



## NEWS RELEASE

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[Berkeley Rep presents Fran Lebowitz - YouTube](#)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CULTURAL ICON FRAN LEBOWITZ RETURNS TO BERKELEY REP**

Celebrated Social Commentator to be Interviewed by Local Luminaries Over Six Nights

**January 18, 2022** - Berkeley Repertory Theatre is proud to announce a special presentation of [Fran Lebowitz in Conversation](#). Following her binge-worthy hit Netflix series *Pretend It's a City*, Fran Lebowitz returns for six appearances only at Berkeley Rep where she played to sold-out crowds in the Roda Theatre in 2018. In a cultural landscape filled with endless pundits and talking heads, **Fran Lebowitz** stands out as one of our most insightful social commentators. With her acerbic views on everything from current events and pet peeves to politics and the media, each discussion promises to be unique and highly entertaining.

The conversations will run **Friday, January 21 – Wednesday, January 26**. Each event will feature a dialogue with a different local luminary, followed by an open question & answer session with the audience.

**Schedule (subject to change)**

**Friday, January 21, 7:00pm: Dacher Keltner** (Professor of Psychology at UC Berkeley and founding director of the Greater Good Science Center)

**Saturday, January 22, 2:00pm: Jose Antonio Vargas** (Founder of Define American)

**Sunday, January 23, 1:00pm: Mark Danner** (Writer and Educator)

**Monday, January 24, 8:00pm: Scott Shafer** (Senior Editor for KQED's Politics and Government Desk)

**Tuesday, January 25, 8:00pm: Anna Sale** (Creator and host of the WNYC podcast *Death, Sex & Money*)

**Wednesday, January 26, 7:00pm: Peter L. Stein** (Peabody Award-winning documentary maker, film programmer and interviewer)

*"Fran Lebowitz's trademark is the sneer; she disapproves of virtually everything except sleep, cigarette smoking, and good furniture. Her essays and topical interviews on subjects ranging from the difficulty of finding an acceptable apartment to the art of freeloading at weekend houses have come to be regarded as classics of literary humor and social observation."*

— *The Paris Review*

Tickets can be purchased online at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org) or by phone, 510 647-2949. [Proof of vaccination](#) required and mask must be worn at all times.

## ABOUT FRAN LEBOWITZ

Fran Lebowitz has worked odd jobs, such as taxi driving, belt peddling, and apartment cleaning (“with a small specialty in Venetian blinds”), before being hired by Andy Warhol as a columnist for *Interview*. That was followed by a stint at *Mademoiselle*. Her first book, a collection of essays titled *Metropolitan Life*, was a bestseller, as was a second collection, *Social Studies*. By turns ironic, facetious, deadpan, sarcastic, wry, wisecracking, and waggish, Lebowitz’s prose is wickedly entertaining. Her two books are collected in the *Fran Lebowitz Reader*, with a new preface by the author. Lebowitz is also the author of the children’s book, *Mr. Chas and Lisa Sue Meet the Pandas*. Between 2001 to 2007, Lebowitz had a recurring role as Judge Janice Goldberg on the television drama *Law & Order*. She also had a part in the Martin Scorsese-directed film, *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). A raconteur if ever there was one, Lebowitz has long been a regular on various talk shows including those hosted by Jimmy Fallon, Conan O’Brien, and Bill Maher. In an interview with the *Paris Review*, Lebowitz said “I’m not a nervous person. I’m not afraid to be on TV. I’m only afraid when I write. When I’m at my desk I feel like most people would feel if they went on TV.” She can also be seen in various documentary films including the *American Experience* series on New York City, as well as *Mapplethorpe: Look at the Pictures* (2016), *Regarding Susan Sontag* (2014), and *Superstar: The Life and Times of Andy Warhol* (1990), among others. In 2010 Martin Scorsese directed a documentary about Lebowitz for HBO titled *Public Speaking*. A limited documentary series, *Pretend It’s a City*, also directed by Martin Scorsese, premiered on Netflix in 2021, and was nominated for the 2021 Emmys in the Outstanding Documentary Or Nonfiction Series category. In 2021 she was given the Forte dei Marmi Festival della Satira Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lebowitz was named to *Vanity Fair*’s International Best Dressed List Hall of Fame in 2008. She remains a style icon. Lebowitz lives in New York City, as she does not believe that she would be allowed to live anywhere else.

## INTERVIEWER BIOS

### Mark Danner (Writer and Educator)

Mark Danner is a writer and educator who has covered foreign affairs, war and politics for three decades. He has covered wars and political violence in Central America, Haiti, the Balkans, and the Middle East, among other stories. A longtime staff writer for *The New Yorker*, he is a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books* and many other publications. His books include *The Massacre at El Mozote*, *Torture and Truth*, *Stripping Bare the Body* and *Spiral: Trapped in the Forever War*. He is currently Class of 1961 Distinguished Chair in Undergraduate Education at Berkeley, where he teaches in the Graduate School of Journalism and the Department of English. His work has been recognized with a National Magazine Award, Three Overseas Press Awards, a Guggenheim, an Andrew Carnegie Fellowship and an Emmy. In 1999, Danner was named a MacArthur Fellow. [markdanner.com](http://markdanner.com)

### Dacher Keltner (Professor of Psychology at UC Berkeley and founding director of the Greater Good Science Center)

Dacher Keltner is a professor of Psychology at UC Berkeley and faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center ([greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu)). Dacher’s research focuses on the biological and evolutionary origins of compassion, awe, love, beauty, and humility, as well as power, social class, and inequality. Dacher is the author of several hundred scientific articles, several books, including *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life*, *The Compassionate Instinct*, *The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence*, and *AWE* (to be published January 3, 2023), and has written for popular outlets like the *New York Times*. Dacher has won many research, teaching, and service awards, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has consulted for Apple, Pinterest, Google, the Sierra Club, and was a scientific consultant for Pixar’s *Inside Out* and for the Center for Constitutional Rights in its work to outlaw solitary confinement.

### Anna Sale (Creator and host of WNYC’s podcast *Death, Sex & Money*)

Anna Sale is the creator and host of *Death, Sex & Money*, the interview podcast from WNYC Studios about “the things we think about a lot and need to talk about more.” After debuting at the top of the Apple podcast charts in 2014, *Death, Sex & Money* was named the #1 podcast of the year by New York Magazine in 2015. Anna won a Gracie for best podcast host in 2016 and the show won the 2018 Webby

and 2021 *Ambie* for best interview show. Before launching *Death, Sex & Money*, Anna covered politics for nearly a decade. She is the author of the book *Let's Talk About Hard Things*, which *The New Yorker* wrote "shows us how supportive listening happens." She grew up in West Virginia and now lives in Berkeley with her husband and two daughters.

**Scott Shafer** (Senior Editor for KQED's Politics and Government Desk)

Scott Shafer came to KQED in 1998 to host the statewide *California Report*. Prior to that he had extended stints in politics and government. Using that inside experience, Scott is now Senior Editor for KQED's Politics and Government Desk where he provides reporting, hosting and analysis while overseeing the politics desk. Scott co-hosts the weekly show and podcast *Political Breakdown* and he collaborated on *The Political Mind of Jerry Brown*, an eight-part series about the life and extraordinary political career of the former governor. For fun, he plays water polo with the San Francisco Tsunami.

**Peter L. Stein** (Peabody Award-winning documentary maker, film programmer and interviewer)

Peter L. Stein is a Peabody Award-winning documentary maker, film programmer and interviewer based in San Francisco. As a public speaker and moderator, he has conducted on-stage and broadcast interviews with such diverse talent as Kirk Douglas, Stephen Sondheim, Tony Kushner, Carlos Santana, Norman Lear, Lily Tomlin, Jhumpa Lahiri and Miranda July; he has taught both popular and graduate level courses in film, appeared as a guest on such programs as NPR's *Fresh Air* and *Weekend Edition*, and moderates the San Francisco chapter of The Cinema Club. During 11 years at PBS station KQED, he created a wide range of documentaries and series for national public television, including the six-hour series *Neighborhoods: The Hidden Cities of San Francisco*, which garnered a Peabody Award (for *The Castro*, which Peter wrote, produced and directed) and several regional Emmy Awards for *The Fillmore* (writer/producer) and *Chinatown* (executive producer). He recently produced and directed a biography of legendary chef Jacques Pépin for the PBS series *American Masters*, and his culinary television series have garnered four James Beard Awards. Peter's latest documentary, *Moving San Francisco*, addresses the history and future of Bay Area transit. He was Executive Director of the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival for eight years, and since 2014 has served as Senior Programmer for Frameline, the world's longest-running and largest LGBTQ+ film festival. He is a third-generation San Franciscan, and among other idiosyncrasies constructed a crossword puzzle published in the New York Times (on a Wednesday). More at [peterlstein.com](http://peterlstein.com) and @peterlstein.

**Jose Antonio Vargas** (Founder of Define American)

Jose Antonio Vargas is the founder of Define American ([DefineAmerican.com](http://DefineAmerican.com)), a non-profit culture change organization dedicated to humanizing the narratives surrounding immigrants. A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and Emmy-nominated filmmaker, he is the author of the bestselling memoir *DEAR AMERICA: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* (HarperCollins), and is currently working on a book on race, immigration and identity titled *White is Not a Country* (Knopf), to be published in 2023. A Tony-nominated producer of Heidi Schreck's *What the Constitution Means to Me*, he was also a producer, with Schreck, on the Broadway run of Antoinette Chinonye Nwandu's *Pass Over*. A product of the San Francisco Bay Area, an elementary school named after Vargas opened in his hometown of Mountain View, California in August 2019. Follow @joseiswriting and @defineamerican on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

## ABOUT BERKELEY REP

Berkeley Repertory Theatre has grown from a storefront stage to an international leader in innovative theatre. Known for its ambition, relevance, and excellence, as well as its adventurous audience, the nonprofit has provided a welcoming home for emerging and established artists since 1968. Over 5.5 million people have enjoyed nearly 500 shows at Berkeley Rep, which have gone on to win six Tony Awards, seven Obie Awards, nine Drama Desk Awards, one Grammy Award, one Pulitzer Prize, and many other honors. Berkeley Rep received the Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre in 1997. To formalize, enhance, and expand the processes by which Berkeley Rep makes theatre, The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep's Center for the Creation and Development of New Work was launched in 2012. The Berkeley Rep School of Theatre engages and educates some 20,000 people a year and helps build the audiences of tomorrow with its nationally recognized teen programs. Berkeley Rep's bustling facilities —

which also include the 400-seat Peet's Theatre, the 600-seat Roda Theatre, and a spacious campus in West Berkeley — are helping revitalize a renowned city. Learn more at [berkeleyrep.org](http://berkeleyrep.org)

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