Poéticas para el siglo XXI
A Latin American, Caribbean and Trans-Atlantic Poetry Forum at UT Austin

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Framework

What is the place of poetry and what are the new poetics that have taken shape in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Africa in the recent two decades (1990-2010)? To what extent do contemporary poets and their poetics establish new ways to inhabit and imagine the urban and natural, local and global, national and transnational, print and digital spaces of the late twentieth century and the early twenty first century? What type of critical mapping can we construct over the vast and disparate panorama of contemporary poetry? How do literary conventions and innovations co-exist within this palimpsest of poetics? With these key questions in mind, we, a group of literature faculty, have organized an annual literary and academic colloquium for an initial period of 5 years at The University of Texas at Austin.

Drawing on texts from Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States, Spain and Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking Africa, our initiative imagines itself as an exploration of the heterogeneous poetics that have been in circulation in the recent two decades (1990-2010). These poetics constitute a varied panorama of trends and themes that ranges from urban slang, body performance and cyber poetics to new forms of intimate lyricism, formalisms, surrealisms and baroques; from new urban languages to new forms of aestheticism; from poetry slams to textual experimentalism; from poetics of place, territory and the body, social and economic margins, racial and ethnic citizenships, to the imaginaries of migrant and immigrant subjectivities that are taking shape within the current process of globalization. Through our series of colloquia, we will create a forum for critical and collective reflection on these multiple literary and aesthetic routes; and, above all, we will be able to offer—to our intellectual community on campus and in Austin—a space for the very enjoyment of poetry.

Agenda

Our initiative aims to bring to campus contemporary poets and scholars in the month of April every year. We will annually have a one-afternoon colloquium, which will be divided in two segments: 1) the presentation and discussion of two or three academic papers on the trope that articulate the corresponding year’s colloquium; and, 2) a poetry reading by and conversation with our guest poets. Each year we plan to publish
the materials (academic papers and poems) as well as record the poetry readings in order to file and store “contemporary poetic voices” at the Benson Library.

Across the years, our guest poets—through their poetry readings—and two or three guest scholars—through academic papers—will be asked to address the poetic trend(s) in discussion.

Each year, two or more faculty will be in charge of conceptualizing and coordinating the colloquium. Our agenda is, in this sense, open and flexible.

Poetry readings will be primarily delivered in the poets’ languages; if available, translations into English will be provided in print.