

Princeton University, where Toni Morrison taught, will honor the 'Beloved' author for months



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More than three years after her death, Toni Morrison's former teaching grounds of Princeton University will honor the writer with a community-wide series of art exhibitions and events exploring her creative process and its impact.

"Toni Morrison: Sites of Memory" begins Feb. 22 at Princeton University Library's Millberg Gallery, centering months of programming at the school. Artists Daniel Alexander Jones and Mame Diarra Samantha Speis will hold the first public performances at the school's McCarter Theatre on March 24 and 25, in which they will respond to Morrison's archive and influence through original work.

There will also be a spring lecture series and a three-day symposium in which more than 30 writers and artists will gather to reflect on Morrison's legacy.

Other events will include Princeton University Art Museum's presentation of "Cycle of Creativity: Alison Saar and the Toni Morrison Papers." The show will pair Morrison's writings with sculptures, prints and textiles by Saar to explore their relationship with the Black American experience. It runs Feb. 25 through July 9.

"It is difficult to overstate the importance of Toni Morrison's writing to American literature, art and life," said Autumn Womack, an assistant professor of English and African American studies at Princeton, in a statement from the university. "This exhibition draws us toward the unexplored corners of her writing process and unknown aspects of her creative investments that only live in this archive."

Womack said she wanted to show the importance of Morrison's work, "but I also wanted to show how this archive in particular is a site that opens up new lines of inquiry and inspires new kinds of collaboration."

Morrison taught literature and writing at Princeton University for 17 years, beginning in 1989. The university later named Morrison Hall, home to its Department of African American Studies, after the author. Over the course of her career, Morrison also taught at SUNY Purchase, SUNY Albany and at Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus.

Her most well-known novels include "The Bluest Eye," "Sula," "Song of Solomon," "Tar Baby," "Beloved," "Jazz," "Paradise" and "Love." In 1993, Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.

Morrison lived in Tribeca until her death from pneumonia at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx in 2019.

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