



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

**MLA AWARDS PRIZE FOR AN EDITED COLLECTION TO *THE AESTHETIC LIFE OF INFRASTRUCTURE*; *MIDDLE EASTERN GOTHICS* AND *MEXICAN LITERATURE AS WORLD LITERATURE* RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS**

New York, NY – 6 December 2023 – The Modern Language Association of America has announced the winners of the second Modern Language Association Prize for an Edited Collection. Kelly M. Rich, associate professor of English at Harvard University; Nicole M. Rizzuto, associate professor of English at Georgetown University; and Susan Zieger, professor of English at the University of California, Riverside, will receive the award for *The Aesthetic Life of Infrastructure: Race, Affect, Environment*, published by Northwestern University Press. Two honorable mentions have been awarded. Karen Grumberg, the Arnold S. Chaplik Professor of Israel and Diaspora Studies and director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas, Austin, is receiving an honorable mention for *Middle Eastern Gothics: Literature, Spectral Modernities and the Restless Past*, published by the University of Wales Press. Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado, professor of Spanish, Latin American studies, and film and media studies at Washington University in St. Louis, is receiving an honorable mention for *Mexican Literature as World Literature*, published by Bloomsbury.

The prize is one of twenty-two awards that will be presented on 5 January 2024 during the association's annual convention, to be held in Philadelphia. The members of the selection committee were Bernadette Andrea (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara); Ambreen Hai (Smith Coll.), chair; Alexa Alice Joubin (George Washington Univ.); and Benita Sampedro Vizcaya (Hofstra Univ.).

The committee's citation for *The Aesthetic Life of Infrastructure* reads:

Infrastructure, like the body, is a relation rather than an entity. *The Aesthetic Life of Infrastructure: Race, Affect, Environment* charts new paths for, and decolonizes, both literary and infrastructure studies by proposing a poetics of infrastructure as a set of temporally unstable forms. Kelly M. Rich, Nicole M. Rizzuto, and Susan Zieger have brought together essays that masterfully demonstrate how these forms govern embodied experiences and produce ambient conditions of life in a range of genres. Racial capitalism, sexual labor, and the plantation system inform imperial infrastructures, and the shadow histories excavated by the lens of infrastructural aesthetics counter the assumed oppositions rooted in the traditional privileging of infrastructure's technicity: nature versus built environments or humans versus objects. This volume illuminates multiple fields by attending to infrastructure's figural, material, and situated dimensions.

The committee's citation for *Middle Eastern Gothics* reads:

*Middle Eastern Gothics: Literature, Spectral Modernities and the Restless Past* reorients the literary mode of the Middle Eastern gothic by using as its frame of reference a robust but neglected body of writing in Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish, and Persian. Through a practice of relational reading, the volume assesses the limits of the global as a structuring term, explores transnational parallels by centering the gothic in non-European sites of production, and explicates the haunting themes of trauma, catastrophe, and violence grounded in the histories of these regions. The contributions in Karen Grumberg's edition cover works from pre-Islamic Arabia to post-9/11 America to offer astute readings of literary traditions, texts, and histories that not only recenter the gothic but also situate better-known works such as Aḥmad Sa' dāwī's *Frānkishtāyn fī Baghdād* (*Frankenstein in Baghdad*) within a corpus of previously inaccessible works. Relevant to multiple disciplines, *Middle Eastern Gothics* will be a valuable teaching tool.

The committee's citation for *Mexican Literature as World Literature* reads:

Instead of pleading for inclusion in Eurocentric canons, the contributors to Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado's *Mexican Literature as World Literature* examine how a vast array of Mexican literary production since the colonial period has been inscribed in worldwide networks of material and intellectual circulation. The commercial, religious, and cultural infrastructures of the Spanish empire played a critical role in the emergence of Mexico City as a global hub, and Mexico continued to be a pivotal center of world literary circuits in the post-Independence period after the 1820s, a site of intellectual cosmopolitanism in the nineteenth century and an arena of world-literary consciousness in the twentieth. These theoretically well-informed essays, covering half a millennium of vibrant literary production, engage provocatively with complex ongoing debates in Latin American studies and approach world literature as an unresolved question worthy of sustained attention from scholars of the global Hispanophone.

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 750 scholarly and professional development sessions. More information on MLA programs is available at [www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org).

The MLA Prize for an Edited Collection was established by the MLA Executive Council in 2020 and is awarded biennially in odd-numbered years.

The MLA Prize for an Edited Collection is awarded under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other 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 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 Matei Calinescu Prize; 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](#).