



Welcome back to all UMass Boston students, faculty and staff. The Joiner Institute looks forward to another academic year of public programming, research, and cultural events focused on the ongoing social consequences of war. Below is our Joiner newsletter with updates from this past summer's Joiner Writers' Workshop.

After a busy Spring of organizing, fighting back against budget cuts, and marching in the streets, the Joiner Institute was thrilled to host our 31st annual summer [Writers' Workshop](#)! With participants, faculty, and veterans from Iraq, Vietnam, and all across the U.S., new faculty joining us to teach, and familiar friends and faces visiting us again, it was a privilege to host a week of creative writing workshops, readings, and performances focusing on the social consequences of war.

Thank you to all our participants, faculty, veterans, Warrior Writers, visiting writers, and readers for joining us for this special workshop.

Joiner Writers' Workshop: A Thriving Community of Writers and Veterans

[Click for photos](#) from the 2018 Writers Workshop



Faculty and participants from the 2018 Writers' Workshop

Check out these recent essays by Joiner workshop writers about the value of the Joiner Writers' Workshop. If you have writing or work from the recent Writers' Workshop, please send to mitch.manning@umb.edu so we can share online and on social media.

- Deana Tavares [The Origins of Peace](#)
- Caleb Nelson [How Can We Save the Joiner Institute](#)
- Marc Levy [William Joiner Institute Under Siege](#)

Veteran Writers Discuss War, Trauma, and Recovery

During the Writers' Workshop, the Joiner Institute was honored to screen two short documentaries about veterans: local

filmmaker Federico Muchnik's documentary [Hunters in the Blackness: Veterans, Recovery and Hope](#) and the New Jersey Public Arts 2015 short film about the Warrior Writers titled [The Fog of War: Combat Paper and Warrior Writers](#).



From left to right: Veterans Anne Bartlieb, Doug Anderson, Preston Hood and moderator Sean Davis.

The film screening was followed by a talk back with veteran workshop participants. Doug Anderson and Preston Hood, two longtime members of the Joiner community and the Writers' Workshop, both of whom are

featured in Muchnik's documentary, shared their experiences returning from the Vietnam War and the role writing has had in their lives. Anne Bartlieb, a Warrior Writer, veteran and pilot shared her powerful personal story of war, mental health, and recovery. Sean Davis helped moderate the discussion and shared his own experiences from the Iraq War and writing his novel *The Wax Bullet War*. The powerful films, and the panelists' candor and stories made for an impassioned audience discussion.

Black Words Matter: Black Incandescence Reading



Black Words Matter readers with organizers Dan Wuenschel of the Cambridge Public Library, Danielle-Legros Georges and Mitch Manning

In honor of our multi-year grant with the [Boston Cultural Council](#) titled 'Black Words Matter', which provides a select group of writers of color from the Boston writing community scholarships to attend the week-long Joiner workshop, Boston poet Laureate Danielle Legros Georges helped to organize a special reading during the workshop week, Black Words Matter: Black Incandescence. Featuring an evening of 'glowing black work' by Joiner workshop alums Boyah Farah, Ashley Rose, and Danielle Legros Georges, the evening also included local luminaries Everett Hoagland and Askia Toure, both recently featured in *SOS - Calling All Black People: A Black Arts Movement Reader* published by UMass press in 2014. Thank you to our friends at the Cambridge Public Library for hosting an inspiring evening of black writing and poetry.

Her Story Is: Iraqi and American Women

Artists in Dialogue



Fulbright scholar and translator Noor Al-Atee reads Iraqi poet Hana Ahmed Mohammed.

Continuing the long-term collaboration between the Joiner Institute and Fort Point Theatre Channel, the Writers' Workshop featured a presentation of a new collaborative project between American and Iraqi artists called [Her Story Is](#).

Emerging out of the work of the [Odysseus](#) and [Boston-Basra](#) projects, "Her Story Is" seeks to build connections between Iraqi and American women artists. Culminating with a week long workshop in Dubai in December 2017, the "Her Story Is" presentation featured new work from Iraq by Elham Nasser al-Zabeedy, Thaira al-Mayahi, and popular artist Mary al-Barguth and US artists Anne Loyer, Jennifer Jean, Lillie Paquette and Amy Merrill. Live music was presented by Syrian singer [Nano Raies](#) and Palestinian oudist Ghassan Sawalhi.

Read an article about the performance by UMass Boston's Colleen Locke called [Writers' Workshop Goes Beyond Written Word to Express Fallout of War](#)



Legislative Theatre: #SavetheJoiner Performance



Amir al-Azraki and the Legislative Theatre players: Myles, Gustavo, Renata, Naomi, Josh, Melissa, Tracey, Beverly, and Ruby.

Channeling the spirit of Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' Joiner workshop participants wrote and performed their own short play during the workshop week around the theme of recent budget cuts at the Joiner Institute. Using stories by Joiner writer and veteran Joshua Lewin, co-founder of [Juliet](#) Restaurant in Somerville, and Barbara Lewis, Director of the [Trotter Institute](#) for Black Culture, director Amir al-Azraki then helped shape the story with workshop actors. The ensuing production was a live, and partially improvised, story of the value of the Joiner's work to UMass Boston and the veteran community with participation from audience members. Featuring local decision makers from the Boston Mayor's Office, Senator Pat Jehlen's office, and the UMass Boston unions, the Legislative Theatre production produced several possible solutions to the budget crisis including 1) a broad communication campaign to highlight the Joiner Institute's work and value and to 2) continue public demonstrations of support for the Joiner at the legislative, university, and public level. Thank you to all our actors and audience participants for their work and feedback.

*** If you have photos or videos from the Legislative Theatre, please send them to Deborah Kalin at deborahkalin@sisterlightning.com who is kindly working on editing a video of the performance that we will share on our site.

Inheriting the War Reading at Suffolk University



From left to right, Lily Bowen, Kevin Bowen, Bruce Weigl, Nguyen Phan Que Mai, Martha Collins, and Levi Rubek

Joiner workshop faculty and local Boston writers joined together at Suffolk University for a reading and discussion inspired by new Joiner faculty member Laren McClung's recent anthology [*Inheriting the War: Poetry and Prose by Descendants of Vietnam Veterans and Refugees*](#),

Featuring Kevin Bowen, former Joiner director, his daughter, poet Lily Bowen, Bruce Weigl, Vietnamese visiting writer Nguyen Phan Que Mai, Martha Collins, Levi Rubek and Laren McClung, the evening included poems, stories and reflections on the legacy of war and the power of poetry and creative writing to bring generations together. Thanks to Fred Marchant and the Suffolk Poetry Center for hosting a beautiful reading and discussion.

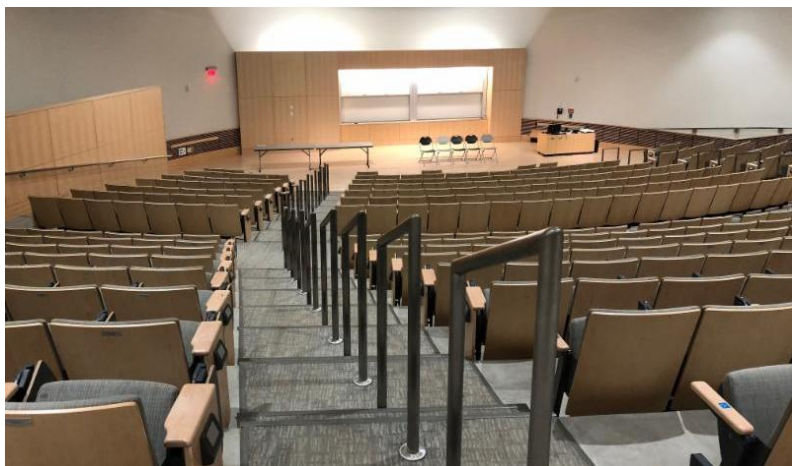
**Celebrating Nguyen
Ba Chung and**



Vietnamese Visiting Writers

At the conclusion of the Writers Workshop, the Joiner Institute celebrated the retirement of Nguyen Ba Chung after many years of service at the Joiner Institute. With readings by visiting writers Nguyen Bao and Dang Nguyet Anh and other friends and

poets, we toasted Chung's immeasurable contribution to Vietnamese literature in translation, his kind spirit, and dedication to cultural exchange through literature. All of Chung's translation titles are listed on the [Joiner Research and Publications](#) portion of our website and we are eager to see his next poems and translations. We wish Chung the best of luck in his retirement.



What's Next?

The Joiner Institute continues to fight for its longevity at UMass Boston in the face of ongoing budget cuts. Thanks to overwhelming support from both the Massachusetts House and Senate, a

recent State budget amendment was passed that guarantees the Joiner and other UMass Institutes funding for this year ("that funding for each center and institute at the University of Massachusetts at Boston shall be provided at an amount not less than in fiscal year 2018"). We look forward to meeting with the new Chancellor, as well as with our supporters, to discuss plans for moving ahead.

We will continue to reach out to our Joiner community for support in the coming months so stay tuned. We will send updates as we hear new

developments and we are always open to suggestions for new fundraising and program ideas. Please reach out to us if you have ideas!

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Joiner Institute and we look forward to fighting for a sustaining future to continue to address the consequences of war, a mission we desperately need in an era of enduring war.



Donate Today!

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