



**UNIVERSITÀ
DI PARMA**

Awarding of the title of Honorary Doctor in

**“Classical and Modern Philology
and Literature”**

to

Patti Smith

**Motivation for the proposal of
the award**

read by **Massimo Magnani**

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Philology and Literature.

Parma, Auditorium Paganini

3 May 2017

In the meeting held on 15th June 2016, the Academic Board of the Department of Classics, Modern Languages, Education and Philosophy assessed the proposal to award the Honorary Degree in Classical and Modern Philology and Literature (classes LM14-15 of the Master's Degrees in Modern Philology and Philology, Literature and History of Antiquity) to Patricia Lee Smith (professionally known as Patti Smith), proposed by Professor Diego Saglia on the basis of the following motivation:

«Patti Smith's interest for poetic composition dates from her adolescent period. As her first form of artistic expression, poetry immediately opened up new avenues of experimentation, which she expanded thanks to the crucial influence of jazz rhythms. In common with her musical texts, her highly personal poetic output draws intense inspiration from figures such as A. Rimbaud, William Blake, Antonin Artaud and Bob Dylan. Moreover, the edition of the *Poems (Vintage Classics)* by the great English Romantic poet, edited with an introduction by Smith (2007), is noteworthy.

Patti Smith's poetry is characterised on a stylistic level by the use of the stream of consciousness technique, whereas the content, which encompasses a wide range of themes often hinged on issues of morality and faith (although these are not oriented towards any specific religion), represent one of the distinctive hallmarks of her poetry.

Of her volume entitled *Auguries of Innocence* (2005), a title bearing distinctly Blakean echoes, the critic Donna Seaman commented that it propounds «lithe works unsettling in their spiritual inquiry, archetypal imagery, and dissonant juxtapositions».

A musician and photographer, as well as a poetess, Patti Smith has acquired and developed in the course of her long career an artistic and intellectual versatility which, combined with her constant commitment as a professional and intellectual, has proved to be instrumental in making her a central figure on the international cultural scene from the end of the 20th century to the present date, and an important point of reference for studies on contemporary

literature written in the English language, as well as foreign literature in translation.

In the light of Patti Smith's curriculum and of the motivation relating to the proposal of the conferral of the Honorary Degree, in view of the fact that her articulated literary, or more precisely poetic, output represents her original field of interest and is to this day a fundamental component of her artistic activity, and finally considering that the conferral of such an Honorary Degree was, and continues to be, in line with the outlook and mission of the present Department of Classics, Modern Languages, Education and Philosophy (A.L.E.F.) and of the new Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Cultural Industries, the Academic Board of the Department has unanimously determined to propose the conferral of the Honorary Master's Degree in Classical and Modern Philology and Literature on Patricia Lee Smith, professionally known as Patti Smith.

Prof. Massimo Magnani

Parma, 3rd May 2017