



ART FROM ASHES inc.

empowering youth through creative expression and personal transformation

1310 west 10th ave • denver co 80204 • 303.837.1550 • artfromashes.org • [fb/artfromashes](https://fb.com/artfromashes) • [twitter/artfromashes](https://twitter.com/artfromashes)

ROLE OF THE GUEST POET/ARTIST

The job of the guest poet/artist is to inspire and motivate youth to recognize their own creative genius by displaying their craft in a professional and engaging manner. It is not to perform for an audience, it is not to teach performance skills or teach the youth how to write or perform poetry.

We ask that you show up on time and prepared to read or perform a signature piece that highlights some of the struggles you have experienced and how creativity has effected change in your life, then finish with a piece that underscores the theme of the workshop in an inspiring way (basically, we don't want to end the workshop by bumming them out or redirecting their process).

Each workshop for which you are scheduled pays an honorarium: \$60 for a 1.5 to 2-hour in-person workshop; \$45 for up to 1.25-hour in-person workshop; and \$35 for a 1-hour virtual workshop. Checks are cut every First Friday for the preceding month.

We Ask Guest Poets/Artists To Comply With The Following 10 Requests:

1. Please attend a one-hour orientation, so you're aware of AfA values and purpose. Until the threat of COVID has passed, orientations are held virtually every third Saturday at 10 am. If you are unable to attend and would like to get started right away, you can contact the Guest Coordinator directly via email: workshops@artfromashes.org
2. Please send us a bio and let us know your pronoun so we can introduce you correctly. Your bio is meant to indicate your accomplishments in order to impress upon the youth that a) being an artist is a significant achievement and b) you're pretty damn important and you took the time to be with them!
3. Guests must actively participate during the workshop and be engaged with the youth, particularly in regards to encouragement and applause. Along these lines, we ask that you please not use your cell phone during the workshop.
4. The youth workshop space is a courageous and sacred space. Please come alone unless you request and receive permission from the program manager (programs@artfromashes.org) to bring others into the workshop space.
5. Your poems should be one or two minutes long since the attention span of young people is typically not longer than that.
6. Please refrain from values statements or facial expressions indicating that some poems are better than others. When one (or more) of the youth performs a particularly powerful piece, saying something like "WOW, that was amazing!" means that we would then have to say something similar to each and every young person or the others will feel like theirs isn't "as good." ***That can really stop a young person from freedom of expression, which is the point.*** The point is *not* to teach them how to be "good" poets or to perform well. Typically we simply applaud and say "Thank you for sharing," or "That was a very honest piece."
7. Strong language is not an issue since we promote a censorship-free and judgment-free environment. However, some facilities have agency rules and youth contracts that do not allow

swearing. We always ask that they allow youth to write whatever they want, and they only request that the youth perform at the mic with more sensitivity. Age also is a factor, since we are now working more with much younger traumatized youth. We'll let you know ahead of time if this is the case. In ALL cases, respect for self and others is the only rule, and gratuitous references to substance use and/or sex and violence are prohibited.

8. Please do not come to an in-person workshop smelling of anything strong, in particular alcohol, cigarettes or marijuana (even on clothing and hair, where you may not be aware it exists). Many of the youth are in treatment for substance abuse and can be triggered by those scents, and it also reflects poorly on our relationships with our partners. We've gotten feedback on each of these issues in the past, including strong body odor.
9. We have a "two strikes you're out" policy ('cuz this ain't baseball LOL) in regards to no call/no shows or disregarding the aforementioned requests.
10. We also ask that you fill out an artist evaluation form within a week of the workshop, since this not only helps us examine the effectiveness of our workshop based on your objective observations, but also how the bookkeeper knows to pay you: artfromashes.org/forms/guest-poet-artist-evaluation/

Importance Of Diverse Poets And Types Of Poetry

Although young people are typically more engaged by performance and slam poets, part of the purpose of Art from Ashes is to expose the youth to various types of poetry. In this way, youth become aware that all writing can be a form of dialogue with the subconscious. Additionally, some quieter young people find that a less performance-oriented form of poetry is more accessible for them.

The agency strives to ensure we have poets of diverse ethnicities, ages, backgrounds, and orientations, and that we don't only select poets who represent each particular youth population while at the same time ensuring we do provide representation when possible. We want the young people to understand that we can find connection in our common creative genius, and can learn to listen to one another from a shared place of understanding and empathy.

Thank you for being willing to share your creativity and love of community with the youth!

Quick Recap Of Our Process:

- Through email we ask our poets/artists to say *all* of the dates they would be available for the workshops we have scheduled.
- We select guest poets/artists from those available, depending on a variety of factors (choices are most often based on the number of times they've already performed for a specific group of youth).
- We'll let everyone know the schedule once it's confirmed.
- We'll send you the specific information several days before the scheduled workshop.
- You fill out the guest poet/artist evaluation.
- We pay you at the beginning of the following month.

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