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New writer in residence encourages writers to take it slow

Edmonton – Deborah Willis is MacEwan University’s writer in residence for the fall academic term. During her time at the university, the acclaimed short story writer will be available to meet with MacEwan students and the public for discussion, consultation or editorial comment—no matter their level of experience.

Willis’s experience working at a publishing house and seeing manuscripts at varying stages of completion means she has a lot of useful advice to offer—including the benefits of slowing things down. “Take your time at every stage of the process,” she says. “If you show something too early, before you really understand what it is, then you can be pushed off course.”

Willis’s first collection of short stories, *Vanishing and Other Stories*, was named one of *The Globe and Mail’s* Best Books of 2009 and was also nominated for the Governor General’s Award. Earlier this year she released her second collection, *The Dark and Other Love Stories*. While she serves as writer in residence, Willis will be working on her first novel and she hopes to complete a draft or two before she shares what it’s about.

“I’ve always liked reading and though I started writing at age nine, I probably only started to seriously think that I could write a book once I was in university,” say Willis. “Publishing a book seemed like a really foreign, amazing thing that only amazing people did, and then when I actually met writers for the first time, I was at the University of Victoria. I think, that a writer in residence can do and show anyone that it’s possible to write and publish a book.”

Willis’s term as MacEwan University’s Writer in Residence is from September to December, 2017. Previous writers in residence include Richard Van Camp, Curtis Gillespie, and current faculty member Jacqueline Baker.

To set up an appointment, please go to: wir@macewan.ca

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