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MLA'S KATHERINE SINGER KOVACS PRIZE AWARDED TO ÉRIC MORALES-FRANCESCHINI FOR *THE EPIC OF CUBA LIBRE*; JAVIER GUERRERO RECEIVES HONORABLE MENTION FOR *ESCRIBIR DESPUÉS DE MORIR*

New York, NY – 6 December 2023 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced its thirty-third annual Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize for an outstanding book published in English or Spanish in the field of Latin American and Spanish literatures and cultures. The winner is Éric Morales-Franceschini, associate professor of English and Latin American and Caribbean studies at the University of Georgia, for *The Epic of Cuba Libre: The Mambí, Mythopoetics, and Liberation*, published by the University of Virginia Press. Javier Guerrero, associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Princeton University, has received an honorable mention for his book *Escribir después de morir: El archivo y el más allá*, published by Ediciones Metales Pesados.

The Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize was established in 1990 by a gift from Joseph and Mimi B. Singer, parents of the late Katherine Singer Kovacs. 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 Frederick Luis Aldama (Univ. of Texas, Austin), chair; Samuel Amago (Univ. of Virginia); Persephone Braham (Univ. of Delaware, Newark); Anna M. Nogar (Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque); and John Ochoa (Penn State Univ., University Park). The committee's citation for Morales-Franceschini's book reads:

Innovative and methodically daring, Éric Morales-Franceschini's *The Epic of Cuba Libre: The Mambí, Mythopoetics, and Liberation* offers an urgently needed new perspective on Cuban history. His nuanced analysis of race, gender, and memory in the construction of the Afro-Cuban *mambí* as archetype in the cultural imaginary across a range of narrative forms (literature, hymns, textbooks, art, history, politics, film, hip-hop, graffiti, and town festivals, among others), delivered in elegant prose, makes for a moving, learned, and insightful new understanding of the forces at play in Cuba's shaping of an aesthetics of liberation.

The committee's citation for Guerrero's work reads:

Javier Guerrero's *Escribir después de morir: El archivo y el más allá* presents an ambitious, original, heartfelt, beautifully written, and fascinating archive-based study of queer Latin American authors such as Delmira Agustini, Severo Sarduy, Reinaldo Arenas, and Pedro Lemebel. Moreover, Guerrero's book presents an impressive first-person creative critical approach that convincingly demonstrates how the activation of the archive keeps vitally alive these authors, their words, and their works.

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.

The prize is presented 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 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 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](#).

Katherine Singer Kovacs completed her undergraduate studies at Tufts University, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and earned her MA and her PhD (in 1974) at Harvard University. She is the author of "*Le Rêve et la Vie*": *A Theatrical Experiment by Gustave Flaubert* and articles and reviews on Latin American literature, culture, and film and on comparative literature. Kovacs was a specialist in Spanish and Latin American literature and film. She taught at Stanford University, the University of Southern California, and Whittier College. She was associate editor and coeditor of *Humanities in Society*, a member of the executive committee of the *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, and a consultant for *Latin American Perspectives*. Kovacs died in May 1989.