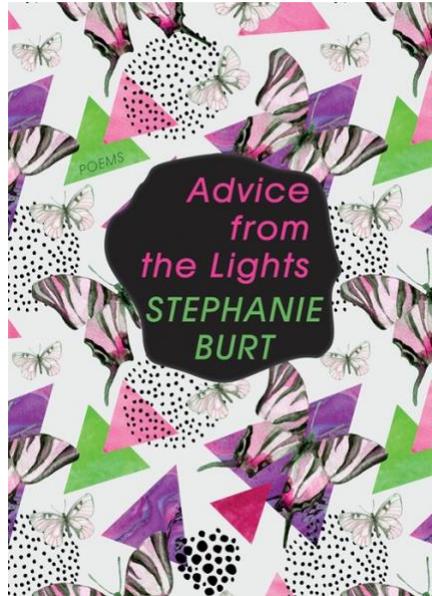


ACKLAND



Ackland Art Museum One of 84 Organizations Nationwide to Receive a National Endowment for the Arts Big Read Grant

Chapel Hill and Online Audiences Worldwide to Read and Celebrate Stephanie Burt's 'Advice from the Lights' in Virtual Event Series Starting October 11, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Chapel Hill, N.C. — September 30, 2020) — The Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is a recipient of a grant of \$11,130 to host the National Endowment for the Arts Big Read in Chapel Hill. An Arts Endowment initiative in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book. The Ackland is one of 84 nonprofit organizations selected to receive an NEA Big Read grant to support a community reading program. **NEA Big Read at the Ackland** will focus on *Advice from the Lights* by author **Stephanie Burt** (see photo on page 2). Events reflecting LGBTQ+ lives and experiences — including a keynote conversation with Stephanie Burt and **Jacob Lau** (Women's and Gender Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill), a series of book discussions, and Drag Storytime for children with performers **Shasta Kola** and **Naomi Dix** — will take place virtually on ackland.org from Oct.11 - Dec. 4.

“We have become even more aware this year of the important ways the arts help us connect with others, and how they bring meaning, joy, and comfort to our lives,” said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “By bringing the NEA Big Read to online visitors from Chapel

Hill and beyond, the Ackland Art Museum will provide opportunities for deep discussion and ways to help us better understand one another.”

The NEA Big Read offers a range of titles that reflect many different voices and perspectives, aiming to inspire conversation and discovery. The main feature of the initiative is a grants program, managed by Arts Midwest, which annually supports dynamic community reading programs, each designed around a single National Endowment for the Arts Big Read selection.

NEA Big Read at the Ackland has been organized in partnership with the Chapel Hill Public Library and Carolina Public Humanities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The programming will kick off with a free conversational program with author Stephanie Burt on Wednesday, Oct 21 at 7:30 p.m. Following the kick-off event, the Ackland and its partners will host six book discussions of Burt’s *Advice from the Lights* with discussion facilitators from our community. A series of Drag Storytimes for children and families featuring local performers Shasta Kola and Naomi Dix (see photo on page 3) on Oct 11, 18, and 25 will bookend the Stephanie Burt event. NEA Big Read at the Ackland is presented in connection with an **ongoing installation of art by LGBTQ+ artists** at the Ackland and several related programs, including a **Queer Cinema** virtual film series and **artist talks**. Scroll down for all NEA Big Read at the Ackland listings, and visit ackland.org or follow the Ackland on social media to find out more about related events.



Since 2006, the National Endowment for the Arts has funded more than 1,600 NEA Big Read programs, providing more than \$22 million to organizations nationwide. Over the past thirteen years, grantees have leveraged more than \$50 million in local funding to support their NEA Big Read programs. More than 5.7 million Americans have attended an NEA Big Read event, approximately 91,000 volunteers have participated at the local level, and 39,000 community organizations have partnered to make NEA Big Read activities possible. For more information about the NEA Big Read, including book and author information, podcasts, and videos, visit arts.gov/neabigread.

Established by Congress in 1965, the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning,

affirms and celebrates America’s rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America. Visit arts.gov to learn more.

Arts Midwest promotes creativity, nurtures cultural leadership, and engages people in meaningful arts experiences, bringing vitality to Midwest communities and enriching people’s lives. Based in Minneapolis, Arts Midwest connects the arts to audiences throughout the nine-state region of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. One of six non-profit regional arts organizations in the United States, Arts Midwest’s history spans more than 35 years. For more information, please visit artsmidwest.org.

Scroll down to learn more about the Ackland Art Museum. Photos and bios of NEA Big Read at the Ackland participants are available on request.





Chapel Hill
PUBLIC LIBRARY



ORANGE COUNTY
ARTS COMMISSION

NEA Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest. NEA Big Read at the Ackland has been organized in partnership with Chapel Hill Public Library and Carolina Public Humanities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This program is supported by the Orange County Arts Commission.

NEA Big Read at the Ackland - Virtual Events

OPENING EVENT

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 | 7:30 p.m. ET
**Virtual Kick-Off Event with Author Stephanie Burt
in conversation with Jacob Lau**
Registration required at ackland.org

BOOK DISCUSSIONS

Virtual Book Discussions | October through December
Free and includes a copy of *Advice from the Lights*
Registration limited and required at ackland.org

Thursday, October 22 | 7-8:30 p.m. ET
Friday, October 23 | 3:30-5 p.m. ET
Thursday, November 5 | 7-8:30 p.m. ET
Friday, November 6 | 3:30-5 p.m. ET
Thursday, December 3 | 7-8:30 p.m. ET
Friday, December 4 | 3:30-5 p.m. ET

DRAG STORYTIME

Three Sundays in October: 11, 18, 25 | 2:30 p.m. ET

Virtual storytime for kids and their families with local drag performers, including **Shasta Kola, Naomi Dix, and more**. Free; registration required at ackland.org

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About the Ackland Art Museum: Featuring a year-round calendar of special exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Ackland Art Museum on UNC-Chapel Hill's historic campus is a local museum with a global outlook that bridges campus and community. Admission to the Ackland is free and accessible to all. The Ackland's holdings include more than 19,000 works of art. The collection spans cultures and time periods, showcasing the breadth of human creativity. A vital teaching resource, the Museum's mission is the art of understanding. Visitors can connect with the complexity and beauty of the wider world by getting close to art — the familiar, the unexpected, the challenging. The Ackland Art Museum's building is currently closed due to COVID-19, but we hope to welcome in-person visitors to 101 South Columbia St. on the UNC Chapel Hill campus as soon as it is safe to do so. More information and an array of digital resources for all ages are available at ackland.org.

Image credits:

Cover of Stephanie Burt's *Advice from the Lights*. Design by Kapo Ng. Used with permission from Graywolf Press.

Headshot of Stephanie Burt used with permission.

Photo of Naomi Dix used with permission.

The Ackland Art Museum provides experiences that spark insight into ourselves, each other, and the world. For more information, visit ackland.org