

# MIAMI New Times®



Karamo Brown of *Queer Eye*. / Photo by Amanda Edwards / Getty Images

## Miami Book Fair's LGBTQ Programming Has Something for Everyone

**CHRIS MALONE** | NOVEMBER 12, 2019 | 8:00AM

Every year, the Miami Book Fair attracts authors from countless walks of life to the heart of downtown Miami and hundreds of thousands of literary fans eager to meet them and hear them speak. The event always boasts a wide variety of programming centered on various experiences and the authors who relate those experiences, and this year, LGBTQ readers will have a large selection of activities from which to choose.

The fair is covering all of its bases with its programming for LGBTQ readers. Rather than recruit a simple lineup of cis gay and lesbian authors, the event is ensuring every kind of person is represented in some capacity, making for an even stronger experience for both the community members and uninitiated attendees who are eager to learn something new.

The Miami Book Fair will kick off Sunday, November 17, but most of its queer programming is scheduled for the following weekend. However, the pope of trash – film director and screenwriter **John Waters** – will make an appearance early Tuesday, November 19. Waters is worshipped in queer circles for his camp masterpieces such as *Female Trouble* and *Pink Flamingos*, as well as best-selling books *Role Models* and *Carsick*.

*Queer Eye* fans will have two chances to see the beloved **Karamo Brown** in conversation with his son **Jason "Rachel" Brown** about their new picture book, *I Am Perfectly Designed*, Friday, November 22, and Saturday, November 24. The book tells the story of a fictional father and son who learn about all the ways they complement each other and, as a result, find even more strength in their relationship.

At the same time as Brown's appearance on Saturday, radio personality **Elvis Duran** will discuss his memoir, *Where Do I Begin? Stories From a Life Lived Out Loud*. In the book, Duran opens up about his experiences in the entertainment industry as an out gay man, as well as things he learned in the decades he worked while in the closet.

Queer love stories are often the subject of scrutiny for their representational accuracy, which makes Saturday afternoon's **Fantastic Loves** panel a must-attend for lovers of queer romance and coming-of-age stories. **José Ignacio Valenzuela**, a Chilean writer popularly known as "Chascas," is the author of the lauded *Malamor* trilogy and last year debuted the English translation of the first book, *To the End of the World*. Uruguayan novelist **Carolina de Robertis** will sit on the panel to speak about her new novel, *Cantoras*, a stunning tale of five women brought together in a revolutionary Uruguay and their interconnected lives. Rounding out the panel will be genderqueer author **Andrea Lawlor**, whose 2017 novel, *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl*, has delighted readers through its authentic portrayal of the complex human spirit.

Following *Fantastic Loves* will be another panel about representation, but with the premise of using identity as a form of strength. **I Belong Here: Identity as Power** will bring together nonbinary author and illustrator **Maia Kobabe**, novelist **Mira Jacob**, and Puerto Rican nonbinary writer **Vita Ayala** to discuss the current norms at play with regards to gender, race, sexuality, and cultural heritage and the importance of actively breaking those norms.

Wrapping up Saturday's schedule will be a **memoir reading** by two public figures with recently published works: *Family Guy* and *Will & Grace* alumnus **Gary Janetti** and former Olympic figure skater **Adam Rippon**. Janetti's book *Do You Mind If I Cancel? (Things That Still Annoy Me)* is a collection of essays that sees the accomplished TV producer ruminating on the challenges and annoyances that life continues to bring. Rippon's *Beautiful on the Outside*, in addition to being more chronological in structure, tells the Olympic medalist's origin story, from his living a sheltered life in Scranton, Pennsylvania, to capturing the hearts of Americans on the world stage.

The programming for Sunday, November 24, leans more political and provocative, with events designed to generate conversation as a form of interpersonal education. **Awakenings** at noon will present readings from **Megan Phelps-Roper** and activist-author **Mab Segrest**. Phelps-Roper should be familiar to many LGBTQ people: She is a former member of the reviled **Westboro Baptist Church** and has since chronicled her moral awakening and subsequent disavowal of the church's violent homophobic values in her new memoir, *Unfollow*. Segrest's acclaimed 1994 work, *Memoir of a Race Traitor*, is back in print after more than a decade, and she'll discuss the transformation of the far right in the years since the book's publication and how her anti-homophobic and antiracist rhetoric is still pertinent.

At Sunday's **LGBTQ Lives** event, **Samantha Allen** – a trans journalist and author of *Real Queer America: LGBT Stories From Red States* – will discuss what she learned from the queer communities she came across in her reporting, and **Libby Davies** will talk about her journey to becoming the first openly lesbian member of parliament in Canadian politics, which she chronicles in *Outside In: A Political Memoir*.

**Miami Book Fair.** Sunday, November 17, through Sunday, November 24, at Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus, 600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; [miamibookfair.com](http://miamibookfair.com).

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