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For Immediate Release

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Claudia Rankine, Acclaimed Writer, Receives Princeton's Holmes National Poetry Prize and Lectures at Lewis Center for the Arts
Poet, playwright and editor discusses "On Whiteness and The Racial Imaginary Institute" for the 2016-2017 Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes Lecture



Photo caption: Claudia Rankine, recipient of the Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes National Poetry Prize awarded by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University. She will present a talk on March 1.

Photo credit: Courtesy Claudia Rankine

What: A talk entitled "On Whiteness and The Racial Imaginary Institute," the 2017 Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes Lecture at Princeton University

Who: Claudia Rankine, acclaimed poet and recipient of the Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes National Poetry Prize awarded by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University, presented by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing

When: Wednesday, March 1 at 5:00 p.m.

Where: James M. Stewart '32 Theater at 185 Nassau St., Princeton
Free and open to the public

(Princeton, NJ) Writer Claudia Rankine has been selected as the latest recipient of the Theodore H. Holmes '51 and Bernice Holmes National Poetry Prize awarded by the Lewis Center for the Arts' Program in Creative Writing at Princeton University. She will present a talk entitled "On Whiteness and The Racial Imaginary Institute" on March 1 at 5:00 p.m. in the James M. Stewart '32 Theater at 185 Nassau Street. The event is free and open to the public.

The Holmes National Poetry Prize was established in memory of Princeton alumnus Theodore H. Holmes, a Class of 1951 biology major who became a poet, and his sister Bernice. The prize is presented each year to a poet of special merit as selected by the faculty of the Creative Writing Program, which includes writers Jeffrey Eugenides, Jhumpa Lahiri, Paul Muldoon, James Richardson, Tracy K. Smith, Kirstin Valdez Quade, Susan Wheeler, and Edmund White. First made to Mark Doty in 2011, the prize has since also been awarded to Eduardo C. Corral, Natalie Diaz, Marie Howe, Matt Rasmussen and Evie Shockley. The prize's candidates are nominated by faculty in Princeton's Program in Creative Writing. Recipients receive a monetary prize and present a lecture at Princeton.

Claudia Rankine is the author of five collections of poetry, including *Citizen: An American Lyric* and *Don't Let Me Be Lonely*; two plays including *Provenance of Beauty: A South Bronx Travelogue*; numerous video collaborations, and is the editor of several anthologies including *The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind*. For *Citizen*, Rankine received the Forward Prize for Poetry, the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry (*Citizen* was also nominated in the criticism category, making it the first book in the award's history to be a double nominee), the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award, the PEN Open Book Award, and the NAACP Image Award. A finalist for the National Book Award, *Citizen* also holds the distinction of being the only poetry book to be a *New York Times* bestseller in the nonfiction category. Among her numerous awards and honors, Rankine is the recipient of the *Poets & Writers'* Jackson Poetry Prize and fellowships from the Lannan Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, United States

Artists, and the National Endowment of the Arts. She lives in New York City and teaches at Yale University as the Frederick Iseman Professor of Poetry.

“Whiteness as a source of unquestioned power, and as a ‘bloc,’ feels itself to be endangered even as it retains its hold on power,” explains Rankine. “Given that the concept of racial hierarchy is a strategy employed to support white dominance, whiteness is an important aspect of any conversation about race. This talk will make visible that which has been intentionally presented as inevitable so that we can move forward into more revelatory conversations about race.”

Rankine is currently teaching an advanced poetry course as a visiting professor of creative writing at Princeton. She visited Princeton last year as part of the Althea Ward Clark W’21 Reading Series, at which she followed a reading with an onstage conversation with Tracy K. Smith, the director of the Program in Creative Writing.

For more information on the Program in Creative Writing or the more than 100 other events offered each year by the Lewis Center for the Arts, visit arts.princeton.edu.

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