

SAAG ARTS WRITING PRIZE 2026

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS CLOSING TUESDAY, APRIL 7

The Southern Alberta Art Gallery Maansiksikaitsitapiitsinikssin is excited to announce the 15th annual SAAG Arts Writing Prize. This prize aims to recognize and support emerging writers whose writing relates to the field of contemporary art. Art writing is essential to supporting a healthy art ecosystem, providing access points for contemporary art practice, engaging different voices in the field, and encouraging and developing discourse in the arts.

Writers can be considered for one or both of this year's categories: 1) Arts Writing and 2) the Aruna D'Souza Award for BIPOC Writers. The requirements and prizes for each category are listed below. All entries are eligible to be included in the digital *SAAG Arts Writing Prize Reader 2026*, which will be shared on the Gallery's website and sent out to all contributors via email.

This prize focuses on submissions of writing about contemporary art. This includes but is not limited to: exhibition reviews, critical essays, ekphrasis, etc. We will also consider experimental and innovative approaches to writing about contemporary art, including poetry, prose, creative fiction, etc.

CATEGORIES & PRIZES

ARTS WRITING

- Winner: \$1000.00 CAD cash prize, the opportunity for a paid public program (\$391.00CAD) with the Gallery, and the opportunity for an arts writing mentorship.
- Runner-up: \$250.00 CAD cash prize, and the opportunity for an arts writing mentorship.

ARUNA D'SOUZA (BIPOC)

- Winner: \$1000.00 CAD cash prize, the opportunity for a paid public program (\$391.00CAD) the Gallery, and the opportunity for an arts writing mentorship.
- Runner-up: \$250.00 CAD cash prize, and the opportunity for an arts writing mentorship

Please see the [FAQ](#) for more details about the awards.

ELIGIBILITY

Writers must be at least 18 years of age at the time of entry. The competition is open to anyone residing in Canada, regardless of citizenship status, and to Canadians living abroad.

For the purposes of the award, an emerging writer is defined as anyone who has not published more than one piece of art writing in a recognized print or online publication, exclusive of student-run journals and magazines, as well as self-published works. Applicants may be asked to provide evidence of publication history upon request (i.e. website, CV, resume).

Applicants may submit one piece of writing for consideration. Submissions are limited to 1000 words. Participants may be considered for both awards depending on their eligibility. Applicants must identify which awards they would like to be considered for. All submissions must be original and previously unpublished, inclusive of online publications.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Electronic submissions are preferred. To apply please complete the [application form](#) and send a formatted PDF file of your submission to hkehoe@saag.ca. This PDF will be included as-is without any formatting changes or copy edits in the 2026 Reader.

Writers retain all copyrights to their submitted work. The two winners and two runners-up of the awards will have their work published in the digital SAAG Arts Writing Prize Reader 2026. All other submissions are eligible to be included in this publication, but writers who have not been selected for one of the awards may choose to opt out.

The Gallery is committed to continually working towards more equitable systems and practices. We welcome applications from candidates who identify as Indigenous, Black, racialized, LGBTQ2S+, d/Deaf and disabled, and from historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

JURY

The SAAG Arts Writing Prize and Aruna D'Souza Award is assessed by a peer jury of arts writing professionals. Stay tuned for the announcement of our 2026 jurors.

The Arts Writing Prize and Aruna D'Souza Award will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Artistic Impact (30%): The submitted piece of writing is effective and interesting. The submitted piece of writing demonstrates a new and exciting contribution to the field of art writing.
- Connection to art (30%): The submitted piece of writing provides a unique and insightful perspective on contemporary art, art history, and/or artistic practice.
- Originality (20%): The submitted piece of writing shows imagination, creativity, and individuality. The submitted piece of writing demonstrates a unique perspective.
- Technical excellence (20%): The writer demonstrates a high level of skill in their craft, and rigor and intentionality in their chosen format.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about the submission process, eligibility, or to request accommodations please contact Heather Kehoe, Program & Event Coordinator, at 403.327.8770 x 29 or hkehoe@saag.ca.