

Sussex author to hit 6 cities on tour

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TEXTE INTÉGRAL

Though she didn't know all that it would entail, the idea of building communities was all Beth Powning needed to hear.

"We're all New Brunswickers but we don't really know each other's worlds," she said. "I think that's very, very important that we connect more with the other sectors and with people that don't speak the language that we speak everyday."

The Sussex author will be touring the province with 11 other writers in Faire communauté/Creating Community, a bilingual literary event aimed at forming relationships between experienced and non-experienced writers from different parts of the province and of different generations.

Organized by Acadian literary journal Ancrages, the six-stop tour will include writers from different backgrounds namely Acadian, English, Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqiyik and immigrant communities. The project is backed through the Canada Council for the Arts' New Chapter program.

Authors are encouraged to write a fresh piece on the theme of community.

"We are creating community because being with these other people has created a community," Powning said.

The Sussex writer has published six books - three novels and three works of literary non-fiction. She has taken up professional writing as her career for most of her life and is currently working on new novel.

With the help of translators and subtitles, the works of the authors will be presented in both English and French. Organizers are working to also include languages of Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik.

"It's very interesting to think of seeing your own words in another language because it not only changes it for you the author," Powning said. "You look at it and you think, 'I didn't write it in that language. Isn't that amazing? It has potential to be in all these different languages.'" It thus becomes accessible to people to whom it would not be accessible to."

The tour, which began Nov. 24 and will run until Dec. 9., will span from Bathurst, Rexton, Moncton, Saint John, Edmundston, and Fredericton.

"Some of us are travelling in a van so that we get to spend more time together," she said. "I only knew three of these people. But most of us had not met before. I think it's an amazing opportunity for us to know what's happening in the Francophone and Indigenous cultures."

Once the show is over, all of the writers' work will be published in an online magazine.

Powning said though she is visiting multiple communities, one thing will remain the same.

"I think that the message will remain. The message being that we are not separate communities that have a problem coming together...That is one of the great strengths of this province," she said. "We have these very distinct cultural communities and yet we're all New Brunswickers and we all are friendly and wanting to be friends with each other."

Tickets cost \$5 each and are available at the doors. Doors will open at 7:30 p.m., with shows starting at 8 p.m., except in Fredericton, where doors will open at 1:30 p.m. Authors will take the stage at 2 p.m.

Faire communautaire /Creating Community upcoming tour stops and dates

Friday, Dec. 8: Edmundston

Centre des arts d'Edmundston, 82 Canada Rd.

Saturday, Dec. 9: Fredericton

Picaroons Roundhouse, 880 Union St.

Credit: Tiffany Lewis