



DOROTHEA SMARTT

Friday 30 November 2018, 12-2pm

**Old Council Chamber,
Wills Memorial Building,
Queen's Rd, Bristol, BS8 1RJ**

With the support of the School of Sociology, Politics, & International Studies, Gender Research Centre, Centre for Black Humanities, Critically Queer Working Group, & Bristol Institute for Learning & Teaching,

Dorothea Smartt, is a literary activist, live artist, and poet of Barbadian heritage.

Described by Kamau Brathwaite as a 'Brit-born Bajan international', her work typically bridges the islands of Britain and Barbados, effortlessly shuttling between local and global scenes, as it weaves a diasporic web.

Join us for this first of a series of conversations at the University of Bristol in which we move beyond the now familiar question/complaint "Why is my curriculum white?", towards imagining what our curriculum might look like were it researched, taught, and learned from Black Queer-Trans perspectives.

The photograph above, part of "Zabat", by Maud Sulter, depicts Dorothea as the muse of history. In "Zabat", Black Women are the nine muses: Greek goddesses of the arts and sciences, whom Western art has traditionally depicted as White Women. "Clio" (1989) © Maud Sulter Estate, courtesy of Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum

Considered 'among the best of her generation' [Carole Boyce Davies, Cornell University], Dorothea's first collection "Connecting Medium" [Peepal Tree Press, 2001] has had several reprints, and is taught at various institutions in the USA, including Oberlin College, SUNY Geneseo, Florida International, and Vanderbilt Universities. Her collection "Ship Shape" [Peepal Tree Press, 2008], is 'a powerful work of reclamation, restitution and reanimation' [Wasafiri], and is now an 'A' level English Literature text. In her chapbook "Reader, I Married Him & Other Queer Goings-On" [Inscribe/Peepal Tree Press, 2014], she continues to explore poetic forms. Her most recent anthology and journal credits include: "New Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Writing By Women of African Descent", [Myriad, 2018] and "The Rialto" [Winter 2018]. Her poems also feature on the PoetryArchive.org – the world's premier online collection of recordings by poets.

Dorothea was awarded an Attached Live Artist residency at London's Institute for Contemporary Arts, and is a recipient of an Arts Council of England One-to-One live art development award. Her seminal work "Medusa! Medusa Black", was cited as an O.B.E [Outstanding Black Example] of British live art. Other works include "Triangle" [A Black Arts Alliance commission, with Kevin Dalton Johnson], exploring generations of UK Blacklesbian & Blackgay lives. In 2009 she was invited to take part in the international cross-arts residency "Tradewinds/Landfall", developing work and exhibiting in Project Row Houses, Houston Texas and then the Museum of London, Docklands.

Active in British literary development for over twenty-five years, Dorothea is currently Associate Poetry Editor of SABLE Litmag, guest co-editor of their landmark 2006 LGBTQ issue. She was an honorary team-member of Cambridge University's Caribbean Poetry Project, and is Programme Manager of Inscribe, the national writer development programme, of Peepal Tree Press, for writers of African and Asian descent.

With an MA in Anthropology from Hunter College, CUNY, Dorothea enjoys contributing creatively to academic conferences, including The Association of Black Anthropologists [Cuba, 2001], The Caribbean Women Writers & Scholars conference [Puerto Rico, 1999], and the AfroEuropean Culture & Identity conference [Spain, 2010]. In 2013, she chaired panels on aspects of Black British Literature at the Association of Writing Programs, and the NorthEastern Modern Languages Association conventions, both in Boston, MA. In 2019, she will again attend UWI Mona's Beyond Homophobia conference, presenting a Black British panel of speakers.

Recent projects and commitments include: "Looking for Samuel" – a commissioned work of poetry and music celebrating Samuel Coleridge Taylor, with the Royal College of Music, the Victoria & Albert Museum and producer The Books Project; on-going participation in Malika's Kitchen, the celebrated and highly regarded London-based poetry workshop; guest lecturing at the Royal College of Art and University Arts London, and a major poetry commission for all twenty ventilation columns on the new public spaces being created by London's new 'Super Sewer'.

With Arts Council, England funding Dorothea visited Panama for on-going research towards her third full collection, where she continues to rework standard narratives, this time re-imagining same-sex relationships and traditional spiritual practices among workers constructing the Panama Canal. She recently secured a place on the UWI Cave Hill, Cultural Studies PhD program, where she will transfer her practice-based research, at a future date.

In recognition of her contribution to British cultural life, she was nominated for a 2016 Barbados Golden Jubilee Award.

For further information on Dorothea's cultural activism:

- <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/dorothea-smartt>
- <https://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/dorothea-smartt>

