



2025 MISA/Loft Excellence in Teaching Fellowship Recipients

At the Loft, we deeply value our teaching artists and all the work they do to support our community of students and writers. In partnership with the Madeline Island School for the Arts, we are thrilled to be able to offer a yearly fellowship for Loft teaching artists that is meant to foster and encourage one's writing practice and the start or completion of a writing project. The Loft is proud to announce the 2025 MISA/Loft Excellence in Teaching Fellowship recipients for teaching excellence, commitment to students, and dedication to the craft of writing, as nominated by Loft friends, teaching artists, and community members. For more information about what this fellowship entails, please see loft.org.

Alex Juffer lives in a small town in Minnesota with his wife, two dogs, and a family of attic squirrels. He's won competitions, been a Wigleaf Top 50, and has publications in *Epoch*, *Passages North*, *Monkey Bicycle*, *Vestal Review*, *X-R-A-Y*, *The Los Angeles Review* and more. Recently, Alex has worked at Southern New Hampshire University, the Loft Literary Center, and the University of Minnesota, teaching literature, creative writing, and public speaking.

Chelsea B. DesAutels is the author of *A Dangerous Place* (Sarabande Books 2021), which was named a New York Times Editors' Choice. Her work appears in *Ploughshares*, *Copper Nickel*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Southeast Review*, and elsewhere, and has been featured on *The Slowdown* podcast. Winner of the Jeffrey E. Smith Editors' Prize from the Missouri Review, Chelsea lives with her family in Minneapolis.

Dralandra Larkins is an award-winning spoken word poet, teaching artist, storyteller, and co-editor of Cracked Walnut's anthology "Rewilding Hope, 2023" and Hansel-Cabello's "The Nations Underground: Writing with Our Ancestors 2024" based in Minneapolis. Her work has been recognized in the *Minnesota Women's Press*, *The Edge Magazine*, *Insight News*, *Witness Writers*, *The Agates* and other anthologies.

Her spoken word performances weave together words, rhythm, and intimacy to create a haven for healing, advocacy, and self-discovery for those seeking solace, empowerment, and connection. She has graced numerous stages with her captivating storytelling and performances, leaving audiences spellbound and inspired. She's collaborated and competed on platforms including Button Poetry, NAACP, Mill City Museum, MN State Capitol, Minnesota Black Authors Expo, the MN Black Business Ball Enterprise, TruArtSpeaks, Artstart, KFAI Radio, MN Public Radio, Modist Brewing, Poets & Pints, and others. She invites her audience to confront their own traumas and find strength in vulnerability. Her work is rooted in the art of healing, spirituality, community, self-love and liberation. Poetry serves as a form of therapeutic release for herself but also for those who listen to her words.

Erin Sharkey is a writer, producer, educator, and graphic designer based in Minneapolis. She received her MFA in Creative Writing from Hamline University and is, with Junauda Petrus, the co-founder of an experimental arts production company called Free Black Dirt. Erin has appeared or is forthcoming in publications such as Walker Art Center's *Untitled*, *Brooklyn Quarterly*, and *Paper Darts*. She currently teaches with the Minnesota Prison Writers Workshop. Erin is a 2016/17 Loft Mentor Series winner in creative nonfiction, was a 2016 VONA/Voices Travel Writing fellow, 2015 Givens Foundation for African American Literature Emerging Writers fellow, as well as a Coffee House Press in the Stacks artist-in-residence at the Givens Collection at the University of MN, where she now is helping to promote Umbra Search, a digital search tool for African American memory.

Michael Gorrie is an award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker from the Twin Cities. His films have run at numerous film festivals across the US and have won him an Artist Initiative grant in 2010. In five of the last six years Michael has been a two-time McKnight finalist for directing and a three-time Knight Screenwriting Residency finalist. He was also a semi-finalist in the PAGE International Screenwriting Competition, which placed him in the top 3% of more than 7000 screenplays. In May of 2018 he served as Creative Consultant and Script Supervisor on *Brother's Keeper*, featuring Laurence Fishburne. He is currently in pre-production on a web series about an aging Twin Cities rapper from Executive Producers Alan Porter (McKnight winner), and Sean "Slug" Daley, from Atmosphere.