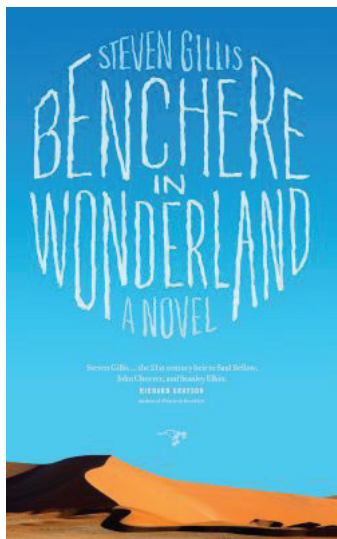

PRESS RELEASE

Benchere in Wonderland

Steven Gillis

Fiction
September, 2015



ISBN: 978-0-9904370-5-5
\$15.95 | Trade Paperback
312 pages | 5.5 x 9 | 13.6 oz.
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After the death of his wife, Michael Benchere, a renowned architect and sculptor, sets out to build his masterpiece in the Kalahari desert. In a surprising turn Benchere's sculpture becomes a mecca for artists, scholars, and a couple with plans to profit from Benchere's acclaim. Denying his role as the leader of a growing community, Benchere faces the consequences of placing his art in a corrupt and war-torn country. The result is a touching love-song to art and the inspiration it can provide those who are suffering.

The question of "Why create art?" quickly gives way to the more important: "What can it do?"

"A heartfelt story of what the terror of loss can drive an artist to do. Steven shares more in common with Benchere than we may think in that they both build beautiful things. There's so much humanity in this book that it's hard to carry the full weight of it, but I love it."

- **Anthony Doerr**, author of *All the Light We Cannot See*

"Steven Gillis's writing is sorrowful with the same kind of emotional landscape his characters must work in. There's real art in the voice and in the steps the novel takes. I cringed for Benchere, the pain he suffered, and then I smiled at what this drove him toward. The developments of the characters are what you'll want to see to the end."

- **Chelsea Cain**, author of *Heartsick*

"I was struck by the political charge that art held for Benchere. Steven Gillis explores what art can bring to those living under oppression in an honest way that doesn't sugar coat things as other writers may. What the book can't explore it leaves the reader to find on their own, resisting the urge to place its own assumptions on grander situations."

- **Cornel West**

"A combination of art, politics, and loss like we've yet to see. Across a desert there's no way to run from the pain of grief and Steven Gillis lets that drive his protagonist. The writing here is superbly focused and on target. It hits you in a way that only a skilled writer could do."

- **Publishers Weekly**

"What can I say that will convince you to read this book? That the landscape is beautifully rendered? That the crafted way in which Gillis lets the reader explore the sculpture on their own is something more books need to do? Gillis's investigation of the politics of art and everything that surrounds it is dead on."

- **Jeff Koons**



Steven Gillis is the author of the novels *Walter Falls*, *The Weight of Nothing*, *Temporary People*, and *The Consequence of Skating*, along with *Benchere in Wonderland* (Hawthorne Books, 2015) as well as the short story collections *Giraffes* and *The Law of Strings*. A three-year member of the Ann Arbor Book Festival Board of Directors, and a finalist for the 2007 Ann Arbor News Citizen of the Year, Steve taught writing at Eastern Michigan University before founding 826michigan in 2004. Steve is now the co-founder and publisher of Dzanc Books.

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