



Contact: Paula M. Krebs
646 576-5102, awards@mla.org

**MLA'S MATEI CALINESCU PRIZE AWARDED TO KATERINA CLARK FOR
EURASIA WITHOUT BORDERS; ADA SMAILBEGOVIĆ RECEIVES HONORABLE
MENTION FOR *POETICS OF LIVELINESS***

New York, NY – 7 December 2022 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced its seventh annual Matei Calinescu Prize for a distinguished work of scholarship in twentieth- or twentieth-first-century literature and thought. The winner is Katerina Clark, professor of comparative literature and of Slavic languages and literatures at Yale University, for *Eurasia without Borders: The Dream of a Leftist Literary Commons, 1919–1943*, published by Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. Ada Smailbegović, assistant professor of English at Brown University, will receive an honorable mention for *Poetics of Liveliness: Molecules, Fibers, Tissues, Clouds*, published by Columbia University Press.

The Matei Calinescu Prize was established in 2016 in honor of Matei Calinescu, a Romanian poet and scholar who taught at Indiana University, Bloomington. The prize is one of nineteen awards that will be presented on 6 January 2023, during the association's annual convention, to be held in San Francisco. The members of the selection committee were Emily Apter (New York Univ.); Jonathan Eburne (Penn State Univ., University Park), chair; Jed Rasula (Univ. of Georgia); and Hertha D. Sweet Wong (Univ. of California, Berkeley). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

Eurasia without Borders: The Dream of a Leftist Literary Commons, 1919–1943 is a brilliantly researched political history of world literature that reveals how writers reimagined Eurasia in response to Soviet internationalism. Katerina Clark argues that Soviet, European, and Asian writers on the Left attempted to create a single cultural space in service of an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-fascist aesthetic. The resulting "socialist literary internationalism" was anything but monolithic, and Clark's study deftly traces the conflicting pulls of the national and the international, heeding at once Marxist ideological platforms and discrete vernacular or national literary traditions. The book's rich treatment of internationalism and the role of translation in the formation of a leftist literary commons is deeply resonant within literary studies and contemporary geopolitics alike. Magisterial in scope, lucidly written, and regionally timely, *Eurasia without Borders* is literary-political history at its best.

The committee's citation for the honorable mention reads:

Poetics of Liveliness: Molecules, Fibers, Tissues, Clouds is an imaginative, readable, and poetically inspired meditation on the thematics of vitalism and atmosphere in contemporary poetics and in their engagement with the natural sciences. Ada Smailbegović's attention to perceptual modes and self-organizing systems yields a

nuanced conceptual architecture that is organized not around monumental achievement but instead around “soft matter,” an understanding of form understood as “patterns of arrangement and shaping” that unfold and shift in time rather than as a superimposition of form over matter. Smailbegović’s study draws on philosophy, biology, aesthetics, and affect studies, and her poetic ear for the authors, concepts, and systems she writes about is profoundly attuned to the sensory. *Poetics of Liveliness* offers a significant contribution to the study of new materialisms, bridging contemporary poetics, biome studies, critical race theory, and environmental humanities.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 20,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The prize is presented under the auspices of the MLA’s Committee on Honors and Awards. Other publication awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the Lois Roth Award; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, for African Studies, for East Asian Studies, for Middle Eastern Studies, and for South Asian Studies; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. A complete list of current and previous winners can be found on the [MLA website](#).