



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AWP California Dreaming After #AWP25

Norfolk, VA — Is the West Coast the best coast? The Association of Writers & Writing Programs community seems to think so! AWP held their annual conference and bookfair in Los Angeles, California, on March 26–29, with 10,000 attendees, 585 exhibitors representing 634 organizations, 375 on-site events at the Los Angeles Convention Center, and over 150 off-site events.

In support of the thousands of Angelenos who were affected by the devastating January wildfires, on Wednesday, March 26, AWP hosted the AWP Awards Reception & Benefit for LA Fire Recovery, sponsored by Live Talks Los Angeles and hosted by third-generation Angeleno Amber Tamblyn. The event provided an opportunity for attendees to donate to Arts for LA, a nonprofit advocacy organization that provides crucial support for communities, artists, and organizations to advocate for an equitable, healthy, and vibrant Los Angeles region through the arts. Additionally, throughout the conference, attendees wrote moving messages for LA through Letters to LA at #AWP25. These postcards will be shared with the Los Angeles community, with select postcards [posted](#) on AWP's [Instagram](#).

Interim Executive Director Michelle Aielli says, “Los Angeles was an absolutely wonderful host for #AWP25. Many people and organizations came together to discuss important and timely issues affecting writers and academic institutions, and it was a fruitful time for our community.”

On Thursday, March 27, Roxane Gay delivered a powerful and insightful keynote about her writing life, and the impact of the turbulent political and cultural climate on writers. Sharing humorous anecdotes from her own life, she concluded by encouraging writers to harness the power they have to effect change, saying, “The pen is not mightier than the sword; the pen is the sword.”





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The keynote address, along with all featured events and selected prerecorded events, will be available for registered attendees on the [virtual platform](#) until May 1. All [featured events](#) will be posted on AWP's YouTube channel later this year.

Other notable moments include the following:

#AWP25 was the inaugural year for the AWP Tribal Colleges & Universities Fellowship Program. Poet and writer Jake Skeets acted as creative advisor. Skeets reflected on the importance of this program, saying, "Native literature isn't just something to be preserved or something to remember . . . it's alive and happening now and it's shaping the future of the world of writing." Skeets gave his lecture "[Emergence & Becoming—Framing Native Poetics Beyond the 'Renaissance'](#)," on Saturday, March 29.

Acclaimed writer Tayari Jones served as creative advisor for the AWP HBCU Fellowship Program, in its third year. She delivered a moving lecture titled "[Black Words Are Black Wealth](#)," sponsored by IngramSpark, on Friday, March 28.

The HBCU MFA Think Tank provided space for creative writing educators from HBCUs across the nation to convene and explore the viability of MFA programs at HBCUs, where none currently exist.

#AWP25 Attendance at a Glance

- 10,000 attendees
- 1,000 with Saturday-only passes
- 300 virtual conference attendees
- Approximately 2,000 attendees took advantage of AWP's student discount (majority \$65-\$70 all-conference access).
- 700 attendees participated in the AWP Work-Exchange Program, which grants free registration to the conference in exchange for four hours of on-site conference support.
- 55 full scholarships were provided for the in-person conference, with most awarded to attendees in the Western region who identify as low-income, LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, or disabled.