



**The Loft Literary Center
Open Book Suite 200
1011 Washington Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415**

**CONTACT:
Chris Jones
612-215-2589
cjones@loft.org**



The Loft is Bringing a Major New Festival to the Heart of Minneapolis in May 2019

The event will aim to draw more than 10,000 booklovers to the Mill District of Minneapolis on May 11-12, 2019

Minneapolis, Minn—The Loft's Wordplay will launch May 11-12, 2019 and aims to be the biggest party for words that Minnesota has ever seen. Drawing talented and marquee authors from around the country and world, Wordplay will be a celebration that lives up to its name.



Festivals like Wordplay happen all over the country, connecting readers, writers, and books in a festive atmosphere. The Loft believes the time is right to bring an event like this to Minneapolis. “This city is exceptionally rich in readers and writers, so much so that Minneapolis is often rated as the most literary city in America,” says Britt Udesen, Executive Director of the Loft. “We believe it’s time to bring an event to town with ambitions to match that label.”

WHAT IS WORDPLAY?

Wordplay is a family-friendly book party in the heart of Minneapolis. It is intended for anyone who loves to read. From the space opera epic to the children’s chapter book, from the tragic teen novel to the laugh-out-loud memoir, from the stirring poetry collection to the mouthwatering cookbook. Wordplay is about bringing people together to celebrate the love of stories and poems.

But do we really need this? Haven’t people stopped reading? The simple answer is no. A 2016 Pew study found that 73% of people in the United States read at least one book in the last year. That number is much higher in Minnesota. That same study showed that readers are one of the most engaged and diverse segments of any community. They come from all walks of life and care about the places they live. Our communities are increasingly segmented and divided, and the Loft thinks it’s time to bring people together to celebrate something we have in common.

This will be a big gathering—a place for important and interesting conversations as well as one-of-a-kind events that foster curiosity and discovery. There will be author signings, pop up events, and children’s activities. There will be quiet corners and big gatherings. There will be food trucks, beer tents, special events, vendors, and lots and lots of books. It’s going to be one great big book party, and we can’t wait to host it.

WHICH AUTHORS WILL PARTICIPATE?

The Loft is not ready to announce the lineup yet, but we do know we’ll have dozens of visiting authors, including award-winners, crowd-pleasers, and conversation-starters. We anticipate making the lineup announcement in late 2018 or early 2019.



The Loft has hired Steph Opitz as its festival director. Steph comes to the Loft with a long legacy of helping plan world class book festivals. Most recently, she served as the literary director of the Texas Book Festival, one of the largest and most esteemed book festivals in the country.

"I'm thrilled to join the Loft," says Steph. "I think we can create a city-defining event with Wordplay and that's really exciting to be a part of."

The Loft will put out a call in the summer of 2018 for proposals from authors who would like to participate in Wordplay.

WHERE WILL WORDPLAY TAKE PLACE?

Wordplay will take place in the Mill District of Minneapolis. It will stretch across several outdoor and indoor venues in the area including (but not limited to) Mill City Museum and Open Book, home to the Loft. A full map of the festival footprint will be available in 2018.

HOW MUCH WILL WORDPLAY COST?

The Loft is still figuring out the venue and ticketing model for Wordplay events. Much of the festival will be free and open to the public. Some of the high-profile events and workshops will be ticketed and will have a cost associated with them. More details will be announced as the festival lineup is announced.

HOW DO PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?

The Loft will be seeking event sponsors, exhibitors, volunteers, and participating authors in the next few months. To learn more about Wordplay or any of these opportunities, please visit **loftwordplay.com** (site will not be active until December 12).

###END###

Incorporated in 1975, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation's leading independent literary centers. The Loft advances the artistic development of writers, fosters a thriving literary community, and inspires a passion for literature. Learn more at loft.org.