

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STARFest Presents Giller-Prize-winning author Suzette Mayr on May 12

St. ALBERT—STARFest is excited to present a special after-hours event with Giller-Prize-winning author Suzette Mayr and her stunning novel, *The Sleeping Car Porter*, on Friday, May 12 at 7 p.m. Mayr will be in conversation with award-winning author and filmmaker Cheryl Foggo.

“We’re thrilled to bring an author of Suzette Mayr’s stature and talent to St. Albert for the first STARFest after hours event of 2023,” says STARFest Director Michelle Steinhuisen. “*The Sleeping Car Porter* is a mesmerizing, compelling read and we can’t wait to hear her discuss it with Cheryl Foggo, another award-winning storyteller.”

The Sleeping Car Porter brings to life an important part of Black history in North America, from the perspective of a queer man living in a culture that renders him invisible in two ways. When a mudslide strands a train, Baxter, a queer Black sleeping car porter, must contend with the perils of white passengers, ghosts, and his secret love affair. Affecting, imaginative, and visceral enough that you’ll feel the rocking of the train, *The Sleeping Car Porter* is a stunning accomplishment.

The Sleeping Car Porter won the 2022 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and has been shortlisted for the 2023 Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction. It has garnered rave reviews nationally and beyond, been named a top book of the year by Publishers Weekly, *The Globe and Mail*, and CBC Books and listed in Oprah Daily: Books to Read By the Fire.

Suzette Mayr is the author of the novels *Dr. Edith Vane and the Hares of Crawley Hall*, *Monoceros*, *Moon Honey*, *The Widows*, and *Venous Hum*. *The Widows* was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers’ Prize for Best Book in the Canada-Caribbean region, and has been translated into German. *Moon Honey* was shortlisted for the Writers’ Guild of Alberta’s Best First Book and Best Novel Awards. *Monoceros* won the ReLit Award, the City of Calgary W. O. Mitchell Book Prize, was longlisted for the 2011 Giller Prize, and shortlisted for a Ferro-Grumley Award for LGBT Fiction, and the Georges Bugnet Award for Fiction. She and her partner live in Calgary.

Cheryl Foggo is a multiple award-winning playwright, author and filmmaker, whose work over the last 30 years has focused on the lives of Western Canadians of African descent. Recent works include the release of her National Film Board feature documentary *John Ware*

Reclaimed, available on nfb.ca, as well as the 30th anniversary edition of her book *Pourin' Down Rain: A Black Woman Claims Her Place in the Canadian West*. In 2021, 2022 and 2023, her plays *Heaven* and *John Ware Reimagined* have received multiple productions, including at The Citadel in Edmonton, Lunchbox Theatre in Calgary, at the Blyth Theatre Festival and in Ottawa at the National Arts Centre. She recently wrapped shooting of a short film about northern Saskatchewan's Black History, scheduled to premiere in 2023.

Tickets to see Suzette Mayr in conversation with Cheryl Foggo on May 12 at the Downtown Library are \$7 and are available at www.STARFest.ca. The event begins at 7 p.m. in Forsyth Hall at the Downtown Library and will end with a book signing. Wine and refreshments are provided.

STARFest Readers Festival offers a range of author events through the year: the star-studded ticketed fall festival takes place over three weeks each October, the Sunday afternoon STARFest Conversations series throughout the year, and ticketed "STARFest Presents" after-hours events. Be the first to know about STARFest events and the 2023 festival by subscribing to our newsletter at www.starfest.ca.

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