



**Nevada Humanities Welcomes Journalists Masha Gessen and Jon Ralston  
in Conversation about Journalism and Democracy**  
Mellon-funded Conversations Continue throughout May with  
Final Conversation on Community Building

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**May 4, 2021—RENO, Nev—**Nevada Humanities will conclude its [Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation](#) series—a national initiative about civic and electoral engagement—with two events in May. [Why It Matters: Journalism and Democracy](#) will be held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 12 – 1 pm PDT on Zoom. Nevada Humanities welcomes journalists Masha Gessen (bestselling author of the National Book Award-winning *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia*) and Jon Ralston (editor of *The Nevada Independent*) in conversation about the state of journalism in the United States and abroad, current threats to a free press, and threats to democracy. The conversation will be moderated by Caesar Andrews, Professor and Leonard Distinguished Chair in Media Ethics and Writing at the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno. Registration is required; [register](#) for this event at [nevadahumanities.org](http://nevadahumanities.org).

Nevada Humanities will host the final event in this series, [Why It Matters: What It Means to Build Community](#), on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, at 4 – 5 pm PDT on Zoom. Meredith Oda, Mark Padoongpatt, Leilani Kupo, and Vida Lin, members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities of Nevada, join in a discussion about the challenges faced by minority populations to establish strong civic ties to their communities, state, and country. This event will be moderated by Anh Gray, public health editor for KUNR radio. Registration is required; [register](#) for this event at [nevadahumanities.org](http://nevadahumanities.org).

“Throughout 2021, Nevada Humanities has been hosting critical conversations about voting rights and the importance of civic participation in our state. We have seen that participation is only realized with access, and these *Why It Matters* events shine a light on the inequities in our system that prevent Nevadans from exercising their rights to vote and participate in democracy,” said Christina Barr, Executive Director of Nevada Humanities.

[Why It Matters](#) is a special series of online conversation programs through May 2021 around the topics of voting, electoral participation, and civic engagement, featuring academics, journalists, and community leaders working in the field. These events are meant to bring people together to talk, share, learn, and listen using the humanities to promote understanding through historical context and conversation.

*These events are produced by Nevada Humanities and are funded by the “Why it Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation” initiative, administered by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.*

**About Nevada Humanities:** Nevada Humanities is one of 56 independent, nonprofit state and territorial humanities councils affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. With offices in Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada Humanities creates public programs and supports public projects statewide that define the Nevada experience and facilitate the exploration of issues that matter to the people of Nevada and their communities. For more information about Nevada Humanities visit [nevadahumanities.org](http://nevadahumanities.org).

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