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Global Book Club Aims to Inspire Empathy

IAM Readers Guild to launch in January, featuring authors from around the world

NEW YORK, NY (November 16, 2009) – International Arts Movement will launch the IAM Readers Guild, a global book club featuring authors from Japan, England, the United States, India, and Italy, in January.

Each month, groups around the world will meet to discuss the book of the month, beginning with a list of questions that will be sent to all groups and welcoming spontaneous discussions as they arise. A member of each group will take notes and blog a brief summary of the group discussion after the meeting, allowing all the readers a wider experience of the book.

In his book *Refractions: A Journey of Art, Faith and Culture*, IAM Founder Makoto Fujimura writes, “Deeply engaged reading leads to perceptual awakening, stimulation of the core of the intuitive and experiential . . . What reading and writing can teach us is a deeper empathy that leads us to desire the best for others who are entirely different from us, and to long to communicate with them.” Inspired by Fujimura’s essay, IAM’s Programming Coordinator, Alissa Wilkinson, envisioned a platform to engage people globally around books that have proven themselves to be relevant cross-culturally.

“Becoming an engaged reader requires commitment and intellectual curiosity, but the rewards are great,” says Wilkinson. “The IAM Readers Guild is designed to allow readers to interact with others in their own community as well as the wider IAM global community, and to learn a ‘deeper empathy’ through experiencing great writing that wrestles with big ideas in many cultural contexts.”

The first book that the 2010 IAM Readers Guild will read is *Silence*, by Japanese author Shusaku Endo. The book is available in Japanese, English, Dutch and Swedish. Additional books on the list for 2010 include *The Supper of the Lamb* by Robert Farrar Capon, *The Violent Bear it Away* by Flannery O’Connor, and *Unaccustomed Earth* by Jhumpa Lahiri. Books by Wendell Berry, C.S. Lewis, Italo Calvino, Marilynne Robinson, Matthew B. Crawford, Chinua Achebe, Robert Clark and Annie Dillard will also be included.

For more information on joining the IAM Readers Guild or to connect with (or start) a local group in your area, visit www.IAMReadersGuild.com, where you can see the complete list of titles and available translations.

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