

Schedule of Events: Free and Open to the Public

SINAN ANTOON Wed., March 28 • 7-9 p.m. Visual Arts Gallery Dearlove Hall	Sinan Antoon , an Iraqi exile, co-produced and co-directed the documentary, <i>About Baghdad</i> . He is a journalist and poet; his book of poetry – <i>Mawshur Muballal bil-Huroob</i> (A Prism: Wet with Wars) – and a novel – <i>I'jam</i> (Diacritics) – were published in Arabic and will soon be released in English.
DIANA ABU-JABER Fri., March 30 • 1-2:30 p.m. Visual Arts Gallery Dearlove Hall	Diana Abu-Jaber's first novel, <i>Arabian Jazz</i> , considered by many to be the first mainstream Arab-American novel, won the 1994 Oregon Book Award. Her rich and lyrical novel <i>Crescent</i> won the PEN Center Award for Literary Fiction and the American Book Award. Her latest book is a culinary memoir entitled <i>The Language of Baklava</i> (Pantheon 2005).
DUNYA MIKHAIL Wed., Apr. 11 • 7-9 p.m. Visual Arts Gallery Dearlove Hall	Dunya Mikhail has published four collections of poetry and one multi-genre book in Arabic. Her first book in English – <i>The War Works Hard</i> (New Directions 2005) – was selected for a 2004 PEN Translation Fund Award and picked by the New York Public Library as one of 25 Books to Remember for 2005. In 2001, she was awarded the U.N. Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing.
BRUCE GUERNSEY Mon., Apr. 16 • 12:30-2 p.m. Visual Arts Gallery Dearlove Hall	Bruce Guernsey has published three books of poetry. His latest collection of work, <i>The Lost Brigade</i> (Water Press and Media 2004), is "a powerful indictment of the war and how we bear its scars forever," writes Chris Hedges. Guernsey is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Eastern Illinois University where he taught creative writing and American Literature for twenty-five years. He was recently named editor of the <i>Spoon River Poetry Review</i> .
DENISE DUHAMEL Wed., Apr. 25 • 12:30-2 p.m. Miller Auditorium Dearlove Hall	Denise Duhamel's work includes <i>Two and Two</i> , her most recent collection; <i>Kinky</i> (Orchard Press); <i>Star Spangled Banner</i> (Southern Illinois University Press); <i>Queen for a Day: Selected and New Poems</i> (University of Pittsburgh Press); and <i>Mille et un sentiments</i> , a limited edition book. A recipient of an NEA Fellowship, she teaches creative writing at Florida International University at Miami.

Copies of our guests' most recent work are available at the ACC Bookstore!



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Poets & Writers



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Writers project NEWS

at Adirondack Community College

Two and Two: Denise Duhamel

Denise Duhamel's much anticipated new collection of poetry begins with a revisionist tale – Noah is married to Joan of Arc – in a poem about America's often flawed sense of history. "Here come the high spirits, good nature, smartass deduction, brassy intelligence, form-bending generosity, and large-hearted liberal brio of Denise Duhamel's new poems," writes Albert Goldbarth.

Throughout *Two and Two*, doubles abound: Noah's animals, Duhamel's parents as Jack and Jill in a near-fatal accident; an incestuous double sestina: a male/female pantoum; a dream and its interpretation; and translations of advertisements from English into Spanish. In two Möbius strip poems (shaped like the Twin Towers), Duhamel invites her readers to get out their scissors and tape and transform her poems into 3-D objects.

At the book's center is "Love Which Took Its Symmetry for Granted," a gathering of journal entries, personal emails, and news



Denise Duhamel
Photo by Nick Carbo

reports into a collage of witness about September 11. *Publishers Weekly* says that this poem "is one of the few versifications of the tragedy and its aftermath that is genuinely affecting," and will give "people who never buy books of poetry" a "compelling reason to buy this one."

A section of *Mille et un sentiments*, modeled on the lists of Hervé Le Tellier's *Mille Pensées*, breaks down emotions into their most basic levels, their 1,001 tiny recognitions ranging from the silly "I feel open to the Holy Potato and its Holy Eyes" to the sardonic

(See Duhamel, page 3.)

Warning

Do not swallow.

If you accidentally swallow this poem, contact a poison control center immediately.

Do not read this poem while sleeping.

If you consume three or more alcoholic drinks every day,

consult your doctor before reading this poem as a pain reliever.

This poem is not for use with the browning unit of your conventional oven.

Never place this poem in a microwave...

Keep this and all poems out of the reach of children.

The reading of this poem does not enable you to fly.

-- excerpted from *Two and Two*

Volume 5, Issue 2 Page 1
Spring 2007

The Writers Project at ACC was developed to give students and Warren and Washington County residents the chance to listen to and speak in person with nationally renowned and up-and-coming writers. The Project is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and from Poets & Writers, Inc. with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. We owe special thanks to the New York State Writers Institute for lending their authors and expertise; to our Advisory Board members; to the Faculty-Student Association of ACC; and also to President Marshall Bishop for his enthusiasm and support.

All readings are free and open to the public.

NEW THIS YEAR! VOICES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Sinan Antoon

Wed., March 28 • 7-9 p.m.
Visual Arts Gallery/Dearlove Hall

Diana Abu-Jaber

Fri., March 30 • 1-2:30 p.m.
Visual Arts Gallery/Dearlove Hall

Dunya Mikhail

Wed., April 11 • 7-9 p.m.
Visual Arts Gallery/Dearlove Hall

SEE INSIDE

All venues for readings for the Writers Project at Adirondack Community College are handicap-accessible, and amplification devices for the hearing impaired can be made available upon request.

Voices from the Middle East - A Writers' Series

From "The Mother of the World": Sinan Antoon



Sinan Antoon
Courtesy photo

Sinan Antoon, an Iraqi exile, came to the American public's attention when he returned to Iraq in 2003 after the American invasion to report on the effects of "liberation." He co-produced and co-directed the resulting film documentary, *About Baghdad*, as part of InCounter Productions, in which he interviews a variety of laborers, children, government workers and cabdrivers. "Although those interviewed unanimously despised the government of Mr. Hussein," states a *New*

York Times review, "the speakers are divided on the subject of American presence in Iraq. They evince a complex set of attitudes toward their new American occupiers, by turns angry, resigned, hopeful and even witty."

In an essay for *Al-Abram Weekly*, Antoon explains that Baghdad was once considered "the mother of the world...It was so sophisticated and elegant in its golden age that an Arabic verb, *yatabaghdadu*, was derived from its name to signify how people used to emulate the coveted styles and ways of Baghdad's elites...Thousands of invisible umbilical cords still bind the city to many a soul. With every bomb, missile and fire that has erupted over the last three weeks in Baghdad, I have felt the pain of those cords

being violently severed in my heart."

Antoon, a journalist and poet born in 1967, had to flee Iraq in 1991 after the Gulf War and has been teaching literature in the United States ever since.

His book of poetry – *Mausbur Muballal bil-Huroob* (A Prism: Wet with Wars) – and a novel – *I'jam* (Diacritics) – were published in Arabic and will soon be released in English.

He has published poems and essays in both Arabic and English, co-translated the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, and was nominated for the PEN Prize for translation in 2004. He is a senior editor for *Arab Studies Journal*, a contributing editor to *Banipal*, and a member of the editorial committee of *Middle East Report*.

Sinan Antoon • Wednesday, March 28 • 7 pm - 9 pm • Visual Arts Gallery • Dearlove Hall



Diana Abu-Jaber

Diana Abu-Jaber was born in Syracuse to an American mother and a Jordanian father. When she was seven, her family moved to Jordan for two years, and she has lived between the U.S. and Jordan ever since. Life was a constant juggling act, acting Arab at home, but American in the street. The struggle to make sense of this sort of "inbetweenness" permeates Abu-Jaber's fiction.

Her first novel, *Arabian Jazz*, considered

Insights into the Arab-American: Diana Abu-Jaber

by many to be the first mainstream Arab-American novel, won the 1994 Oregon Book Award and prompted Jean Grant of the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* to say, "Abu-Jaber's novel will probably do more to convince readers to abandon what media analyst Jack Shaheen calls American's 'abhorrence of the Arab' than any number of speeches or publicity gambits."

Her second novel, *Crescent* (W.W. Norton 2003), which was inspired by Shakespeare's *Othello*, is set in contemporary Los Angeles and focuses on a multi-cultural love story between an Iraqi exile and an Iraqi-American chef. "Written in a lush, lyrical style reminiscent of *The God of Small Things*, infused with the flavors and scents of Middle Eastern

food, and spiced with history and fable, *Crescent* is a sensuous love story and a gripping tale of risk and commitment." It won the PEN Center Award for Literary Fiction and the American Book Award and has been published in eight countries to date.

Her latest book is a culinary memoir entitled *The Language of Baklava* (Pantheon 2005), which *Entertainment Weekly* calls "as delectable for its stories as for its accompanying recipes." Describing her experiences growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, the author develops each chapter around one of her father's traditional Middle Eastern recipes.

– Lyceum Agency

Diana Abu-Jaber • Friday, March 30 • 1 pm - 2:30 pm • Visual Arts Gallery • Dearlove Hall



Dunya Mikhail
Courtesy photo

Born in Baghdad, Dunya Mikhail has published four collections of poetry and one multi-genre book in Arabic, including *The Psalms of Absence* (Iraq 1993), *Diary of a Wave Outside the Sea* (Iraq 1995 and Egypt 2000), and *Almost Music* (Tunisia 1997).

Mikhail, who witnessed and wrote about the atrocities committed by the fascist authorities under Saddam Hussein as well as the

tragedy of the Iraq-Iran war of the eighties and the Gulf War of the nineties, had to flee Iraq like so many Iraqi writers to escape increasingly threatening harassment.

Her first book in English – *The War Works Hard* (New Directions 2005) – was selected for a 2004 PEN Translation Fund Award, short listed for the Griffen Poetry Prize, and picked by the New York Public Library as one of 25 Books to Remember for 2005. As noted in the introduction by Saadi Simawe, the volume contains poems she wrote after the fall of Saddam Hussein, poems she wrote upon reaching America, and poems she wrote but couldn't publish in Iraq. Simawe, an English teacher, describes her voice as childlike and

ironic, and "saturated with horror stories of imprisonment, torture, death, disappearances, massacres and rape."

"What luck!" her first poem begins, "She has found his bones./The skull is also in the bag/the bag in her hand/like all other bags/in all trembling hands."

In 2001, Dunya Mikhail was awarded the U.N. Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing. Her poems have appeared in anthologies such as *Iraqi Poetry Today*, *The Post-Gibran Anthology of New Arab-American Writing*, *New Arab Poetry*, *The Poetry of Arab Women: A Contemporary Anthology*, *Griffen Poetry Prize Anthology*, and *International Poetry Now: World Beat*.

Dunya Mikhail • Wednesday, April 11 • 7 pm - 9 pm • Visual Arts Gallery • Dearlove Hall

Bruce Guernsey: From Illinois to Maine



Bruce Guernsey
Photo by Victoria Woollen-Danner

Many will value the transparency and directness of Bruce Guernsey's poetry, which ranges from confessional narratives, as in the poems about his father's war experience and aftermath, to cryptic wordplay. Readers will also sense Guernsey's kinship to Robert Frost as strongly as they will feel his connection to nature both soft and severe. Martin Scott, an Eastern Illinois University colleague, wrote that Guernsey's poems "are the sort of gems that slip through your fingers if you don't hold onto them right. Cold-blooded, taut little masterpieces, their 'loneliness includes [us] unawares' in an emptiness 'so much nearer home' than we had dreamed."

He has published three books of poetry, the earliest of which, *January Thaw*, was first published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, and was reissued by Water Press and Media. His second book, *Peripheral Vision*, was published by Small Poetry Press, a design and printing service for self-publishing. His latest

book of poetry, *The Lost Brigade* (Water Press and Media 2004), is "a powerful indictment of the war of how we bear its scars forever," writes Chris Hedges.

Guernsey is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Eastern Illinois University where he taught creative writing and American Literature for twenty-five years. A graduate with honors from Colgate University, he holds M.A.'s from the University of Virginia and Johns Hopkins University and a Ph.D. from New Hampshire, writing his dissertation on tools as metaphors in Robert Frost's poetry.

His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Atlantic*, and *American Scholar*. "Apple" was featured on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." The recipient of fellowships in writing from the NEA, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, he was also a featured poet in Ted Kooser's "American Life in Poetry." Beginning [this past January], he [took] over the editorship of *Spoon River Poetry Review*. His essay, "The Raven's Gift," won the creative nonfiction award from the journal *Flyway*.

The recipient of Fulbright Lectureships to Portugal and Greece, Bruce has twice sailed around the world with Semester at Sea.

For his teaching, Dr. G. Was awarded seven faculty excellence awards while at EIU, and in 1992 was awarded the State of Illinois Board of Governors' Distinguished Professor Award.

– Adapted from www.BruceGuernsey.com

Stones

The endless movement of stones,
how they work their way up,
surface each spring in the garden
as if out of breath.

How others will sink,
slowly, over the years, unnoticed,
like a man at peace
slipping off to sleep, or dying.

History happens under our feet,
the tunneling of worms,
the loosening of earth
letting breathe

what's underneath –
the cold foreheads crowning like birth,
our footsteps each year
heavier, deeper.

from *The Lost Brigade*
by Bruce Guernsey

Reading

**Monday, April 16
12:30 pm - 2 pm
Visual Arts Gallery
Dearlove Hall**

**Bruce will also be
visiting various classes.
Call 743-2210 for times.**

Duhamel (continued from page one)

"I feel bad about the bomb I dropped on your country – I pressed the wrong button." The book ends with "Carbó Frescos," written in the form of an art guidebook from the 24th century.

Innovative and unpretentious, Duhamel uses twice the language usually available for poetry. She culls from the literary and nonliterary, from the Bible and product warning labels, from Woody Allen films and Hong Kong action movies – to say difficult things with astonishing accuracy. *Two and Two* is second to none.

Denise Duhamel's dozen or so previous books include *Kinky* (Orchard Press) – poems from the perspective of Barbie dolls – *Star Spangled Banner* (Southern Illinois University Press), *Queen for a Day: Selected and New Poems* (University of Pittsburgh Press) and *Mille et un sentiments*, a limited edition book. A recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, she teaches creative writing at Florida International University at Miami.

– Pittsburgh University Press

Reading

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12:30 pm - 2 pm
Miller Auditorium
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visiting various classes.
Call 743-2210 for times.**