The University of Arizona Poetry Center presents: Spectacular Poetics: The Poetry of Spectacle

New series at the University of Arizona Poetry Center in February 2016

December 15, 2015, Tucson Arizona—

The University of Arizona Poetry Center is pleased to announce the launch of Spectacular Poetics: The Poetry of Spectacle, a thematic series of investigative poetry readings that will bring leading poets Terrance Hayes, Kimiko Hahn, Khadijah Queen, and Adrian Matejka to the University of Arizona campus in February 2016. Over four successive Thursdays, each poet will offer a reading and response that explores the intersections of poetry and spectacle in our contemporary American moment. All readings will take place at the University of Arizona Poetry Center and are free and open to the public.

Spectacular Poetics: The Poetry of Spectacle is part of a broader new initiative at the University of Arizona Poetry Center to annually offer a thematic series of investigative readings that respond to critical social, cultural, environmental or political concerns. Each series will explore how poetry can help us understand and reckon with the role of the human enterprise against the backdrop of some of the most substantial challenges we collectively face.

When asked why the Poetry Center is offering this series, Program Coordinator Hannah Ensor responded, “We’re all constantly navigating spectacles—24-hour news channels, celebrity culture, sports, televised rallies and revolutions and wars. These things come up in our lives, and so of course they show up in our art, too. If we’re reading a poem, and it talks about a TV show instead of a sunset, or love, or a flower, what do we do with that? It’s happening more and more. And we don’t mind at all—poets are uniquely positioned to show us new ways of engaging with spectacle more creatively, with deep attention and curiosity.”

All four invited poets have a track record not only of excellent and highly-acclaimed poetry, but also of work that addresses American culture, race, identity, and/or cultural performance directly, as well as a commitment to using poetry and other creative writing to take part in serious and persistent inquiry into very real and relevant social and cultural phenomena that define the first fifteen years of the 21st century.

In April 2016, this groundbreaking series will also be presented on the national stage, as three of the presenters and University of Arizona Poetry Center Program Coordinator Hannah Ensor will travel to Los Angeles for the 2016 Association of Writers and Writing Programs’ national conference to present a panel and reading with the same title as this Tucson-based series.
Quick facts about the series:

**Title:** Spectacular Poetics: The Poetry of Spectacle

**When:** Four consecutive Thursdays in February, all at 7:00 PM (2/4, 2/11, 2/18, and 2/25).

**Presenters:** Terrance Hayes (2/4), Kimiko Hahn (2/11), Khadijah Queen (2/18), and Adrian Matejka (2/25).

**Partners:** Four University of Arizona departments have partnered with the Poetry Center to present these poets: UA Africana Studies Program, Confluencenter for Creative Inquiry, UA Program in Medical Humanities, and UA Department of East Asian Studies.

About the Artists (publicity photographs available upon request):

- **Terrance Hayes:** A recipient of a 2014 MacArthur Foundation “Genius” Award and a National Book Award for Poetry, two Pushcart selections, eight Best American Poetry selections, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the Guggenheim Foundation. He is the author of five books of poetry, his work has additionally been recognized as a winner of the National Poetry Series, a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Award, and runner-up for the James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets and the earliest of which was a winner of both the Whiting Writers Award and the Kate Tufts Discovery Award. Hayes is widely acclaimed as one of our greatest living poets.

- **Kimiko Hahn:** the author of nine collections of poetry, three of which published by major publishing house Norton. Recipient of an American Book Award. A recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, as well as a Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writers’ Award, the Theodore Roethke Memorial Poetry Prize, and an Association of Asian American Studies Literature Award. She is a Distinguished Professor in the English department at Queens College/CUNY and lives in New York.

- **Khadijah Queen:** Author of three full length collections (Conduit, 2008; Black Peculiar, 2011; and Fearful Beloved, 2015). Recipient of fellowships and awards from Cave Canem, winner of the 2014 Leslie Scalapino Award for Innovative Women Performance Writers; winner of the Noemi book award for poetry for Black Peculiar, which was also a finalist for the Gatewood Prize.

- **Adrian Matejka:** Author of three full length collections (The Devil’s Garden, 2002; Mixology, 2009; and The Big Smoke, 2013). Matejka is a winner of the National Poetry Series (selected for publication by Penguin), finalista for a NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literature (Poetry), and a recipient of the 2014 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Lannan Foundation, as well as awards from the Illinois Arts Council. His most recent book, in addition to the Anisfield-Wolf award, was a finalist for the National Book Award, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and a Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

The University of Arizona Poetry Center is housed in one of three landmark buildings for poetry in the nation. In addition to its world-renowned collection of contemporary poetry, the Poetry Center is known for its long running readings and lecture series, international symposia, classes and workshops, writers’ residencies, and a wide range of programs for children and youth. For more information, please visit poetry.arizona.edu or call (520) 626-3765.