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Lydia Davis in Residence at UCSB

Lydia Davis, a fiction writer, essayist and literary translator of such works as “Swann’s Way” by Marcel Proust and Gustave Flaubert’s “Madame Bovary,” will spend three days at UC Santa Barbara as the 2015 Diana and Simon Raab Writer-in-Residence.

During her time at UCSB, Davis, recipient of the 2013 Man Booker International Prize, will give a reading from her latest collection of short stories, “Can’t and Won’t.” The event will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, in Corwin Pavilion. It is free and open to the public.

Made possible by a gift from Diana and Simon Raab, the writer-in-residence series gives undergraduate writing and literature students at UCSB a unique opportunity to engage with masters of the craft. The series is co-presented by the campus’s Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC) and by the UCSB Writing Program.

“Lydia Davis is a multitalented and precise short-story writer, novelist and translator who is perceptive of the internal and external worlds,” said Diana Raab, the award-winning author of nine books that include memoir, nonfiction, poetry and journalism. “Like those she admires and translates, such as Flaubert and Proust, she is in a unique category of her own. Her writing is compelling, addictive and thought-provoking while inspiring a profound inner dialogue with her reader. We are honored to bring her to Santa Barbara.”

The writer-in-residence series invites creative writers, humanities scholars, journalists and filmmakers to UCSB to deliver public lectures or readings for the Santa Barbara community. While in residence, writers meet with students in a classroom setting to explore the craft of writing.

“What’s wonderful about Lydia Davis is that she is both a translator and a creative writer,” said Susan Derwin, director of the IHC. “She’s a great fit for the campus because she straddles these two worlds. The influence of her attuned translator’s ear is evident in her creative writing, and her fine literary sensibility guides her translations. There’s a beautiful cross-pollination between her translations and her works of fiction.”

In addition to the public reading on March 3, Davis will participate in two classroom discussions, one with students in the campus’s translation studies program and the other with students from the writing program. “The meetings with the students will have a pedagogical focus,” noted Derwin. “Diana Raab is interested in supporting a program that will enable students to meet with accomplished practitioners of the writer’s craft. Writers speak at UCSB all the time, but students don’t often have the chance to learn from them directly. That interaction is really what Diana had in mind. It can be very inspiring for students.”

Linda Adler-Kassner, director of the writing program, called it a “privilege” for students to spend time with Davis. “Her attention to the craft of language and the process of writing can serve as outstanding models for students, whether they are focusing on writing for civic, professional or academic contexts,” she said.

Davis has published one novel, “The End of the Story,” and six collections of short stories, including “Can’t and Won’t,” which came out last spring. Earlier collections, “Varieties of Disturbance” and “Break It Down” were finalists for the National Book Award and the PEN/Hemingway Award, respectively.

In addition to Proust and Flaubert, she has translated works by Maurice Blanchot, Michel Foucault, Michel Leiris and Pierre Jean Jouve from the French, as well works by Dutch writer A.L. Snijders.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.