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Artist and historian Nell Painter (Photo by Robin Holland)

## **The 2017 Newark Arts Honors Award Ceremony and Gala: Honoree Nell Painter**

Newark, NJ – February 15, 2017 – On March 29, 2017, author, historian, and artist Nell Painter will be one of four creatives honored at the 2017 Newark Arts Honors Award Ceremony and Gala. The Gala honors artists that have made significant contributions in their field and represent diverse artistic communities and cultures.

Nell Painter, a Newarker, is best known as the author of *The History of White People* and *Sojourner Truth, A Life, A Symbol*, and the Edwards Professor of American History, Emerita, Princeton University. Her work has been featured on the New York Times Best Sellers list, and

her interviews and essays have been widely publicized. She makes traditional and digital art using found images and digital and traditional manipulations. She graduated from institutions including Harvard University, the Rhode Island School of Design, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Painter's writing largely revolves around the theme of the "other", and the implications of this concept in history. Her best known work, *The History of White People*, breaks down the race dichotomy of black versus white often used in political and historical discussion. In it, she attempts to answer questions about how race matters were tackled throughout history, and how ideas of "whiteness" and "blackness" and identity politics have evolved. For example, she talks about the beginnings of delineating races of people and the origin of this practice with 18<sup>th</sup> century science, and how Irish immigrants, who were once thought to be an inferior race of white people eventually ended up categorized within a Caucasian race considered monolithic.

Painter's historical writings bridge the present and past. Her work allows individuals to connect with their history, and enable better understanding of society today. What Painter's work does for a community like Newark is validate its experiences as a community of all different types of people, solidify its role in local and national history, and turn the intersection of biography and history into a learning experience. She currently both resides and works in Newark, NJ.

Painter is constantly recognized for her contributions to African-American history. Please join us in honoring her continuing legacy at the Newark Arts Honors Gala on March 29, 2017.



An original digital self-portrait by Nell Painter. 2014

About Newark Arts (formerly Newark Arts Council): Newark Arts is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization created to advance and expand the artistic and cultural resources of the City of Newark, New Jersey. The Council's mission is to bring the transformative power of the arts into

the lives of those who live in, work in, and visit Newark. The Council is the umbrella for the Newark Arts Education Roundtable (NAER) and is a partner with the Mayor's Office of Cultural Development, Arts, and Tourism. The Council awards neighborhood grants through its ArtStart program, produces the Open Doors Citywide Arts Festival every October, and will oversee Newark's Community Cultural Plan in 2017-2018. For more information, visit [www.newarkarts.org](http://www.newarkarts.org)

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