

Réney Warrington's *October* Launched at Bibliophilia with Izak de Vries

Posted By [Protea Boekhuis](#) On November 27, 2013 @ 11:18 am In [Events,Fiction,South Africa](#) | [Comments Disabled](#)

The vibrant colours and energy that suffused the air on a recent early summer's evening made [Bibliophilia](#) the perfect spot for the launch of [Réney Warrington's](#) debut novel in English, [October](#). This small independent bookshop, with its focus on books on photography and art and its in-store photographic exhibition, was where Afrikaans author and publishing consultant [Izak de Vries](#) came to talk about the latest publication from Protea Boekhuis. He was one of the first readers of the book, which is published in Afrikaans as [Oktober](#).

De Vries said Warrington touches on a number of topics that are seldom visited in the realm of the imagination that fiction permits.

After reading a short passage from the book, De Vries spoke about Warrington as a photographer and the [photographs contained in the book](#). He praised her deft interweaving of the images and text as an integral part of the book.

"Every chapter starts with a black and white photo, and there are colour photos at the book's centre," said De Vries. "These represent the empty spaces of the narrator Jo Bester's life." He chatted to Warrington about the way her artistry as a photographer informs her writing. She said, "Often the thing you don't photograph, what you leave out and what you don't discuss is more powerful by its absence." De Vries reflected on the toys in the images, which he described as almost more powerful than the children who played with them because they are truly missing from the narrator's life.

Jo, a lesbian, has been forbidden by her homophobic family from seeing the niece and nephew with whom she has a vital and meaningful connection. Warrington writes from firsthand experience: "All I had left was the empty spaces where they had lived." She had endured the grief by transforming the bitter blow life dealt her into fiction and images. She said *October* had touched a raw nerve, giving voice to the loss that many queer people experience when families reject them and deny them access to the children they have loved.

The book also touches on the theme of disability and resilience, and the beauty of what happens when people make real choices in the name of love.

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[Liesl Jobson](#) *tweeted live from the launch using #livebooks*



Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@izakdevries](#) reads extract from *October*. Photographer in the story. Lots of photographers in the audience tonight.

[#livebooks](#)

6:57 PM - 8 Nov 2013





Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@izakdevries](#) gives animated performance, offering flavour of [@ReneyWarrington](#)'s voice with extract from October. [@ProteaBoekhuis](#) #livebooks

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@reneywarrington](#)'s book is full of photographs. Empty spaces in Jo's work appear in the book, says [@izakdevries](#). #livebooks [@ProteaBoekhuis](#)

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@reneywarrington](#) on losing access to children in homophobic family. She took photos of children's empty bedrooms. Space of loss. #livebooks

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1 RETWEET



Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@izakdevries](#) asks [@reneywarrington](#) about Jo's empty spaces in London exhibition where the void is comprehended. #livebooks [@ProteaBoekhuis](#)

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@reneywarrington](#): a child enables Jo, the main character, to get over herself because the child needs her. [#livebooks](#)

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Liesl Jobson

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[@reneywarrington](#): We live in a society where loss doesn't get chance to be mourned. Get on with life. Not much empathy for grief. [#livebooks](#)

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Liesl Jobson

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[@reneywarrington](#): Jo buys gifts for the children she may no longer see, makes a memory box for day she might see them again. [#livebooks](#)

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



[@reneywarrington](#): The story of October has touched many people in gay community. This is a common experience of loss of access. [#livebooks](#)

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



@izakdevries: The act of writing is an act of defiance. You define the emptiness by putting it out there where it can be seen. #livebooks

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



@reneywarrington: October is a love story of a relationship with an expiry date. This is not for ever. #livebooks @ProteaBoekhuis

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Liesl Jobson

@LieslJobson



@reneywarrington grew up with a disabled brother. This enabled her to tell story of a character who can't speak. #livebooks @ProteaBoekhuis

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Book details

- *October* by Réney Warrington
EAN: 9781869199319
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