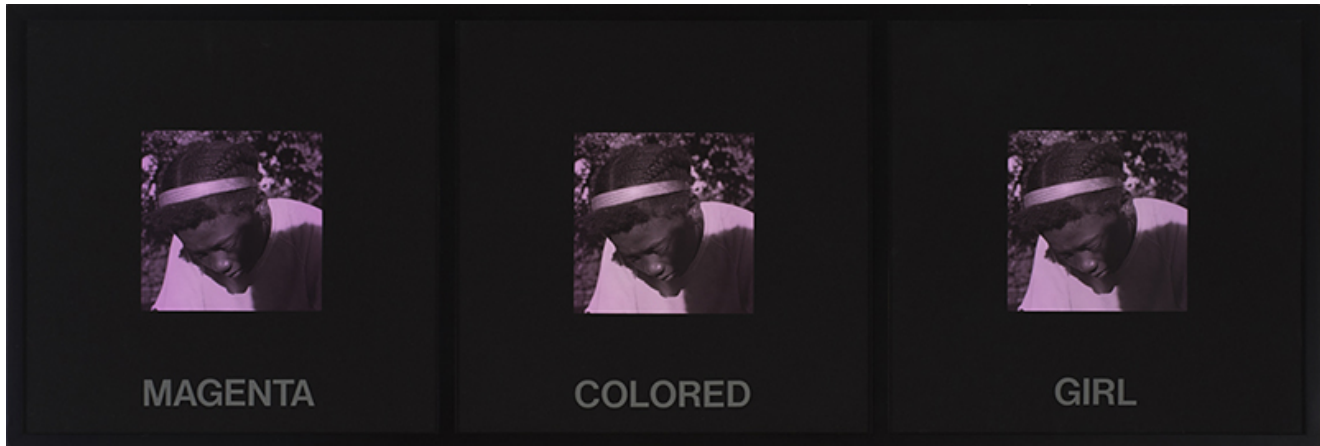


Spencer Museum announces KU Common Work of Art

[KU news.ku.edu/2017/08/23/spencer-museum-announces-ku-common-work-art](http://news.ku.edu/2017/08/23/spencer-museum-announces-ku-common-work-art)

August 23, 2017

Wed, 08/23/2017



LAWRENCE — The Spencer Museum of Art has selected “Magenta Colored Girl” by Carrie Mae Weems as the KU Common Work of Art to accompany the 2017–2018 KU Common Book, “Citizen: An American Lyric” by Claudia Rankine.

“Citizen” uses poetry, images and narrative to recount racial aggressions during the 21st century. The text features “Blue Black Boy,” another work by Weems from the same series as “Magenta Colored Girl.” Both “Magenta Colored Girl” and “Citizen” demonstrate aspects of racism through form and content.

Weems asked Rankine about her strategic use of words and images in “Citizen” during a shared public lecture in 2015 reported on by The Guardian. Rankine said, “Race is structural in our country, but it’s often triggered by the visual.”



The Common Work of Art will be on display in the Spencer Museum’s Jack and Lavon Brosseau Center for Learning through the fall 2017 semester. Additionally, the museum has reproduced the text of two pages from “Citizen” on one wall of the learning center. The text lists the names of African-Americans who have been killed, beginning with Jordan Russell Davis and ending with Philando Castile.

Now through Sept. 10, the learning center will also include the installation “In Conversation with the 2017–2018 Common Book,” which will draw on the Spencer’s collection to create a larger conversation about themes in “Citizen” through works of art.

“Through the Common Work of Art, the Spencer Museum of Art is part of a vibrant shared experience that unites our university's first-year students,” said Kate Meyer, Spencer Museum curator of works on paper. “We want all KU students to know that the Spencer is a place for them.”

This year's Common Work of Art initiative is supported by the Jedel Family Foundation.

Related Programming

Through Sept. 10

Exhibition: “In Conversation with the 2017–2018 Common Book” / Spencer Museum of Art

This installation in the museum's Jack and Lavon Brosseau Center for Learning includes the 2017–2018 KU Common Work of Art and other art from the museum's collection that draws on themes from “Citizen.”

Sept. 7

KU Common Book Lecture with Claudia Rankine / 7 p.m. / Lied Center

Recipient of the 2016 MacArthur Fellowship, Claudia Rankine is the author of five collections of poetry, including the 2017–2018 KU Common Book “Citizen: An American Lyric.” She is the editor of several anthologies, including “The Racial Imaginary: Writers on Race in the Life of the Mind.” She also co-produces a video series, “The Situation,” alongside John Lucas, and she is the founder of the Open Letter Project: Race and the Creative Imagination. Among her numerous awards and honors, Rankine is the recipient of the Poets & Writers' Jackson Poetry Prize and fellowships from the Lannan Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She lives in New York City and teaches at Yale University as the Frederick Iseman Professor of Poetry.

Sept. 13

Global Film Festival: “Whose Streets?” / 5:30–7:30 p.m. / Spencer Museum of Art, Auditorium

“Whose Streets?” (2017) is an unflinching look at the Ferguson uprising after unarmed teenager Michael Brown is killed by police. The film opens the Global Film Festival, a series of four films curated by first-year students in conjunction with the Spencer Museum's exhibitions. This film is screened in conjunction with the 2017 Common Work of Art. Running time: one hour, 30 minutes. Not rated.

Image: Carrie Mae Weems, “Magenta Colored Girl,” 1989, Museum purchase: 1993.0031.

The University of Kansas is a major comprehensive research and teaching university. The university's mission is to lift students and society by educating leaders, building healthy communities and making discoveries that change the world. The KU News Service is the central public relations office for the Lawrence campus.

kunews@ku.edu | 1450 Jayhawk Blvd., Suite 37, Lawrence, KS 66045