A NEW AESTHETIC EDUCATION:

Learning to Love Strangeness

DORIS SOMMER

Harvard University

A conversation about the future of the Humanities in research and in action

Doris Sommer is Ira and Jewell Williams Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. She is the author of Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America (1991); Proceed with Caution when Engaged by Minority Literature (1999); Bilingual Aesthetics: A New Sentimental Education (2004); and, most recently, of The Work of Art in the World: Civic Agency and Public Humanities (2014).

Massive migrations and multicultural settings strain our paradigms of patriotism and rationality to the breaking point. Political impasses are the new normal, worldwide. Friedrich Schiller’s advice to opponents during the Reign of Terror in France was to sidestep conflict with surprising moves called art. The Enlightenment that he learned from Kant and hoped to ground in everyday creative practices—a new culture that generates surprise and a taste for novelty—is ever more urgent. Meanwhile, we have also inherited Herder’s dismissal of Kant’s cosmopolitanism, his preference for no-nonsense blood and earth nationalism. May the innate human faculty to play, Schiller’s Spieltrieb, energize our personal and collective creations to stimulate a new sensibility, sturdy and flexible enough to reinvent democratic multi-cultures!

THURSDAY
NOVEMBER 29, 2018
5:00PM–7:00PM

THE ZIMMERLI MUSEUM, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
71 HAMILTON STREET, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ

Sponsored by Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research in the Humanities and Arts