

A Night (and Afternoon) to Remember – Author and Scholar Joy Castro @REAF 29/30 October 2019

A very special guest opened this semester's string of REAF events: Award-winning author and literary scholar **Prof. Dr. Joy Castro** from University of Nebraska-Lincoln made the trip to Regensburg and spent two days with us here at REAF.

On Tuesday, 29 October, Joy Castro amazed the crowd in the Haus der Begegnung, where she read from several of her works. Among these were different excerpts of her nonfiction collection *Island of Bones* and a new short story called *Betrayed*. The audience was also introduced to Nola Céspedes, protagonist of Joy Castro's crime novel, set in New Orleans, LA., *Hell or High Water*, which Castro calls "a beach-read for intelligent persons". Prof. Castro was accompanied by UR's **Prof. Dr. Ursula Regener** who read from the German translation of the same section of the novel as the author, which made for very interesting opportunities for discussion.

The next afternoon, Prof. Castro came to campus for a special version of the popular REAF Roundtable format, titled "Writing Memoir, Writing Crime: Creative Vision as Sociopolitical Intervention." After speaking about her work in academia, challenges she has faced both as a young author, mother and scholar in changing political climates, and her career as a writer, she switched gears and started a writing workshop. Everyone present, students and faculty alike, were asked to try out being authors, writing either a scene from a crime novel or sketch an episode of a memoir. "Keep on writing" and "go for the jugular" were two of many practical pieces of advice which were gladly taken by the audience, who loved to be reminded that writing, although challenging, can be a lot of fun. Joy Castro then took a lot of time for questions. Everyone present agreed that the events were the best way to kick off the new semester.

REAF would like to thank Prof. Dr. Joy Castro for her time, passion and the opportunity to look behind the scenes of her work! We are very much looking forward to future cooperations!