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ARTS AND INDUSTRY COLLABORATION TO HONOR

AWARD-WINNING TOLEDO POETS ON MARCH 31

In collaboration with Hilton Toledo Downtown and Pineapple Press and Design, four award-winning poets will read Toledo-inspired poems followed by the installation of a custom-printed poetry broadside in the Hilton lobby to commemorate the event.

The event will kick off at 7 pm on Friday, March 31 in the Oak Openings room in the Hilton Downtown, 101 N. Summit Street. Valet, garage, and street parking are available.

Registration at Eventbrite is required: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/htpoetry23-national-poetry-month-kick-off-and-arts-collaboration-tickets-548065276997>

“The idea behind the partnership was to highlight the ways arts and industry can amplify one another, especially with the recent renaissance and revitalization of Toledo’s downtown,” said Julie E. Bloemeke, a Toledo native and current Atlanta resident, whose poem honoring Toledo, “Glass City,” was chosen for the installation.

Identified by the hashtag #htpoetry23, the event marks the kick-off of April’s National Poetry Month. In addition to Bloemeke, Ohio poets Ryan A. Bunch, Dustin Pearson, and Kerry Trautman will perform Toledo poems written for the event.

Bunch released three collaborative spoken word albums with musician Lance Hulsey under the moniker Kyrux Macist and is the founder of the OHMI Reading Series and Mid-Coast Industrial Workshop. Pearson is the author of three poetry books and is the Assistant Professor at University of Toledo where he teaches Creative Writing. In 2019, The Root named him one of nine Black poets working in “academic, cultural and government institutions committed to elevating and preserving the poetry artform.” Trautman is the author of seven collections of poetry, and her one-act play “Mass” was a winner of The Toledo Repertoire Theater’s “Toledo Voices” competition in 2019.

Following the reading, Sven Olaf Nelson, founder of Pineapple Press and Design, will give a video presentation documenting the design and printing process of the broadside.

For Olaf, creating the broadside has been an investment in months of work, including sourcing handmade paper and both new and vintage typeset for the project.

Says Olaf, “Letterpress printing in Toledo seems a perfect intersection of art and industry. Toledo is going through a resurgence of its own, and creating this broadside is a way of bringing together creatives from different mediums to express this moment in the Glass City.”

As part of the collaboration, Olaf brought in Toledo filmmaker Joshua Lightle to produce a video of the broadside production which will be aired as part of the event. Doug Hinebaugh, Toledo photographer, also documented aspects of the letterpress production. Hinebaugh will also be taking photos as part of the celebration.

“We wanted to extend the reach of collaborative spirit as much as possible for this event,” Bloemeke said. “That poetry, industry, local business, film, performance, and photography could all come together in this way opens new doors to possibility on what creative collaborations can offer in Toledo and elsewhere,” she said.

Bloemeke was named a 2021 Georgia Author of the Year Finalist in Poetry and her book, *Slide to Unlock*, from which the broadside poem “Glass City” was selected, was also chosen as a 2021 Book All Georgians Should Read. Her most recent project was co-editing *Let Me Say This: A Dolly Parton Poetry Anthology* along with poet Dustin Brookshire.

“‘Glass City’ pays homage to Toledo’s history of glassmaking in both industry and the arts,” Bloemeke said. “It also raises questions about how we perceive home, past, and memory.” While working on the poem, Bloemeke traveled from Atlanta to consult with glassblowers at the Toledo Museum of Art to ensure accuracy with her use of glassblowing terminology.

Following the unveiling of the broadside, there will be a reception and author signing. Bloemeke will also sign limited edition prints of the broadside Olaf made for the occasion. Only 25 numbered prints will be available.

Following the event, Napa Kitchen and Bar, the Hilton’s onsite restaurant, will also be open for gathering.

“Our hope is that this kick-off for National Poetry Month only marks the start of more art and industry collaborations in Toledo and elsewhere. Toledo is a treasure—so much creative innovation is present here, and it is an honor to be able to shine more light on all of the remarkable projects going on in the Glass City,” Bloemeke said.

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