

# Advance Program Notes

**An Evening with George Saunders**  
Wednesday, April 1, 2015, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

## *An Evening with George Saunders*

"George Saunders is a complete original, unlike anyone else, thank God...There is no one better, no one more essential to our national sense of self and sanity." —Dave Eggers

"With his concise, unorthodox and daring work, [Saunders] proves that the true subversives are not those who shout. They are those with the insight and mastery to show us a world that seems hilariously impossible and horrifyingly likely at the same time." —*Telegraph*

"The best short story writer in English—not 'one of,' not 'arguably,' but the Best." —*Time*



The recipient of a 2006 MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (Genius Award), George Saunders is the author of four collections of short stories, a novella, and a book of essays. His most recent collection is *Tenth of December* (Random House, 2013), winner of the 2014 Story Prize for short fiction and 2014 Folio Prize, which celebrates the best fiction of our time. Chair of the Judges for the Folio Prize, Lavinia Greenlaw, said, "George Saunders's stories are both artful and profound. Darkly playful, they take us to the edge of some of the most difficult questions of our time and force us to consider what lies behind and beyond them. His subject is the human self under ordinary and extraordinary pressure. His worlds are heightened versions of our own, full of inexorable confrontations from which we are not easily released. Unflinching, delightful, adventurous, compassionate, he is a true original whose work is absolutely of the moment. We have no doubt that these stories will prove only more essential in years to come." *Tenth of December* was also a finalist for the 2013 National Book Award in Fiction and named one of the ten best books of the year by *The New York Times Book Review*.

Saunders's other collections include the bestselling *Pastoralia*, set against a warped, hilarious, and terrifyingly recognizable American landscape; *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*, a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award; and *In Persuasion Nation*, one of three finalists for the 2006 Story Prize for best short story collection of the year. *Pastoralia*, *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*, and *Tenth of December* were all *New York Times* Notable Books.

# *About George Saunders, continued*

Saunders is also the author of the novella-length illustrated fable, *The Brief and Frightening Reign of Phil*, which takes us into a profoundly strange country called Inner Horner, and the *New York Times* bestselling children's book, *The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip*, illustrated by Lane Smith, which has also won major children's literature prizes in Italy and the Netherlands. *The Boston Globe* lauds Saunders' ability to "construct a story of absurdist satire, then locate within it a moment of searing humanity." *Congratulations, by the Way* (Random House, 2014) is a book containing the funny yet uplifting graduation speech Saunders gave at Syracuse University, which went viral shortly after its delivery.

Saunders's book of essays, *The Braindead Megaphone* (2007), received critical acclaim and landed him spots on *The Charlie Rose Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman*, and *The Colbert Report*. *Vanity Fair* wrote of the book, "Saunders's biting clever and compassionate essays are a Mark Twain-syle shot in the arm for Americans, an antidote to the dumbing down virus plaguing our country. Well, we live in hope." His work appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, and *Harpers Magazine*, and has appeared in the *O'Henry*, *Best American Short Story*, *Best Non-Required Reading*, and *Best American Travel Writing* anthologies.

In 2001, Saunders was selected by *Entertainment Weekly* as one of the 100 top most creative people in entertainment, and by *The New Yorker* in 2002 and one of the best writers 40 and under. In 2006, he was awarded both a MacArthur Fellowship, for "bring[ing] to contemporary American fiction a sense of humor, pathos, and literary style all his own," and a Guggenheim Fellowship. In 2013 *TIME Magazine* listed Saunders on its list of 100 Most Influential People in the World. He teaches in the creative writing program at Syracuse University.

# *Engagement Activities*

Wednesday, April 1, 2015, following the performance

## **Meet the Artist: George Saunders**

*Grand Lobby*

Following *An Evening with George Saunders*, join the author in the lobby during this book signing event. His books will be available for purchase.

*Free*

Thursday, April 2, 2015, 10 AM

## **Craft Talk**

*Cube*

George Saunders will be presenting a craft talk to faculty and students in the Department of English and University Honors.

## **SPECIAL THANKS**

Department of English, University Honors, Jane Goette, Joe Scallorns, Amber Smith, and Matthew Vollmer

# *In the Galleries*



**Shinique Smith**

*Gnosis, 2013*

Ink, fabric, and acrylic on wood panel

48 x 48 x 5 inches

Courtesy of the artist and James Cohan Gallery, New York/Shanghai

Explore CONNECTIONS between works of art, artists, and viewers; between art past and present; and between ideas and their aesthetic manifestation.

## **THREADED**

**Three one-person exhibitions**

**featuring Shinique Smith, Angelo Filomeno, and Polly Apfelbaum**

Through Sunday, April 12, 2015

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM/Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

Three one-person exhibitions by renowned artists Shinique Smith, Angelo Filomeno, and Polly Apfelbaum, who work with threaded material as their medium, mining its symbolic significance while creating fascinating and unexpected visual forms