

For Immediate Release

## **The Kitchen presents the panel discussion *New Orleans*, part of PEN World Voices Festival of International Literature, Sunday, May 1**

New York, NY, April 18, 2011—On **Sunday, May 1**, **The Kitchen** will host *New Orleans*, an afternoon panel discussion presented as part of the seventh annual **PEN World Voices Festival of International Literature**. Moderated by novelist **Nathaniel Rich**, a group of writers and thinkers will discuss the city they love. Participants include **Sarah Broom**, **Richard Campanella**, **Nicholas Lemann**, and **Billy Sothern**. The event will take place at **3:30 P.M.** at The Kitchen (512 West 19<sup>th</sup> Street). Tickets are **\$10**.

More than five years after Katrina, one of the greatest man-made disasters in America's history, the country has moved on. New Orleans has not. While the city has fought with great passion and courage to recover, disturbing problems remain. On this last day of the PEN World Voices Festival, this group of writers will ask: How has New Orleans, a world unto itself, been transformed, for better and worse? Where does it go from here?

The PEN World Voices Festival aims to encourage people to speak out against censorship and condemn the suppression of freedom of expression everywhere. Celebrating a landmark year—PEN helped persuade the Nobel Committee to grant Liu Xiaobo the Nobel Peace Prize, along with many others—this edition of the festival will take place in and around the High Line. For more information, visit [www.pen.org/festival](http://www.pen.org/festival).

### **About the Participants**

**Sarah Broom** has an extensive publishing background that includes work as a writer, editor, and journalist for newspapers and magazines, including *O*, *The Oprah Magazine*, *Time Asia* (Hong Kong) and New Orleans' *Times-Picayune*. A native New Orleanian and Berkeley Journalism School graduate, Broom recently joined The Praxis Project from her previous position as Senior Writer for the Mayor of New Orleans. Before that, she worked in Bujumbura, Burundi where she developed innovative radio programming for *African Public Radio (Radio Publique Africaine)*. She has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Oxford American*, *New America Media* and others.

**Richard Campanella**, a geographer at Tulane University, is the author of six critically acclaimed books on the physical and human geography of New Orleans, including *Bienville's Dilemma*, *Geographies of New Orleans*, and the recently released *Lincoln in New Orleans*. His research has been cited in the New Orleans' *Times-Picayune* and *New York Times*, and featured on *NPR All Things Considered*, *CBS Evening News*, *CNN*, and *BBC*.

The only two-time winner of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Book of the Year award, Campanella has also received the Williams Prize for Louisiana History and the Mortar Board Award for Excellence in Teaching from Tulane University.

**Nicholas Lemann** was born in New Orleans in 1954. He has been on the staff of *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Washington Monthly*, *Texas Monthly*, and *The Washington Post*. His books include *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America* and *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*, and most recently, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*. Lemann is the dean and Henry R. Luce Professor of Journalism at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism.

**Nathaniel Rich**, not yet thirty, is already an influential figure in the literary world. He is a senior editor at *The Paris Review*, an essayist and critic whose work has appeared in many of the nation's most prestigious publications, and the author of the internationally acclaimed fiction debut, *The Mayor's Tongue* (2009).

**Fatima Shaik** is the author of four books of fiction set in Louisiana, including three for children. Her YA book *Melitte* is a first-person account of slavery through the eyes of a girl. *The Horn Book* called it a "heart rending novel." Kirkus said it was "full of period detail and vivid sensory writing." Her essay on race in children's literature appears on the PEN website, as do her articles published after Katrina.

Shaik is a former reporter for the New Orleans' *Times-Picayune*, and assistant editor for *McGraw-Hill World News*. She has published in the *Southern Review*, *Callaloo*, *The New York Times*, *Essence*, and other national and international publications. Shaik is the recipient of an NEH fellowship and Kittredge Fund grant. She is currently a member of the Saint Peter's College faculty and coordinates the PEN Children's Committee initiative in New Orleans.

**Billy Sothern** is a writer and criminal defense lawyer based in New Orleans, where he has represented men facing the death penalty for the past decade. In 2008, he received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship to complete work on his forthcoming book, *Put Away Childish Things*, a memoir ranging from his own experience as a juvenile offender to the lives of his clients on death row. He is a frequent contributor to *The Nation* and *Salon* and is the author of *Down in New Orleans: Reflections From a Drowned City*.

### **About The Seventh Annual PEN World Voices of International Literature: April 25 to May 1**

More than 100 writers from 40 nations convene in New York City to celebrate the power of the writers voice as a bold and vital element of public discourse. Dare to view the world from a fresh perspective at stages across the city, including the festivals hubs -- The Standard, New York and the High Line. The program features panel discussions, one-on-one conversations, readings, performances, and much more. For more information, go to [www.pen.org/festival](http://www.pen.org/festival).

### **Funding Credits**

Literature programs at The Kitchen are made possible with generous support from the Axe-Houghton Foundation and with public funds from The National Endowment for the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency.



## **About The Kitchen**

The Kitchen is one of New York City's oldest nonprofit performance and exhibition spaces, showing experimental work by innovative artists, both emerging and established. Programs range from dance, music, and theatrical performances to video and media arts exhibitions to literary events, film screenings, and artists' talks. Since its inception in 1971, The Kitchen has been a powerful force in shaping the cultural landscape of this country and has helped launch the careers of many artists who have gone on to worldwide prominence.

Box Office Information:

212.255.5793 ext. 11

Tue-Sat, 2-6pm

The Kitchen

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New York, NY 10011

[www.thekitchen.org](http://www.thekitchen.org)

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