



NEWS RELEASE

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Betty Proctor, Specialist, Public Information/Communication

betty.proctor@chattanoogastate.edu

(423) 697-2432

Mobilizing Empathy: The Encounter of “Otherness” Through Art

By Keri Lamb, Chattanooga State

November 14, 2018 (Chattanooga, TN) --- The Humanities and Fine Arts Division of Chattanooga State Community College will host the third installment of its 5th annual Chautauqua Lecture Series on Thursday, November 15 at 2:00 p.m. in the Humanities Auditorium on Chattanooga State’s main campus, with a dessert reception to follow.

In 1874, people gathered on the shores of Chautauqua Lake in New York State to enjoy speakers, teachers, musicians, and specialists who entertained and educated members of the community, thus catalyzing an adult education movement that subsequently spread throughout rural America. Since 2014, Chattanooga State has hosted its own monthly Chautauqua to unite faculty, students, staff, and the larger Chattanooga community in exploring a wide array of topics within the Humanities. This year, Chattanooga State’s Chautauqua Series features the informative and unique research of seven Humanities & Fine Arts faculty as well as the series finale with Writers@Work 2018-2019 visiting authors Beth Ann Fennelly and Tom Franklin.

This month’s lecture features Assistant Professor Julie Barcroft and Associate Professor Evans Jarnefeldt, who will present “Mobilizing Empathy: The Encounter of ‘Otherness’ Through Art.” All cultures are comprised of dazzling stories, expressed in every artistic medium imaginable; these artifacts foster a sense of self while asking us to step beyond the self into the experiences and perspectives of others. This session with Jarnefeldt and Barcroft explores how art can be usefully disorienting, helping to unpack power dynamics, cultural encounters, and personal identity.

Barcroft and Jarnefeldt have long been interested in works of art that “force us to address our own biases and limited worldviews,” and they assert that art can encourage the viewer to engage with “different races, nationalities, religions, sexual identities” and other perspectives “in a way that traditional conversation and argument often don’t.” Both Barcroft and Jarnefeldt hope to share with their audience that “stories in various mediums can be a less intimidating (but no less powerful) first step into exploring these [other] realities and building relationships” with others, especially at a time when “a lot of national rhetoric is centered on fear of ‘the other’.”

Following Barcroft and Jarnefeldt’s November lecture, two other ChattState faculty will present lectures in their field of study. The final installment in the 2018-2019 Chautauqua Lecture Series will be a special event offered in partnership with the Humanities Department’s Writers@Work program, entitled “Writers@Work: The Art and Craft of Writing.” During this session, the 2018-19 Writers@Work visiting authors, Beth Ann Fennelly and Tom Franklin, will discuss their writing process, their collaboration on the novel *The Tilted World*, and the art and craft of writing.

WHEN: 2-3 p.m., November 15, February 21, March 21, and April 11.

WHERE: Humanities Auditorium, Chattanooga State Main Campus, 4501 Amnicola Highway.

COST: Free to all members of the public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Facebook: “Chattanooga State’s Chautauqua Series”; Instagram: “chautauqua_series”; Twitter: “@ChautauquaSeries”; Email: keri.lamb@chattanoogastate.edu.