

**MLA'S KATHERINE SINGER KOVACS PRIZE AWARDED TO MAITE CONDE FOR
*FOUNDATIONAL FILMS: EARLY CINEMA AND MODERNITY IN BRAZIL***

New York, NY – 4 December 2019 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced its twenty-ninth 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 Maite Conde, of the University of Cambridge, for her book *Foundational Films: Early Cinema and Modernity in Brazil*, published by the University of California Press.

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 eighteen awards that will be presented on 11 January 2020, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The members of the selection committee were Laura G. Gutiérrez (Univ. of Texas, Austin); Kathleen Mc Nerney (West Virginia Univ., Morgantown); Jesús R. Velasco (Columbia Univ.), chair; Lisa Vollendorf (Sonoma State Univ.); and Oswaldo Zavala (Coll. of Staten Island, City Univ. of New York). The committee's citation for Conde's book reads:

Maite Conde's *Foundational Films: Early Cinema and Modernity in Brazil* explores the beginning of Brazilian cinema through a focus on silent films produced during the First Republic (1889–1930). Analysis of these early films brings a fresh perspective to bear both on the construction of the nation and on the tensions between the film industries of Latin America and Hollywood. Conde demonstrates clearly that Brazilian cinema transcended Hollywood's themes and aesthetics and engaged with more culturally specific issues (including slavery) to constitute Brazilian modern ways of seeing that were more grounded and enabled a national film culture. A groundbreaking study, *Foundational Films* will influence all studies of film in Brazil and Latin America for years to come.

Maite Conde is university reader in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Cambridge and fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. She received MAs from the University of London and the University of Glasgow and a PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of *Consuming Visions: Cinema, Writing, and Modernity in Rio de Janeiro* and editor and translator of *Between Conformity and Resistance: Essays on Politics, Culture, and the State* by Marilena Chauí. Conde is also coeditor of *Manifesting Democracy? Urban Protests and the Politics of Representation in Brazil Post-2013* and *Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes: On Global Cinema and Brazil*. *Foundational Films: Early Cinema and Modernity in Brazil* received an honorable mention for the Brazil Section of the Latin American Studies Association's Antonio Candido Prize for Best Book in the Humanities and was a finalist for the Theater Library Association's Richard Wall Prize for an outstanding book in theater or film.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 25,000 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; the 2020 convention in Seattle is expected to draw over 5,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

Recent winners of the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize include Lisa Beth Voigt, Stephanie Merrim, E. Michael Gerli, Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, Mabel Moraña, Stephanie Sieburth, Enrique Fernandez, Anne Lambright, Nancy J. Gates Madsen, and B. Christine Arce. 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 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 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, and for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

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.