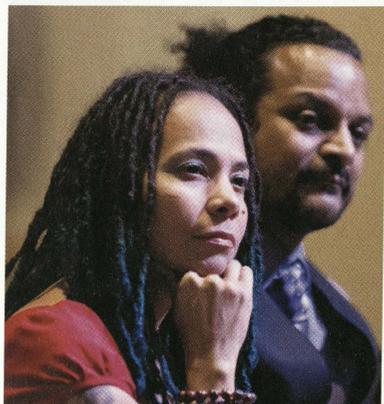


BY THE NUMBERS

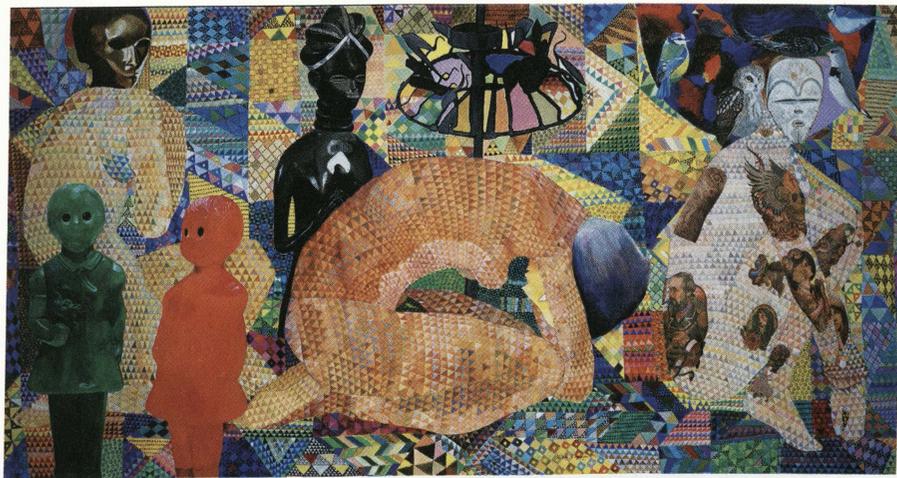
# furious flower *poetry center*

Cultivating, honoring and promoting the diverse voices of African American poets



# 50

On Sept. 24-27, 2014, 50 of the best established and emerging African American poets convened at James Madison University for **"Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry,"** a once-a-decade conference consisting of poetry readings, panel discussions, roundtables, concerts and art exhibits.



(Above) The conference included an exhibit by Nigerian artist Wole Lagunju, who merges images from the Victorian era with Yoruba Gelede. Clockwise from top left: Jessica Care Moore, Sonia Sanchez, Nikki Giovanni, JMU School of Theatre and Dance performers, Ravi Coltrane



BY THE NUMBERS

130

'We just have to keep on becoming the poets we want to be.'

—RITA DOVE, poet and English professor, University of Virginia

During the event, 130 scholars presented papers in concurrent panel discussions and three major roundtables tackling the major themes of the Black Avant-Garde, Diaspora Poetry, and Queer Poetics.

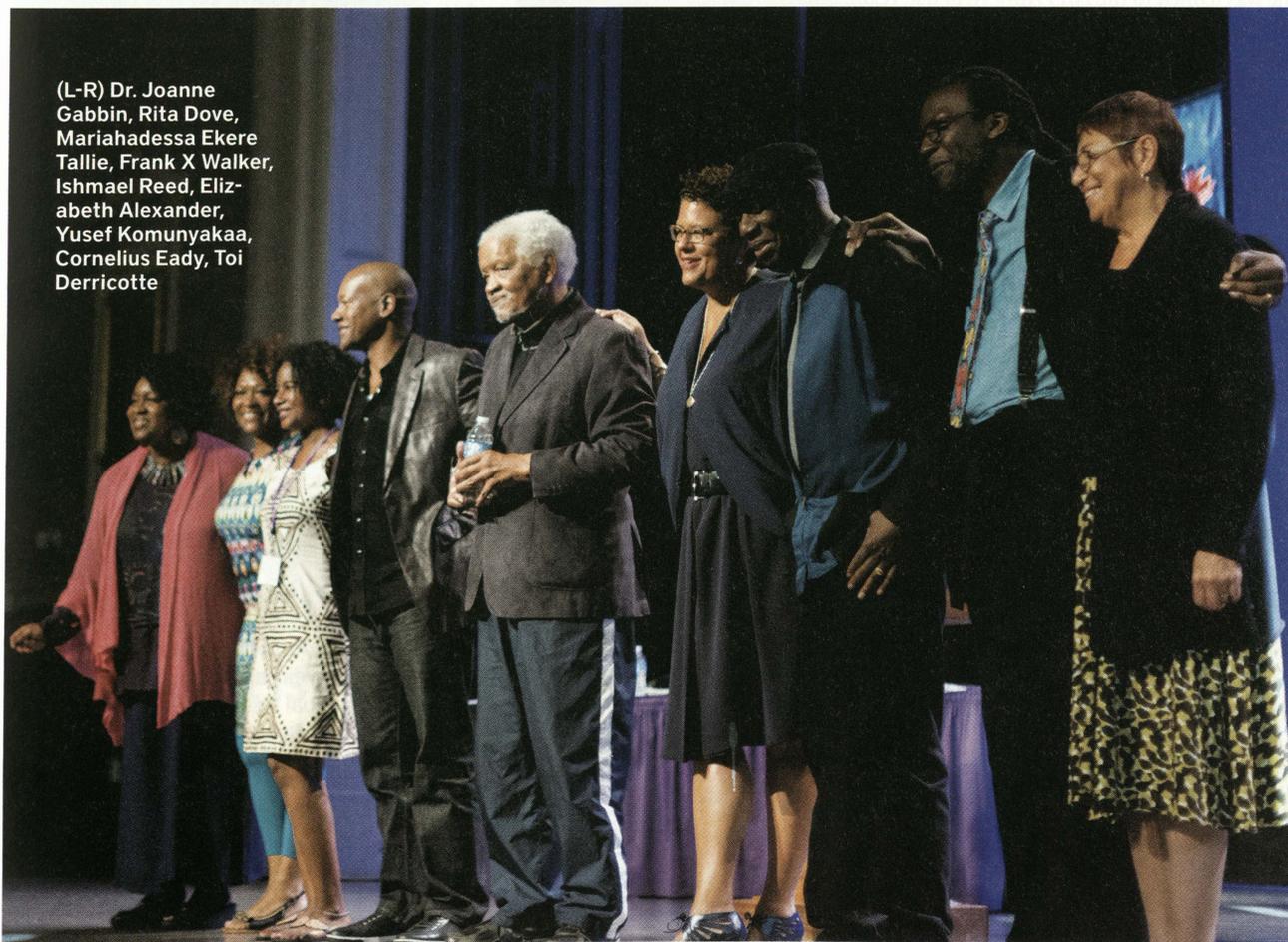
265

The conference engaged a wide audience in the tradition of black poetry—265 registrants, more than 100 guests, and additional crowds attended the free poetry readings, roundtables and panel discussions.



1st

This historic gathering marked 20 years since JMU hosted the first conference to focus solely on black poetry. That watershed event in 1994, "Furious Flower: A Revolution in African American Poetry," has borne impressive fruit. Most notably, it inspired the creation of the Furious Flower Poetry Center. **Dr. Joanne Gabbin**, conference organizer and executive director of the center, has made significant contributions to the curriculum needed to teach critical and cultural perspectives of African American poetry.



(L-R) Dr. Joanne Gabbin, Rita Dove, Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie, Frank X Walker, Ishmael Reed, Elizabeth Alexander, Yusef Komunyakaa, Cornelius Eady, Toi Derricotte