

**FY2016**  
**Criticism**  
**Panelist Biographies**

**Donald Mengay** is a native of Cleveland, Ohio and Denver, Colorado. Having studied painting for a year at Kent State University, photography at the Willoughby School of Fine Arts, and languages on a part-time basis at Borromeo College, he went on to earn degrees at Metropolitan State College in Denver (BA, Psychology), Denver University (MA, English) and New York University (PhD, Comparative Literature).

His research, which centers around representations of the body in literature, has been influenced primarily by his studies in art, but it has also been shaped significantly by post-structuralist feminist, race and queer theories of the 1980s and 90s. Moreover, he has learned several languages, which he continues to study and utilize in his comparative approach to literature; among these are French, German, Japanese, Latin and Spanish. He wrote his dissertation on the notion of the Other in the nineteenth-century gothic novel, after which he published articles on writers from the eighteenth century to the present., including John Cleland, Andre Gide, T.E. Lawrence, James Baldwin and Yukio Mishima. Lately he has been returning to works in Latin, which he encountered early in his education, rereading them in the light of contemporary critical theories and recent archaeological information.

In addition to courses in writing and Great Works (one of his favorites), he has taught electives in the Survey of British Literature; Contemporary Lesbian and Gay Literature; and Nature Writing. While at Baruch he has also co-taught at the CUNY Graduate Center (Lesbian and Gay Literature), and he participated in the CUNY Foreign Exchange Program, for which he taught at Paris University (Parix X).

**Rebecca Ritzel** is a freelance arts journalist and critic based in Washington, D.C. Since 2007, she has regularly written about music, theater and dance for The Washington Post, with bylines appearing in the Arts, Outlook, Style, Travel and Weekend sections. In January 2014, Rebecca became the paper's "Backstage" theater columnist .

Rebecca is also a theater critic for the (Washington) City Paper. Other publications that have published her work in 2015 include The New York Times, Slate, the Chautauquan Daily and American Craft magazine. In years past, her byline has been featured in more than two dozen American, British and Canadian publications.

She earned a master's degree in arts journalism from Syracuse University, and her undergraduate degree at an Ohio liberal arts college. When she's not on deadline, Rebecca teaches Writing for the Arts at the University of Maryland. Students in her Writing for the Arts classes learn practical skills to market themselves as artists (resumes, bios, grants) and/or moonlight as arts writers (program notes, reviews, interviews).