Speculative Fiction

A book talk with Garren from Bennett Martin Library
SpecFic: the *other* SF

Robert Heinlein coined it.

Margaret Atwood and Ursula K. Le Guin argued about it.

People like to make Venn Diagrams about it.
These were the people who made the speculative fiction that I loved. They could not empathize with people like me, and they didn’t want to try. They weren’t comfortable letting us into their archetypal playgrounds at all, let alone in any number. When we did appear, the roles we took were limited, non-threatening...

— from *How Long ‘till Black Future Month*

Nora K. Jemisin, first recipient of three Best Novel Hugos in a row.
When people ask why is it important for me to write diverse characters, I reply that I’m not going to write a future that doesn’t have me or my friends in it. That’s it – that’s as complicated as it is. We exist, therefore I’m going to write about us. It would have had to be an extremely conscious choice to not talk about sexuality, to not include varied sexualities and genders and types of families.

— from *The Irish Times* Aug 26, 2019

Becky Chambers, winner of the Hugo Award for Best Series
The Borderlands

We Need a New Atlas

Power Trip

Deadly Fun

Into the Weird

The Abyss

The Friends We Made Along The Way
Parable of the Sower
Octavia E. Butler (she/her)

The only lasting truth is Change.
Light from Uncommon Stars
Ryka Aoki (she/her)

Souls are cheap.
The trick is finding the right soul.
Plain Bad Heroines
emily m. danforth (she/her)

I wish some one would write a book about a plain, bad heroine so that I might feel in real sympathy with her.

—The Story of Mary MacLane, 1901
Outlawed

Anna North (she/her)

In the year of our Lord 1894, I became an outlaw. Like a lot of things, it didn't happen all at once.
Some things remain mysterious even if you think about them all the time.
You will take away my small stockpile of PO49 watercolors over my dead body.
Garren
Bennett Martin Public Library

Reading is fun. Reading is satisfying. Reading is how I get to know my world, even when I'm reading about other worlds.
I am suffering from fascination burnout. Of all the things that are fascinating, I have to choose just one or two.
You have to learn that things might not be real, even if they look familiar.
Sometimes the ones we call our heroes are the greatest monsters of all.
Who Fears Death
Nnedi Okorafor (she/her)

My mother once said that fear is like a man who, once burned, is afraid of a glow worm.
The Borderlands
We Need a New Atlas
Power Trip
Deadly Fun
Into the Weird
The Abyss
The Friends We Made Along The Way
I'm going to be his beautiful, sultry concubine. And then I'm going to rip his throat open in his sleep.
Empress of Forever
Max Gladstone (he/him)

A grin, Zanj had always felt personally, was more a state of mind than a set of the lips.
I decided that Orion needed to die after the second time he saved my life.
A Memory Called Empire
Arkady Martine (she/her)

This book is dedicated to anyone who has ever fallen in love with a culture that was devouring their own.
Worm
Wildbow (he/him)
https://parahumans.wordpress.com
The Borderlands
We Need a New Atlas
Power Trip
Deadly Fun
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The Abyss
The Friends We Made Along The Way
As a heartless killing machine, I was a terrible failure.
Deal With The Devil

Kit Rocha (plural they)

Supposedly, there are seven bunkers in cities around the country, each one containing the entire digitized contents of the Library of Congress on multiple servers.
It's not funny. I've got a naked drunk vampire running around in my orchard.
The Collapsing Empire
John Scalzi (he/him)

Really nice people don’t usually accrue power.
"I need you to trust me."
"I need you to be trustworthy."
The Borderlands
We Need a New Atlas
Power Trip
Deadly Fun
Into the Weird
The Abyss
The Friends We Made Along The Way
The capital was set aflame, too, and so was its library. All except for one small part.
Maxfield Parrish

Daybreak

Ecstasy
Two memories. Two bright minds which remember past events differently. It is an awkward situation. There exists no third person to say which of us is correct.
This Is How You Lose
The Time War
Amal El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone
(she/her & he/him)
I want to meet you in every place I ever loved. I would rather break the world than lose you.
The Borderlands
We Need a New Atlas
Power Trip
Deadly Fun
Into the Weird
The Abyss
The Friends We Made Along The Way
The Luminous Dead
Caitlin Starling (she/her)
Mexican Gothic
Silvia Moreno-Garcia (she/her)

It was easy to kiss someone when it didn’t matter.
Home is what you take with you, not what you leave behind.
Ice
Anna Kavan (she/her)

Fear was the climate she lived in.
Underwater, it’s not really crying.
Not that she would run. She'd never taken a wound to the back in her life and she wasn't starting now.
The Borderlands
We Need a New Atlas
Power Trip
Deadly Fun
Into the Weird
The Abyss
The Friends We Made Along The Way
Most boys believed they should be heroes: the stories told them so.
Raybearer
Jordan Ifueko (she/her)

People never listen to what you want. They listen to who you are.
Winter’s Orbit
Everina Maxwell (she/her)

Just because it’s not important doesn’t mean it’s not important to someone.
The Long Way To A Small, Angry Planet
Becky Chambers (she/her)

I can wait for the galaxy outside to get a little kinder.