law from Cambridge University and has practiced and taught law in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. She has published half a dozen legal texts and many articles on cyberlaw, domestic and international intellectual property, defamation and privacy law. She has also published a number of short stories under the pen-name K.C. Maguire. Her debut Y.A. novel, *Inside the Palisade*, was published by Lodestone (U.K.) in 2015 and won the Purple Dragonfly Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy as well as placing in the Houston Writer's Guild fiction writing contest the previous year. She is a reader for the Young Adult Review Network and writes a column on speculative fiction for young adults at Luna Station Quarterly.



Tirzah Price is a bookseller at Great Lakes Book & Supply in Big Rapids, MI, the assistant children's literature editor for Hunger Mountain, and a contributing writer at BookRiot.com. She graduated from VCFA in 2015.

