

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Bard Graduate Center Focus Festival—April 8–9, 2017**

**Presents Claudia Rankine, Garnette Cadogan, Michael Puett; Walking Tours with Cynthia Copeland and Jack Tchen; and performances of Aaron Landsman’s *Love Story***

**New York, March 23, 2017—** Bard Graduate Center’s inaugural **Focus Festival, April 8-9, 2017**, brings thinkers and artists together for a weekend of interdisciplinary programming that draws inspiration from the key themes of the two spring Focus Project exhibitions: ***New York Crystal Palace 1853*** and ***Design by the Book: Chinese Ritual Objects and the Sanli tu***.

Complementing Bard Graduate Center’s mission as an institute devoted to studying the cultural histories of the material world, the two-day Festival invites visitors to join in conversations across history that explore how ideas raised by the two exhibitions, notably ritual and capital, resonate in our contemporary moment.

**Claudia Rankine**, 2016 MacArthur Fellow, poet, and essayist, will join **Garnette Cadogan**, essayist, in the keynote conversation “Ways of Seeing the City” on April 8 at 7 pm. Additional programs include a talk by **Michael Puett**, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Path* (April 9, 5 pm); walking tours of the Seneca Village site in Central Park with archaeologist **Cynthia Copeland** (April 8, 3 pm) and the New York ports with **Jack Tchen**, co-founder of the Museum of Chinese in America (April 9, 12 pm); and performances of **Aaron Landsman’s** critically acclaimed *Love Story*, a theatrical piece about a disappearing city, two people navigating it, and a fidgety, obsessive follower (April 8, 5:30 pm and April 9, 3:30 pm). **Curators** will offer **spotlight tours of the exhibitions** (April 8 and 9, 12 pm). **Family-friendly workshops** will be a special treat for kids (April 8 and 9, 1 pm).



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## Bard Graduate Center

The Focus Festival takes place at Bard Graduate Center Gallery at 18 West 86th Street, New York City. Visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/focus-festival-ritual-and-capital-tickets-32420300993](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/focus-festival-ritual-and-capital-tickets-32420300993) for tickets and more information.

The ground floor of the Gallery will feature a Reading Room that promotes community engagement with artists' books and periodicals curated by Brooklyn-based literary organization **Wendy's Subway**.

### **About Bard Graduate Center**

Bard Graduate Center is devoted to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture through research, advanced degrees, exhibitions, publications, and public events. Our community encourages creative investigation of objects, from the everyday to the esoteric. For more information about the Gallery, MA and PhD degrees, programs and events, publications, and more, visit [bgc.bard.edu](http://bgc.bard.edu).

Bard Graduate Center **Focus Projects** are part of an innovative program organized and led by faculty members or postdoctoral fellows through seminars and workshops that culminate in small-scale academically rigorous exhibitions and publications. Students, assisted by the Center's professional gallery staff of curators, designers, and media specialists, are closely involved from genesis through execution and contribute to each project's form and content. Focus Projects promote experimentation in display, interpretation, and the use of digital media reflecting the Center's commitment to exhibitions as integral to scholarly activity.

For press information, contact [hollis.barnhart@bgc.bard.edu](mailto:hollis.barnhart@bgc.bard.edu), 212-501-3074.



Photo Credits: Claudia Rankine: John Lucas; Garnette Cadogan: Anastasia Taylor-Lind

## Bard Graduate Center

### Saturday, April 8

12 pm **New York Crystal Palace 1853** Curator's Spotlight Tour

Cost: Free with RSVP

Led by Caroline Hannah, Associate Curator, Bard Graduate Center

1–3 pm **Writing the City** Kids Workshop

Cost: \$20 per family

Presented by artists-in-residence, Wendy's Subway

Kids and families will join together to read short pieces and excerpts by great New York City writers from different eras and backgrounds. Feeling inspired, kids will draw on personal experiences of the city to write down innovative reflections and will perform simple bookmaking to present the resulting work. Suitable for ages 6–12.

3 pm: Off site **Seneca Village and the Making of Central Park** Walking Tour

Cost: \$20 adult/\$10 student

Led by Cynthia Copeland, Adjunct Professor, New York University, and co-founding Director of the Seneca Village Project.

5:30 pm **Love Story** Performance

Cost: Free with RSVP

A performance about a disappearing city, two people navigating it, and a fidgety, obsessive follower. 35 minutes in length. *Love Story* features Frank Harts and is written by Aaron Landsman with video design by Janet Wong and an original score by Todd Griffin.

7 pm: 38 West 86th Street **Ways of Seeing the City** Keynote

**Claudia Rankine and Garnette Cadogan in Conversation**

Cost: \$20 adult/\$10 student

**Claudia Rankine** is a 2016 MacArthur fellow, poet, essayist, playwright and the editor of several anthologies; **Garnette Cadogan** is an essayist and journalist, and editor-at-large for *Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas*.

### Saturday, April 9

12 pm *Design by the Book: Chinese Ritual Objects and the Sanli tu* Curator's Spotlight Tour

Cost: Free with RSVP

Led by François Louis, Associate Professor, Bard Graduate Center

12 pm: Off site **Port Cultures** Walking Tour

Cost: \$20 adult/\$10 student

Led by **Jack Tchen**, Associate Professor, New York University, and co-founder, Museum of Chinese in America, this tour will take participants through the culture of New York City's ports and explore their role in the economic and commercial development of the United States. This program is in collaboration with Below the Grid Lab.

1–3 pm **We Built this City** Kids Workshop

Cost: \$20 per family

Inspired by *New York Crystal Palace 1853*, kids and families will visualize New York City from different points of view and explore its evolution since the nineteenth century. Build a 3D cardboard model of your neighborhood or design a prototype city of the future. Suitable for ages 6–12.

3:30 pm **Love Story** Performance

Cost: Free with RSVP (see above description)

5 pm: 38 West 86th Street **Ritual and Representation in Classical China** Lecture

Cost: Free with RSVP

Presented by **Michael Puett**, Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University. This talk will explore a complex set of debates developed in classical China concerning the nature of rituals as well as the use, representation, and reproduction of ritual objects in order to provide a context for understanding the materials from the exhibition.