

Call for Contributions

A Room of Her Own Foundations' Retreat for Women Writers: "Writing Against the Current"

Retreat Dates: August 10-16, 2015, Ghost Ranch, Abiquiú, New Mexico

Contribution proposals accepted from May 1, 2014 to August 15, 2014

"I'm fundamentally, I think, an outsider.
I do my best work and feel most braced with my back to the wall.

It's an odd feeling, though, writing against the current:
difficult entirely to disregard the current. Yet of course I shall."

—Virginia Woolf's *Diary*, November 22, 1938

Founded in 2000, A Room of Her Own is the preeminent nonprofit organization working on behalf of women writers today. With a mission to inspire, fund, and champion works of art and literature by women, AROHO has channeled more than 1,000,000 publicly gifted dollars into new awards, fellowships, and life-changing opportunities for women and has inspired hundreds of books and works of art by women.

At AROHO's 2015 retreat, one hundred women writers, specially chosen for their diversity of experience and depth of artistic work, will gather beneath the towering red rocks of New Mexico's high desert, where AROHO first began, to cultivate an environment of collective fellowship in which creative women bravely unearth, articulate, and contribute transformational literature and art.

Maxine Hong Kingston will attend the 2015 Retreat as Fellow of Distinction. Participants in AROHO's previous six retreats have included Marilynne Robinson, Rita Dove, Leslie Marmon Silko, Ellen McLaughlin, Joy Harjo, Denise Chavez, Lesley Hazleton, Janet Fitch, Evie Shockley, Bhanu Kapil, Rebecca Brown, Antonya Nelson, Amy Berkower, Joy Harris, Breena Clarke, and many other accomplished women writers and publication professionals.

On May 1, 2014, AROHO will begin accepting applications for proposals to contribute to the retreat. Women may contribute in various ways: as presenters in The Waves Discussion Series, as consultants, as Studio Hour leaders, or as artists in residence. Approximately 20% of retreat participants attend through fellowships, many of which are conceived of and sponsored by women who've attended previous retreats, and which make attendance possible for gifted women whose financial circumstances would otherwise prohibit participation. All applications will be made online at www.aroho.org. Proposals to contribute to the retreat will be accepted May 1 through August 15, 2014; general admission applications will begin October 31, 2014 and will be accepted until all remaining positions are filled.

The Waves Discussion Series: The 2015 Retreat marks the inauguration of The Waves Discussion Series, named for Virginia Woolf's most experimental novel. In one way or another, all contributions to The Waves Discussion Series will engage the retreat's theme, "Writing Against the Current."

The Discussion Series will be constructed each day from the unique contributions of AROHO women, including Maxine Hong Kingston, AROHO's 2015 Fellow of Distinction. The series will be moderated by AROHO Board member and Red Hen Press founder, poet Kate Gale, PhD, with the assistance of poet Nicelle Davis. We welcome proposals from a diverse group of contributors, realizing that the more diverse contributors' age, interests, writing experience, ethnic and professional backgrounds, the richer the collective experience of transformation is likely to be. Exceptional contributions to the Series will be made available in video form and/or selected for publication in a book to be produced by Red Hen Press.

Since Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior* are both powerful examples of writing against the current, we will encourage each accepted writer to re-read these classics before the retreat, using them as a common springboard for the Discussion Series, allowing these novels to inspire contemporary reflections on culture and genre conventions as well as innovative publication and promotional strategies.

At the retreat, The Waves Discussion Series will include contributions that have been submitted and accepted before the retreat as well as responses created at the retreat, promoting an evolving discussion of collective exploration in a vital call and response, inviting participants to let go of preconceived notions of public sharing.

Proposals submitted before the retreat may take an infinite variety of forms: a lesson on craft, a question posed to the other women at the retreat, a poem, an academic study, an argument with Virginia Woolf, a song, a dramatic presentation, a writing prompt or exercise, a personal story, a guided meditation, a tribute, visual art, movement. We encourage proposals that will be of practical use to the working writers present. We also hope that many of the proposals will surprise us, engaging the theme and the needs of women writers in ways that the selection committee has not yet imagined.

Maxine Hong Kingston will open The Waves Discussion Series with thoughts on *Orlando*. Other invited speakers will continue to root the series with contributions of ten or even thirty minutes. **The challenge of a contributor submitting a proposal is to respond in five minutes or less, and to do so, within that five minutes, in a way that engages the other 100 women writers present at the retreat.**

Consults: Consultants offer services from which other retreat participants may benefit from on a one-on-one basis, including but not limited to manuscript review, publishing advice, creativity counseling, suggestions to improve a writer's online presence, or advice about finding funding. Consulting spaces are limited and require impeccable credentials. Participants proposing consultations will choose 4 one-hour or 8 half-hour sessions, and will name their fees. AROHO will pre-register clients online, schedule sessions, provide a space to conduct sessions at the Ranch, and collect consulting fees. After the retreat, AROHO will mail a check to consultants for fees collected, minus a 15% administrative charge. Consultants receive priority registration and are acknowledged on the website and retreat program.

Studio Hour: Optional literary craft, art, nature, and performance studios take place each morning, providing focused opportunities for interdisciplinary exploration within a smaller group setting. Each studio's goal will be to produce something by the end of the hour: a piece of artwork, writing, revision, performance, etc. Proposals should be for single, one-hour studio sessions, and should specify one of the tracks: literary craft, art, nature, or performance. Studio Leaders receive priority registration and are acknowledged on the website and retreat program.

Artist in Residence: Video and visual artists are selected based on project proposals that take place largely during the week. These projects should effectively integrate, explore, and engage the community of women that gathers, and represent an artistic interpretation of the community experience and retreat theme of "writing/creating against the current". Note: The Video residency is a combination of videography assignment and individual artistic projects. Video AIR will work as a team to secure and compile footage to be used in video of The Waves Discussion Series. Artists in Residence receive a waiver of the retreat tuition fee and room and board fees, while remaining responsible for travel costs. Artists in Residence receive priority registration and are acknowledged on the website and retreat program.

Fellowships: Fellowships enable the participation of gifted, committed writers whose financial circumstances would otherwise prohibit their attendance. Every woman applying for a fellowship should also submit a proposal for a Waves Discussion Series contribution, Consultant, and/or Studio Hour Leader. It is unlikely that a fellowship will be awarded without a program proposal.

The list of available fellowships provided by generous sponsors is available on the application. Fellowships are need- and merit-based. While it is an honor to receive an AROHO Fellowship, please only apply if you have a distinct financial need, and then only for those fellowships you could proudly represent if awarded to you. The Marg Chandler Fellowship is reserved for an applying writer who has attended a previous retreat; all other fellowships are weighted in favor of first time AROHO participants. All fellowships provide a waiver of retreat tuition and casita room and board unless otherwise indicated. Fellows receive priority registration and are acknowledged on the website and retreat program.

General Notes for All Applications: Proposals for The Waves Discussion Series should address, directly or obliquely the theme of Writing Against the Current. Proposals for studios need not directly engage this theme, though they may. Applications of proposals for contribution and for fellowships will be accepted online at www.aroho.org from May 1, 2014 through August 15, 2014. General applications, without proposals for program contribution, artist in residence, or fellowship requests, will be accepted beginning October 31, 2014, continuing until all remaining slots are competitively filled. Women are free to submit proposals in as many categories as desired, including proposals for fellowships and Artist in Residence positions. A flat \$15 administrative fee covers submissions and is required at the time proposals or general admission applications are submitted. Proposals will be reviewed by a 3-person peer review committee. Notification of acceptance of proposals will be made on or before October 1, 2014.

Submission of proposals for The Waves Discussion Series implies the willingness to have the eventual presentation both videotaped for distribution and published in the Red Hen Press compilation, though only selected presentations will eventually be included in the video and/or print compilation. Submission of any proposal also carries with it the intent to attend the entire, week-long retreat and to cover relevant tuition, housing, and transportation costs. Details about the retreat and accompanying costs are available at www.aroho.org.