

STEVEN  
KASHER  
GALLERY



**OFF THE TRACKS**

NZ FESTIVAL WRITERS & READERS: TEJU COLE-BLIND SPOT

By Simon Sweetman, March 13, 2018



This Writers & Readers session was Teju Cole in conversation with Paula Morris. Chiefly the discussion was about his excellent new book *Blind Spot* but from there Cole found his way to talking about his work in a more general sense, his motivations, his multi-discipline approach.

Morris was fantastic at running the session – a strong presence but never taking over from the featured guest. Cole is a great speaker – and though his session the day previous was wonderful in so many ways this was more cohesive, no tech issues this time. We even got a few more photographs, this time images from Cole’s latest book.

The discussion began with some frustrations around social justice warriors – with the publication of *Blind Spot* Cole had been accused by one fleet-fingered typist as being ableist; in fact the book (photos and accompany text) was created as a response to Cole suffering from a temporary loss of vision in one eye, actually referred to as “Blind Spot Syndrome”.

From there it was to a potted history of Cole’s work and practices – his education and travel. His attempts to locate himself in various roles and geographic locations.

The problem with a speaker (and writer) this good is that you almost want a whole extra session of just Q&A with audience questions only.

STEVEN  
KASHER  
GALLERY

Maybe next time – Cole has become a frequent visitor rather quickly and claims to want to come back – he could address an audience and spent the full hour just using questions as a springboard. He’s a vital, influential and inspiring presence. It was a real treat to hear from him twice in two days.