



Courtesy of Miami Book Fair

Miami Book Fair's Diverse 2017 Lineup

DOUGLAS MARKOWITZ | OCTOBER 10, 2017 | 8:00AM

Thanks to a robust schedule, visitors to this year's Miami Book Fair will experience enough readings, panels, and other activities to fill a thousand volumes. There will be plenty of literary goodies to go around, but the organizers are most excited about what's happening beyond the page at the Porch, an outdoor popup lounge that will host food, music, games, and other diversions.

The Porch debuted during the 2015 book fair as part of another area, the Swamp.

When the organizers saw that visitors had a habit of gathering there, they decided to expand it into its own area in 2016. This year, they hope to make it a centerpiece of the fair.

“It’s the crown center of the fair,” says Melissa Messulam, a program coordinator for the book fair. “We really want to make it a completely multidisciplinary space.”

While the rest of the fair is dedicated to the written word, the Porch is more focused on multimedia. Throughout the fair, which runs from Sunday, November 12, through the following Sunday, November 19, visitors can dance to a variety of styles played by local bands and DJs; view photo displays on topics such as Hurricane Andrew and the barbecue culture of Goulds; play giant versions of Jenga, Connect Four, and other games; chow down at food demos; and drink beer from Biscayne Bay Brewery. It’s a full artistic immersion with a decidedly Miami touch.

In keeping with the city’s eclectic sensibilities, many events at the Porch will attempt to mix various mediums and create truly unique, immersive experiences. A choice lineup of musicians will play the stage, from the Latin-electronic blend of Spam Allstars to the funk stylings of Magic City Hippies. A Silent Poetry Disco lounge will let people grab a headset and switch between three channels of curated poetry (it’s up to you if you dance to it). An event called Noir at the Bar will smash together murder-mystery writers with bluegrass musicians. An open mike on Friday and karaoke on Monday will give guests the chance to take the stage, while a display for *The Wynwood Coloring Book* will let attendees of all ages color the neighborhood’s famous murals any way they like.

Finally, if you find yourself overwhelmed at the end of the week, a guided meditation session from Innergy Meditation Studios will begin the last day of festivities.





Courtesy of Miami Book Fair

Beyond the Porch, the book fair, which will take over Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami, will host a variety of high-profile guest authors and hidden gems that will spark visitors' literary curiosity. Of all the VIPs, however, the most VI (and VP) would have to be former Vice President Joe Biden, who will promote *The Book of Joe: The Life, Wit, and (Sometimes Accidental) Wisdom of Joe Biden*. (and possibly help us remember a time when the sitting president was

of 2008 election (and possibly help us remember a time when the sitting president was black instead of orange). For those interested in presidential politics of a slightly different shade, sisters Jenna Bush Hager and Barbara Pierce Bush will present their joint memoir and perhaps a story or two from the George W. Bush White House. Sen. Al Franken will also be around for those needing counterprogramming.

Of course, most people nowadays are probably sick of politics, which is why the book fair is bringing in dozens of authors writing on a vast variety of topics. Literary buffs will want to be on the lookout for Salman Rushdie and Isabel Allende, two celebrated novelists with new works. Steve Jobs biographer Walter Isaacson will have a book about Leonardo da Vinci, while MSNBC anchor Lawrence O'Donnell will promote *Playing With Fire: The 1968 Election and the Transformation of American Politics*. Fans of the travel website Atlas Obscura, which specializes in odd destinations, will want to chat up author Ella Morton about the site's new book version (and weirdo vacation tips).

The fair has also organized an impressive slate of local authors and writers tackling Florida topics. Barry Fellman will be on hand to discuss his photo collection *Hurricane*, marking the 25th anniversary of Hurricane Andrew. Fans of the Roaring '20s might enjoy UM history professor Robin F. Bachin's presentation of *Big Bosses: A Working Girl's Memoir of Jazz Age America*, which tells the story of a young female professional in the Gatsby era. For creative writing, keep an eye out for poet Michael Hettich, short-story writer Luis Garcia, and historical fiction novelist Chantel Acevedo, whose book *The Living Infinite* tells the tale of a Spanish princess in the Bourbon court. There's also a full lineup of Spanish-language authors, local and international, plus plenty of activities celebrating LGBTQ and minority groups, with last year's Read Caribbean programs making a welcome return.

All of these happenings can be experienced throughout the week of the fair and during the Street Fair, which takes place November 18 through 20. Capping off the week, the Street Fair will feature a wide array of vendors, booksellers, and publishers taking over the Wolfson Campus to ply their wares at a veritable bazaar of books. Admission to the Street Fair is free Friday and \$8 Saturday and Sunday.

Miami Book Fair. Sunday, November 12, through Sunday, November 19, at Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus, 300 NE Second Ave., Miami; miamibookfair.com.

Admission varies by event.