

Thursday, January 29, 2009

Novelist S.J. Rozan to launch book tour at OU

Oakland University will host award-winning fiction writer S.J. Rozan for a presentation titled "Writing the City" and a reading of her fiction from 4-5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11.

The event, free and open to the public, is set to take place in the Oakland Room in the Oakland Center. A book signing and question and answer session will follow the reading.

Rozan also plans to visit Professor Susan Hawkins' Fiction Genre class and Professor Annette Gilson's Advance Fiction Workshop.

Born and raised in the Bronx and a long-time Manhattan resident, Rozan is the author of nine books in the Lydia Chin/Bill Smith series and of two stand-alone novels, "Absent Friends" and "In This Rain." Her new novel, "Shanghai Moon" will hit bookstands in February.

Rozan's critically acclaimed, award-winning novels and stories have won most of crime fiction's greatest honors, including the Edgar, Anthony, Shamus, Macavity and Nero awards.

In conjunction with the university-wide celebration of this year's "Cities" theme, Rozan will read selections from several of her books to illustrate the way the city provides an important context or frames the plot. An architect for many years, she is now a full-time writer with a specialized relationship that makes her an extraordinary writer of cities.

"Her novels revolve around issues and themes specific to cities and characterize all aspects, from the defining natures of construction sites and terror attacks to the unique dynamics of immigrant neighborhoods and gentrification," said Oakland University Assistant Professor of English Andrea Knutson. "Her work not only reflects how one writer's stories are informed by the cities that inspire her, but it reflects a deep understanding and respect for the dynamic relationship between people and the cities they inhabit."

In a recent New York Times interview, S.J. described the new challenges that come with the changing landscape for the city's writers of crime. She notes that "those of us who started in a different kind of era have had to adjust" as New York celebrates a sharp decline in crime.

As the editor of Bronx Noir, an anthology comprised of stories about this distinct neighborhood, Rozan highlights the many dark and shadowed places that are hidden within her native borough, "just as the Bronx itself is hidden in the shadow of Manhattan."

She says, "You can't pack so much yearning, so many people, such a range of everything – income, ethnicity, occupation, land use – into a single borough, even one as big as the Bronx, and not force the kind of friction that slices and sparks."

Knutson said the Oakland University community can look forward to gleaning additional insight and perspective when the accomplished novelist launches her new book tour here on campus.

"Rozan's visit will bring a successful, acclaimed writer's world to life and be a special opportunity for everyone, including faculty and the wider community, to reflect on their own relationship to the urban spaces that shape their lives," Knutson explained. "Her visit coincides with a particular historical moment for Detroit itself and the wider metropolitan area, as we continue to face transition to a new economy, the accompanying uncertainty and the possibility of reinvention and renewal. As a writer of cities, Rozan would offer the kind of perspective on this historical moment as only an artist can."

Rozan's visit was made possible with support and contributions from the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the "Cities" Theme Committee, the Departments of Sociology and Anthropology, Modern Languages and Literatures, the Women and Gender Studies Program and the Honors College.

For more information on Rozan's presentation, call (248) 370-2251 or visit the [Department of English](#) Web site.



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SUMMARY

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