



North Carolina Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2022

MEDIA CONTACT

Kat Harding | (919) 664-6795

kat.harding@ncdcr.gov

North Carolina Museum of Art Announces Jaki Shelton Green as Poet in Residence

Green will host workshops, readings, and more events with the NCMA through 2023

Raleigh, NC—The North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) will welcome Jaki Shelton Green, North Carolina’s ninth Poet Laureate, as its inaugural poet in residence. Beginning in spring 2022, Green will host a series of events, including movie screenings, poetry readings and workshops, and other performing arts events through 2023. Throughout the residency, Green will highlight her work and the work of North Carolina poets to help cultivate the next generation of poetry writers. Her programming will create deeper connections to the People’s Collection through the written word.

“Jaki Shelton Green’s contribution to the arts of North Carolina, the country, and the world, cannot be understated,” said Valerie Hillings, Museum director. “We are excited to experience the new connections she will bring to the People’s Collection through poetry.”



“I am honored to be named the poet in residence at the North Carolina Museum of Art,” said Green. “This engagement represents the museum’s latest innovative and nontraditional effort for using the literary arts to change the way visitors interact with the collections. Poetry is also a form of display for ideas, just like a museum chooses the best and most expressive aspects of an object to exhibit in order to give the most accurate portrayal of that object. In addition to my support of the museum’s mission to create diverse and remarkable performing arts and film experiences, I am very excited to use the great vehicle of poetry to help multigenerational public audiences explore their own thoughts and feelings about the natural, social, and cultural artifacts on display at the North Carolina Museum of Art.”

Jaki Shelton Green, ninth poet laureate of North Carolina, is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina poet laureate. She is a 2019 Academy of American Poet laureate fellow, 2014 NC Literary Hall of Fame inductee, 2009 NC Piedmont Laureate appointee, and 2003 recipient of the North Carolina Award for Literature. Jaki Shelton Green teaches documentary poetry at the Duke University Center for Documentary Studies and was appointed the 2021 Frank B. Hanes Writer in Residence at UNC–Chapel Hill. Additionally, she received the George School Outstanding Alumni Award in 2021. Her

(continued)

publications include *Dead on Arrival*, *Masks*, *Dead on Arrival and New Poems*, *Conjure Blues*, *singing a tree into dance*, and *breath of the song*, published by Blair Publishers; *Feeding the Light* and *i want to undie you* published by Jacar Press; and *i want to undie you* English /Italian bilingual edition, published by Lebeg Publishers. On Juneteenth 2020 she released poetry album, *The River Speaks of Thirst*, produced by Soul City Sounds and Clearly Records. She is the owner of SistaWRITE, providing writing retreats for women writers in Sedona, Arizona; Martha's Vineyard; Ocracoke, North Carolina; Northern Morocco; and Tullamore, Ireland.

"At world-class museums, the written word and spoken word are intertwined in ways that allow us to examine, challenge, and experience the power of art," said Moses T. Alexander Greene, Museum director of performing arts and film. "As Jaki Shelton Green is a regionally, nationally, and internationally respected poet, her residency will attract and empower our visitors to engage with the collection and our special exhibitions in invigorating and meaningful ways."

Green has hosted movie screenings, introduced poetry readings, and will host poetry workshops at the NCMA. See current list of upcoming events below. More events in the series will be announced soon.

[The River Speaks of Thirst Film Screening and Discussion](#)

Thursday, March 24

In honor of Women's History Month, the NCMA and the Justice Theater Project present a screening of *The River Speaks of Thirst*.

This critically acclaimed short film includes a collection of audio poems written by Jaki Shelton Green that document the real experiences of African American people past and present. Each poem is treated as a separate vignette using various mediums—including music, dance, song, and dramatic interpretation—to illustrate topics such as race, oppression, emancipation, religion, and grief.

[Poetry Alive! An Evening with Past and Present North Carolina Poet Laureates](#)

Friday, April 8

Join NCMA poet laureate-in-residence Jaki Shelton Green for a special in-person conversation with former NC poet laureates Joseph Bathanti (2012–14) and Shelby Stephenson (2015–18).

This discussion centers on the power of poetry and the written word to illuminate, educate, entertain, and transform the minds and hearts of people of all ages and from all walks of life. The poet laureates share stories of how they cultivated appreciation of literature in its diversity throughout the state during their tenures.

[Poetry Alive! A Reading and Book Signing with NC Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green](#)

Saturday, April 16

Jaki Shelton Green is the first African American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina poet laureate. When she was appointed by Governor Roy Cooper in 2018, he stated, "Jaki Shelton Green brings a deep appreciation of our state's diverse communities to her role as an ambassador of North Carolina literature. Jaki's appointment is a wonderful new chapter in North Carolina's rich literary history."

Crossing the Rift: North Carolina Poets on 9/11 and Its Aftermath (A Poetry Reading)

Thursday, April 28

We invite you to an evening of poetry from the anthology *Crossing the Rift: North Carolina Poets on 9/11 and Its Aftermath*. Join host Jaki Shelton Green, NC poet laureate/NCMA poet in residence; the editors former North Carolina poet laureate Joseph Bathanti and 9/11 family member and former literature and theater director for the North Carolina Arts Council, David Potorti; and poets featured in the anthology.

From the publisher: "No matter how you were touched by the events of September 11, 2001, that moment continues to resonate. *Crossing the Rift: North Carolina Poets on 9/11 and Its Aftermath* illuminates not only what happened that day, but what continues to challenge us twenty years later: Islamophobia, the vilification of refugees and asylum seekers, nationalism, supercharged military budgets, and rises in virulent racism and domestic terrorism."

The NCMA event features poets Diya Abdo, Betty Adcock, Fred L. Joiner, Debra Kaufman, Lenard D. Moore, and Benito del Pliego.

Since 2021 the Museum has hosted residency programs, including artist in residence Carolyn Colquitt. While at the NCMA, Colquitt, a concert pianist, performed in gallery spaces and on stage. She was commissioned by the NCMA to compose a "[musical interchange](#)," a concert piece inspired by artworks by Ludolf Backhuysen and Yinka Shonibare, part of the Museum's *Interchanges: Cross-Collection Conversations*, a series of installations featuring the NCMA collection in new forms. The interchange paired an early 18th-century Dutch seascape by Ludolf Backhuysen with a life-size mannequin sculpture by British Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare made in 2005. This pairing, intended to be jarring, emphasizes the global trade networks built on and supported by European colonialism.

Image Caption:

Image courtesy of Jaki Shelton Green

#

About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's collection spans more than 5,000 years, from antiquity to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing special exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh and is home to the People's Collection. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, under the auspices of Governor Roy Cooper; an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, guided by the direction of Secretary D. Reid Wilson; and led by Director Valerie Hillings.