

OSKAR VON MILLER FORUM

Press Release

The Open City

A lecture by Richard Sennett / London School of Economics and Saskia Sassen / Columbia University on 9 June 2016 at 6:30 pm at the Oskar von Miller Forum

Richard Sennett and Saskia Sassen analyze the ways in which the modern world is succumbing to "brutal simplicities" in the phrase of the historian Jacob Burckhardt, a world sharply divided between winners and losers, between religious convictions, between natives and foreigners. The "open city" means opening the city up to complexities in its politics, social life, and culture.

Richard Sennett is University Professor at New York University and also holds positions at the London School of Economics and at Cambridge University (UK). His research and writing is about cities, labor, and culture. His wife Saskia Sassen is the Robert S. Lynd Professor of Sociology, and chairs The Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University. Her main focus of research is on cities, immigration, and states in the world economy, with inequality, gendering and digitization being three key variables running through her work.

About Richard Sennett

Richard Sennett explores how individuals and groups make social and cultural sense of material facts - about the cities in which they live and about the labour they do. He focuses on how people can become competent interpreters of their own experience, despite the obstacles society may put in their way. His research entails ethnography, history, and social theory. As a social analyst, Richard Sennett continues the pragmatist tradition begun by William James and John Dewey. His recent books are "Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation, Yale (2012) and "The open city" (due in 2016).

About Saskia Sassen

The sociologist Saskia Sassen analyzes in her work globalization and international human migration. Her latest book is: "Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy" (Harvard University Press/Belknap 2014). The organizing thesis is that our global modernity is marked by systemic expulsions of all sorts: we are beyond simply more inequality, more poverty, more refugees in the global south, and so on. And it is often our complex intermediary processes, requiring talent and knowledge, which are facilitating such expulsions.

Saskia Sassen has received many awards and honors, among them multiple doctor honoris causa, the 2013 Principe de Asturias Prize in the Social Sciences, election to the Royal Academy of the Sciences of the Netherlands, and made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the French government.