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PROMINENT WASHINGTON POETS TO COME TOGETHER FOR SPECIAL POETRY MONTH EVENT

THE PUBLIC EVENT, “POETRY AND CIVIC LIFE,” INCLUDES READINGS AND AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

SEATTLE – On April 2, prominent poets from across the state will gather for a free public event in celebration of National Poetry Month. “[Poetry and Civic Life](#)” is a reading and conversation event that will feature Rena Priest, Washington State Poet Laureate; Tod Marshall, Spokane poet and Washington State Poet Laureate (2016-2018); Jourdan Imani Keith, Seattle Civic Poet; and Zinnia Hansen, Seattle Youth Poet Laureate. The event will be emceed by Marcie Sillman, co-host of the doubleXposure podcast and former KUOW arts reporter.

“Over the last two years, we’ve turned to art and artists to help us make sense of the powerful forces changing our world,” said Karen Hanan, executive director of ArtsWA. “Art, and poetry in particular, can help us find the language to communicate and shape our responses to the world around us.”

In an event highlighting the vibrant poetry community in Washington State, poets, civic poets, and poets laureate will gather to explore the power of poetry to enact social change. The event is free and open to the public, and will take place in-person at Hugo House in Seattle at noon on April 2. During the event, poets will respond to written questions from the audience that address the intersection of poetry and politics. The event will be recorded for broadcast by Seattle Channel, and available to livestream through ArtsWA.

In addition, the first part of the day will be a private networking session in which poets of all ages and stages will come together to discuss thriving as a poet and creating civic and community partnerships.

This event is a co-presentation of City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Humanities Washington, ArtsWA (Washington State Arts Commission), Hugo Seattle, and Seattle Arts and Lectures.

“Poetry and Civic Life”

April 2, 2022

Public event 12:00 p.m., Hugo House

[REGISTER HERE >](#)

Program:

Morning: Private networking session for poets

12:00 p.m. – Doors open to public

12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Public program: Reading and interactive conversation with poets

[Headshots, logos, and publicity materials are available here.](#)

Participating poets:

Zinnia Hansen is a poet and essayist from the Pacific Northwest. She is a first-year student at the University of Washington, studying linguistics. She is the 2021-2022 Seattle Youth Poet Laureate. Her work has been published in various magazines and online publications, including Rattle, Blue Marble Review, and Young Poets Network. She was a finalist in the New York Times Personal Narrative Contest and part of the Hugo House Young Poet’s Cohort. She is in the process of writing a book, of amassing an archive of things she holds holy, which will be published May 2022.

Jourdan Keith is the City of Seattle’s 2019-2022 Civic Poet. She is a storyteller, essayist, playwright, naturalist, and activist. Her TEDx Talk, “Your Body of Water,” the theme for King County’s 2016-2018 Poetry on Buses program won an Americans for the Arts award. Keith’s Orion Magazine essays, “Desegregating Wilderness” and “At Risk,” were selected for the 2015 Best American Science and Nature Writing Anthology (Houghton Mifflin). A keeper of culture and history in the Griot (gree-oh) storytelling tradition, she has been awarded fellowships, commissions, and awards from numerous prominent organizations including Hedgebrook, Jack Straw, the University of Washington, Artist Trust, 4Culture, and Seattle’s Office of Arts and Culture. Her memoir in essays, *Tugging at the Web* is forthcoming from University of Washington Press.

Tod Marshall served as poet laureate from 2016-2018. As part of his service as poet laureate, he edited an anthology of Washington poets’ works, *WA 129*. He has published three books of poetry; his most recent book, *Bugle*, won the Washington State Book Award. He lives in Spokane, Washington, and teaches at Gonzaga University.

Rena Priest became the sixth Washington State Poet Laureate on April 14, 2021. A member of the Lhaq’temish (Lummi) Nation, she is the first Indigenous poet to assume the role. Priest’s literary debut, *Patriarchy Blues*, was honored with the 2018 American Book Award, and her most recent work is *Sublime Subliminal*. Priest’s work can be found in *Poetry Northwest*, *Pontoon Poetry*, *Verse Daily*, *Poem-a-Day* at Poets.org, and elsewhere. She is a Vadon Foundation Fellowship recipient and an Allied Arts Foundation Professional Poets Award winner. She has taught Comparative Cultural Studies and Contemporary American Issues at Western Washington University and Native American Literature at Northwest Indian College. Priest holds a BA in English from Western Washington University and an MFA in Writing from Sarah Lawrence College. Learn more at renapriest.com

Presenting organizations:

ArtsWA (The Washington State Arts Commission) was formed by the Washington State Legislature in 1961. ArtsWA’s mission is to be a catalyst for the arts, advancing the role of the arts in the lives of individuals and communities throughout the state.

Humanities Washington, Washington State’s affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a nonprofit whose mission is to open minds and bridge divides by creating spaces to explore different perspectives.

City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture promotes the value of arts and culture in, and of, communities throughout Seattle. It strives to ensure that a wide range of high-quality artistic experiences are available to everyone, encourage artist-friendly arts and cultural policy, and promote Seattle as a cultural destination.

Hugo House is a place where people can read words, hear words, and make their own words better. Hugo House is a place for writers, with a concentrated focus on helping *anyone* who wants to write. We offer readings, classes, book launches, workshops, teen programs, consultations with professional writers, and much more.

Seattle Arts and Lectures cultivates transformative experiences through story and language with readers and writers of all generations.