



CALLING ALL POETS,
SPOKEN WORD ARTISTS,
EMCEES & WRITERS

WIN A CHANCE

TO REPRESENT LOS ANGELES AS THE FIRST EVER
LA YOUTH POET LAUREATE

★ WIN A BOOK DEAL
TO PUBLISH YOUR FIRST BOOK,
PERFORM & TOUR THE CITY

The Los Angeles Youth Poet Laureate program aims to identify youth writers and leaders who are committed to civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, and Human Relations, Diversity, and Social Justice across Los Angeles.





PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Los Angeles Youth Poet Laureate is a joint program of Urban Word Los Angeles and Los Angeles Arts and Athletics Alliance, supported by Los Angeles Commission on Human Relations, Los Angeles Public Library, PEN Center USA and the Academy of American Poets. The Los Angeles Youth Poet Laureate program aims to identify young writers and leaders who are committed to civic and community engagement, poetry and performance, and Human Relations, Diversity & Social Justice across Los Angeles.

During the month of April-National Poetry Month, Urban Word Los Angeles will accept submissions from young poets, rappers, leaders and activists ages 14-19 from across Los Angeles County who are interested in representing Los Angeles as the inaugural LA Youth Poet Laureate. A group of esteemed judges will choose 12 Finalists, all given the distinction of LA Youth Poet Ambassador, and we will select one teen to be honored with the title of LA Youth Poet Laureate at LA Youth Poet Laureate Commencement Performance on Saturday, June 14th at 2PM @ Central Library's Mark Taper Auditorium (630 W. Fifth St., Los Angeles).

Along with winning the prestigious title of LA Youth Poet Laureate, the winning poet will also win a book deal from Penmanship Books to publish their first collection of poems, as well as a library tour. The LA Youth Poet Laureate and the LA Poet Ambassadors will have numerous opportunities and platforms to share their powerful voices, their leadership, and love of Los Angeles at numerous events across the county. Urban Word Los Angeles and our many partners recognize that youth voice and community engagement are vital for empowering young people to effect positive changes in their communities and beyond. Local and national partners also include LA Arts and Athletics Alliance, LA County Commission on Human Relations, LA Public Library, PEN Center USA, Penmanship Books, the Academy of American Poets, Say Word, Get Lit, Street Poets, Hip-Hop High School, and #WeMakeLA.



CONTEST RULES/HOW to APPLY

- 1: Applicants must be from Los Angeles County, and between the ages of 14-19 years old
- 2: Submit 5 Original Poems / Raps / Performances (and/or YouTube Links to your poems)
- 3: Submit at least one poem that speaks to the themes of Human Relations, Diversity and Social Justice.
- 4: Include a RESUME that has your name, address, phone # and email, AS WELL AS detailing all of your accomplishments, community service, after school programs, volunteer experiences and awards (if you want a sheet for this please visit our website or ask your teacher to help)
- 5: ONCE you are ready, EMAIL all of this to POET@URBANWORD.ORG or apply online at WWW.URBANWORD.ORG/LA

PLEASE SUBMIT ALL MATERIALS BY MAY 19, 2014

SUBMISSION MATERIALS can be EMAILED, uploaded to our website, or MAILED to:

LA Youth Poet Laureate
c/o PEN Center USA
269 S. Beverly drive #1163
Beverly Hills, CA 90212

ESTEEMED JUDGES



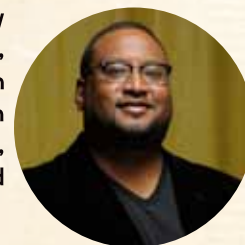
Juan Felipe Herrera, named the Poet Laureate of California, has had a distinguished career spanning four decades. His publications include fourteen collections of poetry, prose, short stories, young adult novels and picture books for children, with twenty-one books in total in the last decade. Recently he published two volumes of collected poems, *Half the World in Light*, which won the 2008 National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, and *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can't Cross the Border* (City Lights, 2007), which emphasizes his contributions to the San Francisco Renaissance and to the emergence of spoken-word poetry. A graduate of UCLA, he holds master's degrees from Stanford and the University of Iowa, and has held the Tomás Rivera Chair of Creative Writing at UC Riverside since 2005. His many honors include the PEN Open Book Award, the Ezra Jack Keats Award, the Hungry Mind Award of Distinction, the Americas Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Bread Loaf Writer's Workshop, and the California Arts Council.

Raised in Oklahoma City, Beau Sia is the son of Chinese immigrants from the Philippines. While attending NYU's Dramatic Writing Program at The Tisch School of The Arts, Beau began making his way through the world of performance poetry. Since then, he has been on two National Poetry Slam championship teams, is an original cast member of the Tony Award Winning Def Poetry Jam on Broadway, and has been featured on all five seasons of the HBO version of the show. Beau Sia is also the author of *The Undisputed Greatest Writer of All Time*, *A Night Without Armor II: The Revenge*, has had roles in the films *Slam* and *Rachel Getting Married*, and wrote the lyrics for the East West Players' produced Hip-Hop Dance musical, *Krunk Fu Battle Battle*. He currently lives in Los Angeles, where he works on developing the self in relation to all universe.



Mahogany Browne is a Cave Canem Alumnae and Poets House Fellow is the author of several books including *Swag & Dear Twitter: Love Letters Hashed Out On-line*, recommended by Small Press Distribution & listed as About.com Best Poetry Books of 2010. She has released five LPs including the live album *Sheroshima*. Her poetry has been published in literary journals *Pluck*, *Manhattanville Review*, *Muzzle*, *Union Station Mag*, *Literary Bohemian*, *Bestiary Brown Girl Love* and *Up The Staircase*. She is an Urban Word NYC mentor, as seen on HBO's *Brave New Voices* and facilitates performance poetry and writing workshops throughout the country. She is the publisher of *Penmanship Books*, a small press for performance artists. Mahogany is the Nuyorican Poets Café Poetry Program Director and curator of their famous Friday Night Slam.

F. Douglas Brown is the recipient of the 2013 Cave Canem Poetry Prize, for his upcoming book, *Zero to Three* (University of Georgia). An educator for nearly 20 years, Mr. Brown currently teaches English at Loyola High School of Los Angeles, an all boys Jesuit school. He has a MA in Literature and Creative Writing from San Francisco State University, and is both a Cave Canem and Kundiman fellow, two writing organizations that celebrate and cultivate African American and Asian American poets, respectively. His poems have appeared in *The Sugar House Review*, *Cura Magazine*, *Muzzle Magazine*, *Transfer Magazine* and *Santa Clara Review*. When he is not writing, teaching, or parenting his two children, Isaiah and Olivia, he is busy DJing in the greater Los Angeles area.



Matthew 'Cuban' Hernandez is Manager of Arts Education for Get Lit-Words Ignite. He is an internationally acclaimed writer and performer. A 3-time Southern Fried Poetry slam champion and one of the most respected Slam coaches. From 2007 to 2011, Matthew was the founder and coach of the Jacksonville youth poetry slam team, "Shattered Thought." Through "S.T," he facilitated writing and performance workshops in high schools, juvenile detention centers and college programs all over the country. From Cook County in Chicago, IL to Duval County in Jacksonville, FL, Matthew became very familiar with a classroom during his 5 years as coach, he lead their youth team to semi-finals four times and in 2009 was the youngest coach to ever take a team to final stage at the Brave New Voices, International Poetry Slam.



ESTEEMED JUDGES



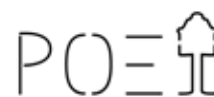
HBO Def Poet Simply Kat is a national performance poet, grand slam champion, author and Co-founder and Executive Director of Say Word, a premier spoken word organization working with youth in Los Angeles. A woman. A mother. An artist. Simply Kat pushes the boundaries of spoken word, working with dance companies, visual artist and social activist to capture the heart of an audience. She has performed with musical talents such as 2011 Grammy Award winner Ryan Lesli, Hip Hop Legend Mos Def, singer and song writer Raheem Devaughn, Latin Grammy award winning Ozomatli and spoke alongside of Whitney Thompson winner of America's Next Top Model. Challenging audiences with her fearless and throbbing work she delivers an unabashed message of the underbelly of hope and healing. As one professor stated, "Kat kept it real. Her performance was a bold alternative to the sanitized and inauthentic ways of thinking and speaking that have infected our lifeways. Kat called us to refuse joining the ranks of the living dead. She left me inspired and, more importantly, I was full of the joy of play and the hope for truly living."

Mike Sonksen, also known as, Mike the Poet, is a 3rd-generation LA native acclaimed for poetry performances, published articles and kinetic city tours. Poet, journalist, historian, tour guide, and teacher, he graduated from the University of California Los Angeles and is currently finishing an advanced degree at California State University Los Angeles. Sonksen has lectured at and had his book ---- I AM ALIVE IN LOS ANGELES! ---- added to the curriculum of over 60 universities and high schools. In April 2013, Sonksen was awarded a prize by the Beyond Baroque Literary Arts Center for "Distinguished Service to the Los Angeles Poetry Community." His weekly KCET column "LA Letters" celebrates bright moments from literary Los Angeles and beyond.



Melina Abdullah is Professor and Chair of Pan-African Studies and is immediate past Chapter President and current Council for Affirmative Action Chair for the California Faculty Association (the faculty union) at California State University, Los Angeles. Dr. Abdullah earned her Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in Political Science and her B.A. from Howard University in African-American Studies. She was appointed to the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission in 2014 and is a recognized expert on race relations. Abdullah is the author of numerous articles and book chapters, with subjects ranging from political coalition building to womanist mothering. What binds her research together is a focus on power allocation and societal transformation. She is currently writing a book manuscript that examines Hip Hop and political mobilization. Professor Abdullah is a womanist scholar-activist – recognizing that the role that she plays in the academy is intrinsically linked to broader struggles for the liberation of oppressed people. Most recently, Professor Abdullah served as a leader in the fight to make Ethnic Studies a General Education requirement at Cal State L.A. Melina is the mother of six children and resides in Mid-City Los Angeles.

URBAN WORD LOS ANGELES
would like to thank our partners
for making this incredible program happen:



#WeMakeLA

For more information or to support this work visit www.urbanword.org/LA