

Monday, May 20, 2019

Bill Chats: Claudia Rankine and Tracy K Smith

Company: New York Live Arts
Venue: New York Live Arts
Location: New York, NY

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Bill T. Jones talks with Claudia Rankine, poet, essayist, playwright, and the editor of several anthologies, and Tracy K. Smith, poet and educator, who is currently serving as the 22nd Poet Laureate of the United States, an office she assumed in 2017.

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 won 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 Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry, Poets & Writers' Jackson Poetry Prize and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, United States Artists, and the National Endowment of the Arts. She is a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets and teaches at Yale University as the Frederick Iseman Professor of Poetry.

In 2017, Tracy K. Smith was appointed the 22nd United States Poet Laureate. She is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir *Ordinary Light* (Knopf, 2015) and three books of poetry, including her most recent *Wade in the Water* (Graywolf, 2018). Her collection *Life on Mars* won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize and was selected as a New York Times Notable Book. *Duende* won the 2006 James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets and an Essence Literary Award. *The Body's Question* was the winner of the 2002 Cave Canem Poetry Prize. Smith was the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Writers Award in 2004 and a Whiting Award in 2005. In 2014 the Academy of American Poets awarded Smith with the Academy Fellowship, awarded to one poet each year to recognize distinguished poetic achievement. She is the Roger S. Berlind '52 Professor in the Humanities, and Director of the Creative Writing Program at Princeton University.

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