

Writers' Rumpus

Authors and Illustrators wild about kids' lit!

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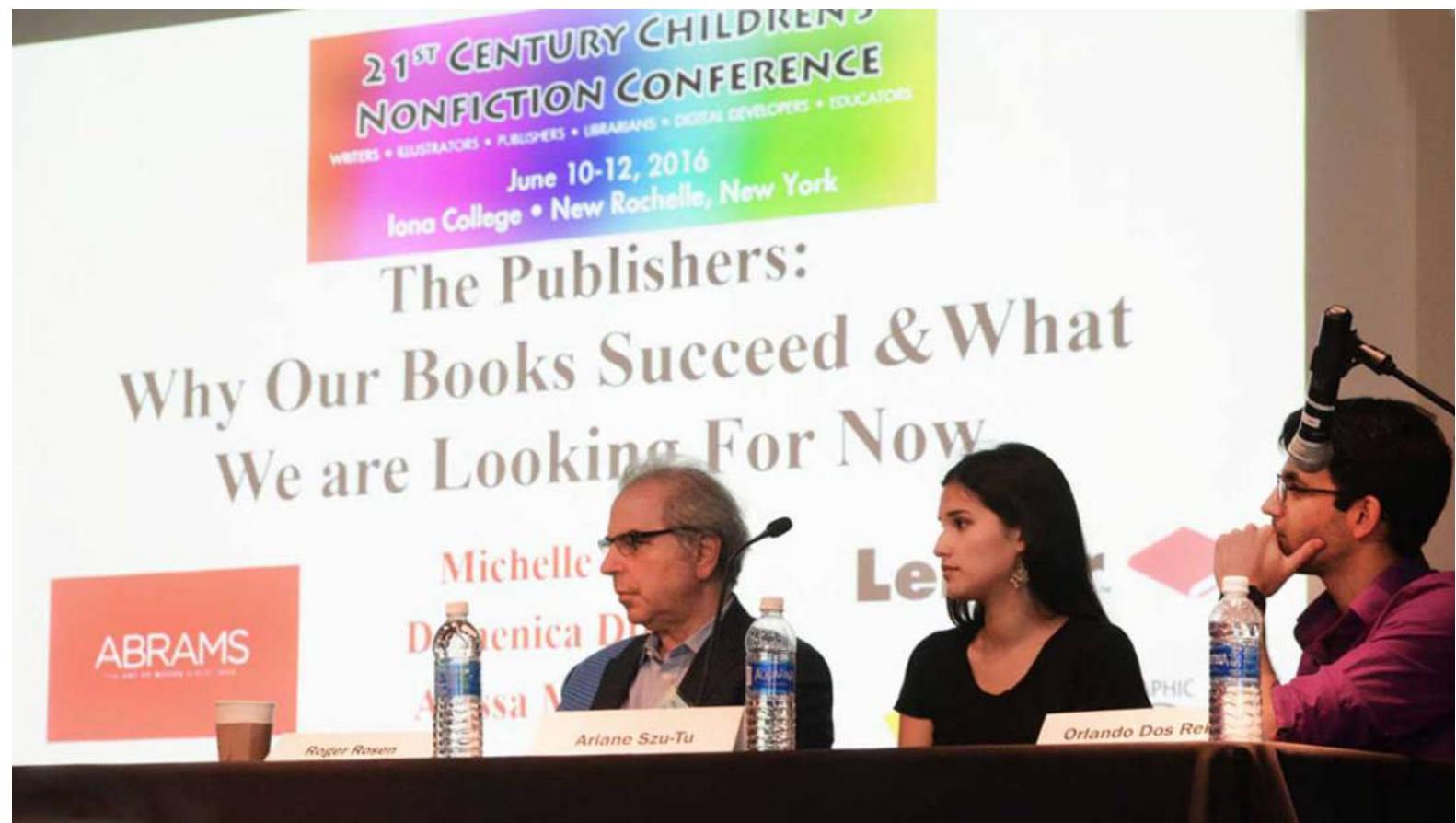
21st Century Children's Nonfiction Conference

1 Comment

By Sarah Lynne Reul

I just got back from another amazing conference – this time, it was the 21st Century Children's Nonfiction Conference (<http://www.21cnfc.com/>), held this year at Iona College in New Rochelle, just outside of NYC.

It was a series of intimate events that ran Friday – Sunday, with a solid mix of larger presentations (speakers and panels in the auditorium)...



Roger Rosen of Rosen Publishing, Ariane Szu-Tu of National Geographic Kids & Orlando Dos Reis of Abrams Books for Young Readers joined editors from Charlesbridge, Lerner & Capstone for a super informative panel. *Photo by Bo Zaunders.*

...a wide choice of one-hour workshop sessions...



Susannah Richards moderated a number of events, including this session with authors Candace Fleming & Steve Sheinkin. *Photo by Bo Zaunders.*

... and lovely breakout “open table” conversations, where established writers led lively conversations about nonfiction writing concepts.



Open table discussion in the library. *Photo by Bo Zaunders.*

I studied field biology in college, so I wanted to learn more about how I could better integrate my nonfiction interests into my illustration work and picture book writing. There were tons of networking opportunities – I really loved nerding out and hearing about all of the wonderful projects the other attendees were working on. I learned about black holes, Biosphere 2, biographies of incredible historical figures and the life histories of unusual creatures, including horseshoe crabs and giant squid.

The bulk of the people that I met were writers, although the conference offered a number of appealing illustration-related opportunities: an art show / contest, one-on-one portfolio reviews (I met with the wonderful Liz Frances of Scholastic), and a several stellar workshops. A couple of my favorites included “Surviving as an Illustrator” with illustrators [James Ransome](http://jamesransome.com/) (<http://jamesransome.com/>) & [Cathy Morrison](http://cathymorrison.blogspot.com/) (<http://cathymorrison.blogspot.com/>); “Writing and Illustrating for Nonfiction Magazines” with [MUSE magazine](http://shop.cricketmedia.com/MUSE-Magazine-for-Kids.html) (<http://shop.cricketmedia.com/MUSE-Magazine-for-Kids.html>) editor Johanna Arnone, as well as “Marketing, Building Your Brand & Promotional Videos” with author /illustrator [Roxie Munro](http://www.roxiemunro.com/) (<http://www.roxiemunro.com/>) and author /KidLit TV guru [Julie Gribble](http://kidlit.tv/about/) (<http://kidlit.tv/about/>) – at the end of that workshop, we broadcast live video on Facebook!

I think there’s tons of opportunity here for more illustrators to join in on the conversation about illustrating nonfiction, since visual communication is so important. I’d love to see more of the illustration community at next year’s event.

Overall, it was a great experience, hoping to make it back again next year. If you have any questions, please feel free to post below in the comments!



Prizes for the Trivia winners at Saturday's dinner! *Photo by Bo Zaunders.*

All of these wonderful photos are from writer/photographer Bo Zaunders – many thanks for sharing, Bo! You can find more of his work at [bozaunders.com](http://www.bozaunders.com/) (<http://www.bozaunders.com/>).

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Sarah Lynne Reul is an illustrator, writer and award-winning 2D animator who likes science, bright colors and figuring out how things work. Learn more at reuler.com.

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