

THE POETRY CENTER & AMERICAN POETRY ARCHIVES

The Poetry Center was founded in 1954, following a small donation from W. H. Auden, who surrendered the honorarium paid to him when he read his poetry to celebrate the opening of the new (and present) San Francisco State campus. Today, The Poetry Center at SF State is one of the most long-lived literary arts institutions in the United States. Celebrating its 65th anniversary in 2019, the Poetry Center initiated its pioneering reading series under founding director, Professor of English Ruth Witt-Diamant, with advice and encouragement from local poets Kenneth Rexroth, Robert Duncan, and Madeline Gleason among others. Since that time, The Poetry Center has presented some 130 continuous seasons of outstanding contemporary poets and writers, reading and performing from their works, often with artists in related areas. With its companion project, The American Poetry Archives, the Poetry Center has amassed some 4,000+ hours of original audio and video recordings, representing an unprecedented collective record of contemporary poets and related artists. Many recordings, both early and more recent, are freely available online as streaming video and downloadable audio, publicly accessible at Poetry Center Digital Archive. The Poetry Center presents an extensive reading series, on and off-campus, during Spring and Fall semesters. It houses a reading room poetry library (Humanities 512), which doubles as performance space and Creative Writing student lounge.

The Poetry Center is open to visitors Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Offices located in Humanities 511

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