

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 8, 2016

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## **Arizona Humanities Announces Programs to Celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Poetry Month this April**

*Programs to feature local and national poets across Arizona for free workshops and readings*

**Phoenix, AZ** – Arizona Humanities is excited to announce a series of programs celebrating National Poetry Month during the month of April. Free programs and workshops will take place across Arizona in Gilbert, the San Carlos Apache Reservation, downtown Phoenix, and Flagstaff.

Established by the Academy of American Poets in 1996, National Poetry Month is the largest literary celebration in the world. The month aims to encourage the reading of poetry, inspire people to write poetry, and more. Programs in Arizona will feature local Arizona poets Josh Rathkamp, Laura Tohe, Orlando White, Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow, and one national guest poet J Mase III.

Ellie Hutchison, Programs Manager with Arizona Humanities remarked, “National Poetry Month brings people together to increase awareness and bring appreciation to the importance of poetry in our lives. We are so excited to unite talented local and national poets to the community through interactive activities throughout the month and to engage diverse audiences in our communities.”

Read below for all program details and poet bios. Tune in on twitter @AZhumanities for daily writing prompts and tips from poets throughout the month. For more information, visit [www.azhumanities.org](http://www.azhumanities.org) or call 602-257-0335. Follow #AZpoetry for updates and news.

For questions about poetry month programs contact Programs Manager Ellie Hutchison, [ehutchison@azhumanities.org](mailto:ehutchison@azhumanities.org).

### **Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> - Poet Josh Rathkamp Workshop and Reading at Art Intersection in Gilbert, AZ**

Join poet Josh Rathkamp for a community writing workshop at the acclaimed Art Intersection Gallery in downtown Gilbert, AZ. Inspired by *The Dancing Devils of Yare* photographic exhibition that explores the ritual dance performed by the Dancing Devils in Venezuela, participants will learn how to overcome writers block and use art and rituals as a form of creative inspiration. Afterwards, hear Rathkamp read selected poems from his works, including his forthcoming book, *A Storm to Close the Door*. Rathkamp will also be sharing writing prompts and tips online throughout the month of April. Follow @AZhumanities on twitter to get your creative juices flowing.

5:30-6:15 p.m. - Community Writing Workshop [RSVP at [ehutchison@azhumanities.org](mailto:ehutchison@azhumanities.org)]

6:30-7:15 p.m. - Poetry Reading and Q&A

Art Intersection

207 N Gilbert Rd, Ste 201, Gilbert AZ 85234 / (480) 361-1118

**About Josh Rathkamp:** Josh Rathkamp received an MFA in Poetry from Arizona State University and an MFA in Poetry Translation from Drew University. He has published two collections of poems, *A Storm to Close the Door* (forthcoming), which won the 2015 Georgetown Review Poetry Prize and *Some Nights No Cars At All* (Ausable Press). He has been awarded an Arizona Artist Grant and has been named a Virginia G. Piper Writing Fellow. His work has won multiple awards, including the *Sow's Ear Poetry Prize* and has appeared in numerous literary journals and public art projects, including *American Poetry Review*, *The Southern Review*, *Narrative*, *Poet Lore*, and *Rattle*. He directs the Creative Writing Program at Mesa Community College.

**Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> - Poets Laura Tohe and Orlando White Engage All-Ages Audience in San Carlos, AZ**

Arizona poets Laura Tohe and Orlando White will lead an all ages interactive workshop with participants of *Poets on the Rez* at the San Carlos Campus of Gila Community College. Founded in 2010, *Poets on the Rez* provides a friendly collaborative atmosphere for community members to get to know one another and provide an opportunity to share their gifts with the community. Join us for this open mic gathering which will feature art, music, and writing.

5:30-6:30 p.m. - All Ages Community Writing Workshop  
6:30-9:30 p.m. - Open Mic Performance + Light Refreshments  
Gila Community College-San Carlos Campus  
Tonto Street and Mesa Drive San Carlos, AZ 85550 / (928) 475-5981

**About Laura Tohe:** Laura Tohe is Diné/Navajo. She is Sleepy Rock clan born for the Bitter Water clan. A librettist and an award-winning poet, she has written 3 books of poetry, edited a book of Native American Women writing, and the oral history book, *Code Talker Stories*. Her commissioned libretto, *Enemy Slayer, A Navajo Oratorio* made its world premiere in 2008 and was performed by The Phoenix Symphony. She is Professor with Distinction in Indigenous Literature at Arizona State University and is the Poet Laureate of the Navajo Nation for 2015-2017.

**About Orlando White:** Orlando White is the author of two books of poetry: *Bone Light* (Red Hen Press, 2009) and *LETTERRS* (Nightboat Books, 2015). He holds a BFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts and an MFA from Brown University. His poems have appeared in *The Kenyon Review*, *Omnidawn Poetry Feature Blog*, *Sentence: A Journal of Prose Poetics*, *American Indian Culture And Research Journal*, *Evening Will Come: A Monthly Journal of Poetics*, and elsewhere. He is the recipient of a Lannan Foundation Residency and a Bread Loaf John Ciardi Fellowship. He teaches at Diné College and in the low-residency MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts.

**April 21<sup>st</sup> - Poet Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow Workshop and Reading at Arizona Humanities in Phoenix, AZ**

Join poet Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow for an all-ages poetry workshop and reading in downtown Phoenix. Selected participants will engage in a writing workshop with Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow held at the historic office of Arizona Humanities. To participate, send a sample of writing up to 35 lines by **April 8<sup>th</sup>** to [ehutchison@azhumanities.org](mailto:ehutchison@azhumanities.org). Afterwards, Edlow will read from both of her poetry book collections, *The Day Judge Spencer Learned the Power of Metaphor*, and *Old School Superhero Loves a Good Wristwatch*. Interspersed with the reading of various poems, hear how Edlow crafts, revises, and finalizes her poems. Learn how a poem comes into being, takes shape, and occupies its own world. Be sure to check out @AZhumanities for daily writing prompts from Cynthia and other poets all month long.

5:00-6:30 p.m. - Writing Workshop (limited to 15 people, RSVP by April 8<sup>th</sup> to [ehutchison@azhumanities.org](mailto:ehutchison@azhumanities.org))  
7:00-7:45 p.m. - Reading and Q&A  
Arizona Humanities  
1242 N. Central Ave. Phoenix, AZ 85004 / (602) 257-0335

**About Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow:** Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow's poetry collection is *The Day Judge Spencer Learned the Power of Metaphor* (Salmon Poetry, 2012). Her chapbook is *Old School Superhero Loves a Good Wristwatch* (Dancing Girl Press, 2014). She won the 2012 Red Hen Press Poetry Award (judge: Cynthia Hogue) – the poem, "Super Dan Comics Question Box Series #18," was published in *The Los Angeles Review*. She won the 2014 Tusculum Review Poetry Prize (judge: Jericho Brown) for the poem, "The Timekeeper," published in *Tusculum Review*. She is also the recipient of the Willow Review Prize for Poetry, the Beullah Rose Poetry Prize and two Pushcart Prize nominations. Her poetry has appeared widely, including *American Literary Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Cimarron Review*, *Cutthroat: A Journal of the Arts*, *Fjords Review*, *Folio*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Georgetown Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Smartish Pace* and *Tahoma Literary Review*. Poems have also been featured in the anthologies *Dogs Singing: A Tribute Anthology*, *Drawn to*

*Marvel, The Emily Dickinson Awards Anthology* and *Not A Muse*. New poetry is forthcoming in: *Dublin Poetry Review, Fulcrum, Iodine Poetry Review* and *Plume*. Her next full-length verse collection, *Horn Section All Day Every Day*, is forthcoming from Salmon Poetry in 2017.

**Monday, April 25 - Poet J Mase III Talk at Northern Arizona University for Ethnic Studies Department Hip Hop Week and Public Program at Firecreek Coffee in Flagstaff, AZ**

Join New York City-based black/trans/queer poet J Mase III on Monday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at the Firecreek Coffee Company for a community writing workshop, reading, and open mic event. The workshop, *Even My Poems Are Revolutionary*, invites new and experienced poets to explore social justice movements through writing and performance to create solo and group poems. Earlier in the day on April 25<sup>th</sup>, J Mase III will be performing on the Northern Arizona University campus from 1:00-2:00 p.m. for the opening of NAU's Hip Hop Week III. Follow @AZhumanities on twitter for daily writing prompts from J Mase III and other poets all month long.

5:00-6:30 p.m. - Community Writing Workshop (All Ages) - *RSVP to ehutchison@azhumanities.org*

7:00-7:45 p.m. - Poetry Reading and Q&A

Firecreek Coffee Company

22 E Rte 66 - Flagstaff, AZ 86001 / (928) 774-2266

**About J Mase III:** J Mase III is a black/trans/queer poet based in NYC. A blogger for the Huffington Post, he is author of "If I Should Die Under the Knife, Tell My Kidney I was the Fiercest Poet Around" as well as, "And Then I Got Fired: One Transqueer's Reflections on Grief, Unemployment and Inappropriate Jokes About Death." As an educator, J Mase has worked with thousands of community members in the US, the UK and Canada on the needs of LGBTQIA youth and adults in spaces such as K-12 schools, universities, faith communities and restricted care facilities among others. He is the founder of the international performance tour Cupid Ain't @#%!: An Anti-Valentine's Day Poetry Movement and awQward, the first ever trans & queer people of color specific talent agency.

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**About Arizona Humanities**

**<http://www.azhumanities.org>**

Arizona Humanities is an independent non-profit organization and the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Arizona Humanities supports public programming in the humanities that promotes understanding of human thoughts, actions, creations, and values. Since its foundation in 1973, nearly \$11 million has been provided to cultural and educational institutions throughout Arizona.

*Mission: Arizona Humanities builds a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning and reflection.*