Guidelines

The Loft Literary Center invites poets, fiction, and nonfiction writers to apply to the 2014–2015 Mentor Series in Poetry and Creative Prose. This program offers advanced criticism and professional development opportunities to twelve writers: four each in the genres of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

The Program

Twelve emerging writers are selected through anonymous competition to work intensively with six nationally acclaimed writers of prose and poetry. Three of the mentors spend an extended period of time working with the entire group and conducting genre-specific workshops and individual conferences with the four writers in their genres. The other three mentors come in for intensive weekends of craft seminars with the full group and individual manuscript conferences with the writers in their genre. All participants are featured in a public reading—two participants with one mentor—throughout the course of the year.

Eligibility

Winners are selected on the basis of anonymous manuscripts and receive a modest stipend to defray the costs of program participation (book purchases, child care, etc.). Winners are required to prepare for and attend all program-related meetings, seminars, readings, workshops, manuscript conferences, and social activities (please see scheduled events below). In addition, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Work sample must be in the genres of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry. Nonfiction may include memoir, personal essay, literary journalism, and biography. It does not include reportage, blogs, or opinion pieces.
- You must have been a resident of Minnesota for a minimum of 12 months at the time of application.
- You must not have published a book in any genre, but work published in magazines, journals, or anthologies is eligible.
- You must not be a full-time student in a degree-granting program or in K–12 education.
- Also ineligible are participants from the 2012–2013 or 2013–2014 program years, as well as board and staff members of the Loft and Jerome Foundation. (Loft teaching artists are independent contractors, and are eligible to apply.)

If you have questions about eligibility, please call program manager Vanessa Ramos at 612-215-2586 or email her at vramos@loft.org. More information, including answers to frequently asked questions, is available on our website: www.loft.org.
Judging Process

A panel of preliminary readers comprised of recent Mentor Series winners who are ineligible to apply for the program will review the initial manuscripts. From these, they will select 20 finalists in each genre which will be forwarded to the respective mentors for final decisions. The two mentors in each genre will confer and select four winners and two honorable mentions.

The Mentors

Note: All program dates are tentative and may be changed.

RU FREEMAN
Fiction

Ru Freeman was born into a family of writers and many boys in Colombo, Sri Lanka. After a year of informal study at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, she arrived in the United States with a Parker ink pen and a box of Staedler pencils to attend Bates College in Maine. She completed her Masters in Labor Relations at the University of Colombo, and worked in the field of American and international humanitarian assistance and workers’ rights. Her political writing has appeared in English and in translation. Her creative work has appeared or is forthcoming in VQR, Guernica, World Literature Today and elsewhere. She is a contributing editorial board member of the Asian American Literary Review, and a fellow of the Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference. She is the author of the novel A Disobedient Girl (Atria/Simon & Schuster, 2009), which was long-listed for the DCS Prize for South Asian Literature, and translated into several languages. Her new novel, On Sal Mal Lane, is published by Graywolf Press in 2013. She calls both Sri Lanka and America home and writes about the people and countries underneath her skin.

Residency dates: Residency will most likely take place April 16–19, 2015. Participants should be available Thursday evening, all day and evening Friday, and most of the day Saturday.

DIEGO VÁZQUEZ, JR.
Fiction

Diego Vázquez, Jr. is a poet, novelist, storyteller. Vázquez comes from indigenous migrants who crossed invisible lines to become immigrants under the same sky. He has never met an illegal human. He is grateful for his ongoing participation in The Women’s Writing Program at the Ramsey County Correctional Facility. This remarkable experience allows him new insights into the strength and joy of the human heart. Vázquez is the recipient of multiple awards and grants and is the author of Growing Through the Ugly. He is completing work on a forthcoming novel, Border Town Sky.
Residency dates: Residency will most likely take place on the following weekends: September 6–7, 2014, November 1–2, 2014, December 6–7, 2014, and January 24–25, 2015. All participants should be available mornings/early afternoons of the Saturdays listed for a three-hour seminar. In addition, fiction writers should be available on Sundays for a three-hour workshop.

DANI SHAPIRO  
Nonfiction

Dani Shapiro is the bestselling author of the memoirs Devotion and Slow Motion, and five novels including Black & White and Family History. Her work has appeared in The New Yorker, Granta, Tin House, One Story, Elle, The New York Times Book Review, The Los Angeles Times, and has been widely anthologized. She has taught in the writing programs at Columbia, NYU, The New School and Wesleyan University, and she is co-founder of the Sirenland Writers Conference in Positano, Italy. She is a contributing editor at Travel + Leisure. She lives with her family in Litchfield County, Connecticut. Her new book, Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life, was published in 2013.

Residency dates: Residency will most likely take place May 14–17, 2015. Participants should be available Thursday evening, all day and evening Friday, and most of the day Saturday.

KAO KALIA YANG  
Nonfiction

Kao Kalia Yang, author of The Latehomecomer, is the co-founder of a company dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. Yang is a graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University. She is currently working on her second manuscript, Still, Fluttering Heart: The Second Album. Based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Kao Kalia Yang is a teacher, public speaker, and writer.

Residency dates: Residency will most likely take place on the following weekends: September 27–28, 2014, October 4–5, 2014, March 14–15, 2015, and March 20–21, 2015. All participants should be available mornings/early afternoons of the Saturdays listed for a three-hour seminar. In addition, nonfiction writers should be available on Sundays for a three-hour workshop.
**MATT RASMUSSEN**

Poetry


**Residency dates:** Residency will *most likely* take place on the following weekends: November 15–16, 2014, December 13–14, 2014, February 7–8, 2015, and February 21–22, 2015. All participants should be available mornings/early afternoons of the Saturdays listed for a three-hour seminar. In addition, poets should be available on Sundays for a three-hour workshop.

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**PATRICIA SMITH**

Poetry

Called “a testament to the power of words to change lives,” Patricia Smith is a renaissance artist of unmistakable signature, recognized as a force in the fields of poetry, playwriting, fiction, performance and creative collaboration. She is the author of six critically-acknowledged volumes of poetry, including *Shoulda Been Jimi Savannah,* winner of the 2013 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy American Poets and finalist for the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America; *Blood Dazzler* (a National Book Award finalist), and *Teahouse of the Almighty* (a National Poetry Series winner), all from Coffee House Press; *Close to Death* and *Big Towns, Big Talk,* both from Zoland Books, and *Life According to Motown,* just released by Tia Chucha Press in a special 20th anniversary edition. She also edited the crime fiction anthology *Staten Island Noir.* She is a Cave Canem faculty member, a professor of English at CUNY/College of Staten Island, and a faculty member of the Sierra Nevada MFA program.

**Residency dates:** Residency will *most likely* take place June 11–14, 2015. Participants should be available Thursday evening, all day and evening Friday, and most of the day Saturday.
**Application Deadline**

- All entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on April 28, 2014.
- Winners will be notified by August, 2014. Please be certain to include your contact information for summer if it is different from your current address.

**Submission Guidelines**

All submissions are handled through the Loft’s submission portal (Submittable). **APPLY HERE:** [http://bit.ly/LMS2014](http://bit.ly/LMS2014). Once your application is ready, you will need to create a Submittable account to submit if you do not already have one. Please prepare the following files to attach to your application. We recommend that you prepare these files as individual files, but you may upload them as one collected file. To add multiple files to your submission, click on “Select Files” at the bottom of the form and then CTRL select (Command select on a Mac) ALL of the files you want to upload.

The following document types are accepted: PDF, DOC, DOCX, RTF, ODT, JPG, GIF, MP3, WAV, XLS, and MOV files. Please complete the Submittable form and then ensure that you have prepared and attached:

1. A one-page goal statement of what you hope to achieve in the program.

2. Your work sample.

**WORK SAMPLE PAGE LIMITS:**

- **Poets** must submit 15–18 pages of poetry, with no more than one poem per page (poems longer than one page should be continued on subsequent pages). Pages must be consecutively numbered, 1 through 15 to 18.
- **Prose writers** must submit 15–20 double-spaced pages, with margins of no less than one inch on all sides. If you are submitting sections of a book-length project, you may include a one-page synopsis as part of your page limit. If you are submitting several short pieces, all pages must be numbered consecutively, 1 through 15 to 20.

**File Preparation**

We recommend you name your files “goal statement” and “work sample” to avoid any confusion, but as long as it is clear and non-identifying, any file name will work. **Do not** put your name anywhere in your attachments OR as the file name of your attachments. The only place your name and contact information should appear is in the Submittable form. This ensures a blind judging contest. **Failure to adhere to this requirement will disqualify your entry.**

**Other Considerations**

- All entries must be submitted through Submittable. Incomplete entries or entries that do not comply with the guidelines will not be considered.
- You must complete the biographical statement on the Submittable form. If you are selected as a winner or honorable mention, it will be used for announcement outreach.
- You may submit work previously published in magazines, journals, or anthologies.
- You may submit one manuscript in each genre but may win in only one category. Each submission will require a separate Submittable entry; you may not submit multiple entries on the same submission.

We cannot help you edit or append your submission once submitted. If you want to update it prior to the deadline, you will need to withdraw your application through your Submittable account and then resubmit.

Failure to submit your work according to these guidelines will disqualify your proposal. If you have never used Submittable before, please consider giving yourself a little time before the deadline in case you run into technical problems. As a starter, download the Loft guide on using Submittable at http://bit.ly/LoftSubmit. We’re here to help, but we cannot extend deadlines due to technical issues.

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