

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Media Contact:**

Dominika Laster | 646 662 9590 | [dlaster@unm.edu](mailto:dlaster@unm.edu)  
Kathleen Clawson | 505 238 6029 | [kclawson@unm.edu](mailto:kclawson@unm.edu)  
<https://www.decolonialgestures.com>

### ***DECOLONIAL GESTURES / A SYMPOSIUM ON INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE* MAY 5TH & 6TH, 2017**

**Albuquerque and Santa Fe, NM, April 24, 2017**—The UNM Department of Theatre and Dance and the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Art (MoCNA) announced today the program of events for an upcoming symposium on indigenous performance. *Decolonial Gestures / A Symposium on Indigenous Performance* is an interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and intertribal symposium intended to both present and stimulate contemporary indigenous expressive forms. The project will bring together three generations of Native American artists to engage in dialogues and practical work with local artists, scholars, students, and communities.

The events serve as a public forum for the presentation of contemporary Native art and the transmission of indigenous knowledges across generations, while engaging multiple, diverse communities of New Mexico. Bringing together both established and emerging artists, the symposium marks a historical trajectory of indigenous performance and explores new directions in Native art.

This two-day symposium will consist of performances, workshops, a film screening, and a roundtable discussion. The program includes a screening of *Through the Repellent Fence: A Land Art Film* at the St. Francis auditorium in New Mexico Museum of Art. The film, directed by Sam Wainwright Douglas, follows art collective Postcommodity as they strive to construct Repellent Fence, a two-mile long outdoor artwork that straddles the U.S.-Mexico border. This screening will be followed by a conversation with Raven Chacon (Diné), Cristóbal Martínez (Mexico), Kade L. Twist (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma) of Postcommodity.

The symposium also features performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña's most recent performance titled *Guillermo Gómez-Peña: The Most (Un)Documented Mexican Artist*. In this latest solo work, "El border brujo" draws from his 30-year-old living archive and combines new and classic performance material to present a unique perspective on the immediate future of the Americas. His self-styled "imaginary activism" invokes performance art as a form of radical democracy and citizenship.

Confirmed guest artists include Gloria Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock), Rhiana Yazzie (Diné), Ty Defoe (Oneida/Ojibwe), Reed Adair Bobroff (Diné), Raven Chacon (Diné), Cristóbal Martínez (Mexico), Kade L. Twist (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), Balitronica Gómez, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña.

*Decolonial Gestures* is made possible through a generous grant from the UNM Center for Regional Studies and the support of the UNM Department of Theatre & Dance. The symposium is curated by Dominika Laster and developed in collaboration with the IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Art (MoCNA), Tricklock Company, the New Mexico Museum of Art, and the UNM Art Museum.

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## **SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM**

### **Friday, May 5 | Santa Fe**

11:00 AM – 5:00 PM | Workshops | IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts | 108 Cathedral Place, Santa Fe

- ⇒ 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM | *Never Alone: writing our histories, families, and communities* with Reed Adair Bobroff (Diné)
  
- ⇒ 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM | *Exercises for Rebel Artists: A Performance Workshop by La Pocha Nostra* with Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Balitronica Gómez

6:00 PM | Film Screening | *Through the Repellent Fence: A Land Art Film*. Directed by Sam Wainwright Douglas (74 min.) | St. Francis Auditorium | New Mexico Museum of Art | 107 West Palace Avenue, Santa Fe. Followed by a post-screening discussion with the Postcommodity members Raven Chacon (Diné), Cristóbal Martínez (Mexico), Kade L. Twist (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma).

### **Saturday, May 6 | Albuquerque**

9:15 AM – 4:30 PM | Workshops

- ⇒ 9:15 AM – 10:45 AM | *The Art of Indigenous Storytelling* with Ty Defoe (Oneida/Ojibwe)
  
- ⇒ 9:15 AM – 10:45 AM | *Understanding the Major Dramatic Question for Playwrights* with Rhiana Yazzie (Diné)
  
- ⇒ 11:00 AM – 12:45 PM | *Storyweaving Workshop* with Gloria Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock) | Spiderwoman Theater
  
- ⇒ 1:15 PM – 3:15 PM | Postcommodity Workshop

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM | Roundtable | UNM Art Museum | Discussion of indigenous performance with Gloria Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock), Rhiana Yazzie (Diné), Ty Defoe (Oneida/Ojibwe), Reed Adair Bobroff (Diné), Raven Chacon (Diné), Cristóbal Martínez (Mexico), and Kade L. Twist (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma).

6:00 PM | Prayer Invocation & Reception | CFA Lobby

7:00 PM | Performance | *New Songs, Old Traditions*  
Reed Adair Bobbroff (Diné) | Rodey Theatre

8:00 PM | Performance | *Guillermo Gómez-Peña: The Most (un) Documented Mexican Artist*  
Guillermo Gómez-Peña with cameo by Balitronica Gómez | Rodey Theatre

All Saturday events will take place in the UNM Center for the Arts, which is located directly north of the UNM Bookstore (one block north of Central) at Cornell and Redondo Drive.

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## **RESERVATIONS**

*All events are free and open to the public.* Reservations are required.

For more information, workshop application guidelines, and ticket reservations, please visit the symposium website at <https://www.decolonialgestures.com>

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## **PERFORMANCE EVENTS**

### **THROUGH THE REPELLENT FENCE: A LAND ART FILM DIRECTED BY SAM WAINWRIGHT DOUGLAS**

**Friday, May 5 | 6:00 PM** | St. Francis Auditorium | New Mexico Museum of Art | 107 West Palace Avenue, Santa Fe | The screening will be followed by a discussion with the artists.

**THROUGH THE REPELLENT FENCE: A Land Art Film** follows art collective Postcommodity as they strive to construct Repellent Fence, a two-mile long outdoor artwork that straddles the U.S.-Mexico border. Postcommodity consists of three Native American artists who “put land art in a tribal context.” Aided by the communities on both sides of the border in 2015 the artists installed a series of 28 huge inflatable spheres emblazoned with an insignia known as the “open eye” that has existed in Indigenous cultures from South America to Canada for thousands of years. The spheres were evenly spaced apart and extended north and south of the border a mile in each direction. “It’s a metaphorical suture stitching together cultures that have inhabited these lands long before borders were drawn.”

The film provides an intimate glimpse into the arduous process behind creating an ambitious artwork that will give voice to the shared history and enduring culture of Indigenous societies that have made the region their home for thousands of years before a border ever divided it. Woven throughout this narrative thread are lush scenes using stunning cinematography to absorb viewers into striking land art environments that have preceded Post Commodity’s work. Scenes with other artists and intellectuals working in the land art realm provide context and insight as well. These include scenes with Chris Taylor of Texas Tech University’s Land Arts of the American West program, writer Lucy Lippard and Matt Coolidge of the Center for Land Use Interpretation.

THROUGH THE REPELLENT FENCE is an adventure in the artistic process blended with a road trip of discovery visiting sites and diverse perspectives to explore how land art can generate community interaction and perceptual shifts in how we interpret, engage and draw inspiration from our natural world.

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## **NEW SONGS, OLD TRADITIONS**

**Saturday, May 6 | 7:00 PM** | Rodey Theatre | UNM Center for the Arts

*New Songs, Old Traditions* is part spoken word, part comedy, and part Powwow. Born out of personal experience and conversations with Native students at Yale University, this show examines the legacy of indigenous students and some of the challenges they face in transitioning to college.

**Reed Adair Bobroff** (Diné) is a poet, playwright, and performer from Albuquerque, NM. He has shared his work in print in the *Breakbeat Poets* Anthology and on stage at the Nuyorican Poets Café, the National Museum of the American Indian, and on HBO's *Brave New Voices*. In 2016, he was the winner of the Yale Young Native Storytellers Playwriting Award for his play, *A Fraction of Love*. He graduated from Yale University with a degree in Theater Studies and now works at the Yale Child Study Center researching the healing quality of writing in Native communities and those struggling with addiction.

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## **GUILLERMO GÓMEZ-PEÑA: THE MOST (UN) DOCUMENTED MEXICAN ARTIST**

*A brand new spoken-word monologue*

**Saturday, May 6 | 8:00 PM** | Rodey Theatre | UNM Center for the Arts

In his latest solo work, 'El border brujo' draws from his 30 year old living archive and combines new and classic performance material to present a unique perspective on the immediate future of the Americas. His-self styled "imaginary activism" invokes performance art as a form of radical democracy and citizenship.

Combining spoken word poetry, activist theory, radical storytelling and language experimentation, Gómez-Peña offers critical and humorous commentary about the art world, academia, new technologies, the culture of war and violence in the US, organized crime in Mexico, gender and race politics, and the latest wave of complications surrounding gentrification in the "creative city".

The performance features a special appearance by **Balitronica Gómez** aka San Francisco's super-heroine "The Phantom Mariachi" who stands against eviction, deportation, and the erasure of complex identities.

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## **WORKSHOPS**

### **NEVER ALONE: WRITING OUR HISTORIES, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES**

**Friday, May 5** | 11:00 PM – 12:30 PM | IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts | 108 Cathedral Place, Santa Fe

When a performer is on stage, it is never just the individual: we always stand on the shoulders of family, friends, ancestors, and anyone who has contributed to our story. In this workshop, participants will dive into their experiences through poetry and storytelling and engage the relationships, whispers, and ghosts that are responsible for the legacies they carry as they develop their own *One People Shows*. As they write, participants will keep in mind that we can't remove ourselves from our environment and, through conversation and writing, they will uncover ways to use history and context to empower and inform our voices. Workshop conducted by **Reed Adair Bobroff (Diné)**.

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### **EXERCISES FOR REBEL ARTISTS: A PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP BY LA POCHA NOSTRA**

**Friday, May 5** | 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM | IAIA Museum of Contemporary Native Arts | 108 Cathedral Place, Santa Fe

CALLING ALL LOCAS Y LOCOS!! A 3-hour intensive workshop on performance art with a focus on the human body as a site for creation, reinvention, memory and activism.

This intensive workshop led by Pocha Nostra members **Guillermo Gómez-Peña** and **Balitronica Gómez** is an amazing artistic and anthropological experiment in which selected artists from every imaginable artistic, ethnic and sub-cultural background begin to negotiate common ground. Performance becomes the connective tissue and lingua franca for our temporary community of rebel artists.

In this cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary and cross-generational intensive, participants are exposed to the 'Pocha Method', an eclectic combination of exercises borrowed from multiple traditions including performance art, experimental theater and dance, the Suzuki method, ritual shamanism, performance games and live jam sessions. Parallel to this hands-on process, the group will analyze the creative process, the issues addressed by the work, its aesthetic currency, cultural impact and political pertinence.

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### **THE ART OF INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING**

**Saturday, May 6** | 9:15 AM – 10:45 AM | UNM Center for the Arts

Writer, director, performer, and facilitator **Ty Defoe (Oneida/Ojibwe)** will share his recent projects engaging Native American/Indigenous storytelling with youth and adults. Part conversation/part workshop, this session will use movement, song, and theatre arts practices to explore the healing power of story.

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## UNDERSTANDING THE MAJOR DRAMATIC QUESTION FOR PLAYWRITERS

Saturday, May 6 | 9:15 AM – 10:45 AM | UNM Center for the Arts

This workshop will look at the structural aspects of Native plays by looking at the Major Dramatic Question. Workshop conducted by **Rhiana Yazzie (Diné)**.

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## STORYWEAVING WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 6 | 9:15 AM – 10:45 AM | UNM Center for the Arts | Experimental Theatre | B417

**Gloria Miguel (Kuna/Rappahannock)** of Spiderwoman Theater investigates the unique process that Spiderwoman Theater uses to create their plays and productions. This technique is called storyweaving. The word storyweaving describes the layering and weaving of stories and parts of stories, images, sound, movement, dance and music, creating a three-dimensional tapestry, embodied in space, which becomes the performance and production.

She teaches exercises that are designed to build an ensemble, the cornerstone of storyweaving. You will learn how to reproduce a sound that you hear in your head, how to express words and phrases in different ways and how to understand the words and phrases in your body. You get to tell your own stories. They can be traditional stories, personal stories or myths. Incorporating the exercises that have been learned in the workshop, you will collectively create a presentation of the stories.

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## POSTCOMMODITY WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 6 | 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM | UNM Center for the Arts | UNM Art Museum

Exploring collaborative forms of generative composition.

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## PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

**Reed Adair Bobroff (Diné)** is a poet, playwright, and performer from Albuquerque, NM. He has shared his work in print in the *Breakbeat Poets* Anthology and on stage at the Nuyorican Poets Café, the National Museum of the American Indian, and on HBO's *Brave New Voices*. In 2016, he was the winner of the Yale Young Native Storytellers Playwriting Award for his play, *A Fraction of Love*. He graduated from Yale University with a degree in Theater Studies and now works at the Yale Child Study Center researching the healing quality of writing in Native communities and those struggling with addiction.

**Ty Defoe [Giizhig]** (Oneida/Ojibwe), is a Grammy Award winner from the Oneida and Ojibwe Nations and resides in NYC. He is a writer and shape-shifting interdisciplinary artist who has gained recognition in many circles around the world and in his community. He brings the teachings of his

mentors with him as a practitioner of hoop dancing, eagle dancing, and a carrier of traditional songs. Ty is this year's Jonathan Larson Award winner (w/ his main collaborator Tidtaya Sinutoke) for book, lyrics, and music on their collection of new musical theater works. He was awarded a New England Foundation for the Arts, American Masterpieces grant for his cultural and artistic legacy on: *Drum is Thunder, Flute is the Wind* under the direction of Kevin Locke. Most recently, Ty was co-writer and co-creator of Heather Henson's *Crane on Earth, in Sky* with Ibex Puppetry (La MaMa, NYC & Lied Center for the Performing Arts in Nebraska). Other works include: *Clouds Are Pillows for the Moon* (w/ composer Tidtaya Sinutoke), (Yale Institute for Musical Theatre, ASCAP Musical Theatre Workshop with Stephan Schwartz, 2015 Kilroy's honorable mention list), *Tick-Tick* (Prospect Theatre's Musical Theatre Lab), *In the Cards* (Boston Contempo-International Festival), *Crossing Borders* (CAP 21 Residency), *Red Pine* (Autry Native Voices Theater Festival, Institute of American Indian Arts). Concerts: Joe's Pub, Songbook at Lincoln Center, Symphony Space, 54 Below, Goodspeed Opera House, Dramatist Guild National Conference, NAMT Songwriters Cabaret, and the Johnny Mercer Songwriting project.

Projects in development: *Hart Island Requiem* (with The Civilians/R&D Group),

*Sunrise Prayer* (with collaborators Mary Kathryn Nagle and Tidtaya Sinutoke at Goodspeed Opera), and *Gender Nation* (Robert Rauschenberg Residency).

In his free time, he mentors Indigenous Artists' at the Alaskan Cultural Heritage Center and Hawaiian Theatre Initiative through his co-owned company, Indigenous Direction (w/ Larissa FastHorse). Ty is a guest artist and lecturer at Central Michigan University and Institute of American Indian Arts. He's on the facilitation team for artEquity, a Theater Communications Group equity, diversity, and inclusion fellow alum, a Dramatist Guild, ASCAP, and East Coast Two Spirit Society member. Degrees from CalArts, Goddard, and NYU's Tisch and made a guest appearance on Netflix show, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt* as Young Anthony Black Elk. Ty draws inspiration from his favorite color, clear and blue. He lives in NYC.

Represented by Alaina Feehan at ATB | He/Him | [tydefoe.com](http://tydefoe.com)

**Guillermo Gómez-Peña** is a performance artist, writer, activist, radical pedagogue, and director of the performance troupe La Pocha Nostra. Born in Mexico City, he moved to the US in 1978. His performance work and 11 books have contributed to the debates on cultural & gender diversity, border culture and US-Mexico relations. His artwork has been presented at over nine hundred venues across the US, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Russia, South Africa and Australia. A MacArthur Fellow, Bessie and American Book Award winner, he is a regular contributor for newspapers and magazines in the US, Mexico, and Europe and a contributing editor to *The Drama Review* (NYU-MIT). Gómez-Peña is a Senior Fellow in the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, a Patron for the London-based Live Art Development Agency and in 2012 he was named Samuel Hoi Fellow by USA Artists.

**Balitronica Gómez** is a cyborg poet, performance artist and queer radical currently living between Mexico City and San Francisco. She was born and raised on the San Diego/Tijuana border where she was part of the punk and literary underground scene. After receiving her BA in Writing and Literature from San Diego State University she then lived in Paris in a 17th century Dominican convent researching nun culture and expat literature. She holds an MFA in Poetry/Writing &

Performance from Mills College. As a photo-performance artist she has worked with various photographers and painters such as Manuel Vason, RJ Muna, Herani Hache, and Marcos Raya. For the last 4 years, Balitronica has toured with Guillermo Gómez-Peña and is a Core Troupe Member of the legendary performance troupe La Pocha Nostra.

**Gloria Miguel** (Kuna/Rappahannock) studied drama at Oberlin College and is a founding member of Spiderwoman Theater. She is an actor, playwright, and educator. With Spiderwoman Theater, she has toured throughout Europe, Australia, New Zealand and performed in Beijing, China at the 4th World Woman's Conference. She received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Miami University and is a lifetime member of the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. Selected acting credits include a US tour of Hanay Geiogamah's *Grandma*; Pelaija Patchnose in Tomson Highway's *The Rez Sisters*; Coyote/Ritalinc in *Jessica* in Edmonton, AB-nominated for a Sterling Award for Best Supporting Actress; *Chocolate Woman Dreams the Milky Way* in Toronto with her daughter, Monique Mojica and the Spanish film *Caotica Ana* in Madrid, Spain.

She was a visiting professor of drama at Brandon University in Canada; drama consultant for the Minnesota Native American AIDS Taskforce, and has taught drama workshops at the Navajo Nation Reservation. Her one woman show, *Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue* was most recently performed at the Weesageechak Begins to Dance Festival in Toronto.

**Postcommodity** is an interdisciplinary arts collective comprised of Raven Chacon, Cristóbal Martínez, and Kade L. Twist. Postcommodity's art functions as a shared Indigenous lens and voice to engage the assaultive manifestations of the global market and its supporting institutions, public perceptions, beliefs, and individual actions that comprise the ever-expanding, multinational, multiracial and multiethnic colonizing force that is defining the 21st Century through ever increasing velocities and complex forms of violence. Postcommodity works to forge new metaphors capable of rationalizing our shared experiences within this increasingly challenging contemporary environment; promote a constructive discourse that challenges the social, political and economic processes that are destabilizing communities and geographies; and connect Indigenous narratives of cultural self-determination with the broader public sphere. Postcommodity are the recipients of grants from the American Composers Forum (2008), Arizona Commission on the Arts (2009), Joan Mitchell Foundation (2010), Creative Capital (2012), Art Matters (2013), and the Native Arts and Cultures Foundation (2014). The collective has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including: Contour the 5th Biennial of the Moving Image in Mechelen, Belgium; Nuit Blanche, Toronto, CA; 18th Biennale of Sydney in Sydney, Australia; Adelaide International in Adelaide, Australia; Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art in Scottsdale, AZ; and their historic land art installation Repellent Fence at the U.S./Mexico border near Douglas, AZ and Agua Prieta, SON.

Postcommodity acknowledges the important contributions of its previous collaborators: Steven Yazzie (2007-2010), Nathan Young (2007-2015), Adam Ingram-Goble (Game Remains), Andrew McCord (If History Moves at the Speed of Its Weapons, Then the Shape of the Arrow is Changing, and Promoting a More Just, Verdant and Harmonious Resolution), Annabel Wong (Dead River) and Existence AD (Dead River).

**Rhiana Yazzie** (Diné) is a playwright, screenwriter, producer, director, and actor based in Minnesota. She is a Playwrights' Center McKnight Playwriting Fellow this year (2016/2017). She is

also a two-time Playwrights' Center Jerome Fellow (2010/2011 and 2006/2007) and was a Playwrights' Center Core Member for three years. This fall she will be in residence at the MacDowell Colony where she'll be working on her next two screenplays. Her most recent projects include a play commission from the William Inge Center and a joint commission from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the Public Theater. She's also written plays for young audiences which include Chile Pod (La Jolla Playhouse); Wild Horses (Bonderman National Theatre for Youth Symposium and The Kennedy Center's New Visions/New Voices).

She created her theatre company, New Native Theatre, in 2009, a new way of looking at, thinking about, and staging Native American stories, [newnativetheatre.org](http://newnativetheatre.org). She holds a Masters of Professional Writing from the University of Southern California where she produced lectures and concerts by Madeleine Albright, Herbie Hancock, Spaulding Grey, and Stephen Hawking among others.