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APIA SPOKEN WORD & POETRY SUMMIT 2001

The isangmahal arts kollektive (Seattle) and the Chicago-based panAsian spoken word group, I Was Born With Two Tongues, are pleased to premiere the APIA Spoken Word and Poetry Summit to be held July 28-30, 2001 at Seattle University. Co-sponsored by the University of Washington-Filipino American Student Association, Seattle University-United Filipino Club and the Northwest Asian American Theater, this ground-breaking gathering is the first of its kind to focus in highlighting, unifying and empowering APIA artists on a national scale. The theme of the summit, "First there was the WORD...then there was the FIST!" highlights the oral tradition of story-telling and poetry as a fundamental medium for creating culture, preserving history and transforming community and self.

"This is a movement thousands of years in the making," explained Anida Esguerra of I Was Born With Two Tongues. "The APIA summit marks a momentous occasion in recognizing the new voices of Asian America. For the first time, we are forging a national identity for Asian American artists and converging upon Seattle (once again) to celebrate the word."

Despite the festivities and a capped attendance of 100 artists, the three-day event will prove to be challenging work for its participants. "This summit puts the word into action," says Chera Amlag of isangmahal arts kollektive, "in a world that renders us silent, the very act of speaking is our form of protest."

Summit events include:

- a welcoming performance by the isangmahal arts kollektive
- writing and performance intensive workshops and activities throughout the three days, including improvisational exercises, mythology creation through ritual, guerilla theater, visual and written ethnography, group poetry and performance
- group and panel discussions facilitated by participating artists and organizations from across the country, tentatively including Feedback (NYC), Mongrel (Minneapolis), Yellow Rage (Philadelphia), and DISKARTE' NAMIN/ LFS (San Francisco)
- a showcase highlighting work from all participants (open to the public)
- a series of round-table discussions and "family meetings" to review and re-envision the state of Asian America as it pertains to the artist as activist, organizer and conscience in the community

The summit will also precede the National Poetry Slam 2001, August 1-5. Participants are encouraged to stay through the duration of the summit and NPS 2001 to help support those APIA artists participating in the slam. The Asian American Showcase, an NPS sponsored day-activity, is expected to draw its largest attendance to date.

With limited capacity, the summit has already secured participation from additional APIA organizations and groups from San Francisco, San Diego, Washington D.C., Houston, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Chico, San Jose and other major cities across the nation.

Through the summit, isangmahal and Two Tongues aim to not only establish a strong network of artists, but also challenge and redefine the role the artist plays in the community. "We must use love as our foundation", says Maya Santos of isangmahal arts kollektive, "as artists breaking glass ceilings every time we speak, we MUST love ourselves in the process, because this is just the beginning of a long road of transformation of which we are in desperate need."