

Melanie Faranello | Writer, Educator, Socially Engaged Public Artist

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EDUCATION

- Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Merit-Based Scholarship, The New School, NY, 2002
- Cambridge Certificate/RSA in English Language Teaching, English International, CA, 1996
- Bachelor of Arts, English, University of Colorado Boulder, 1995
- School for International Training, Field Research Project, Limbu Oral Folklore, Nepal, 1993

OTHER TRAININGS

- Voices of Witness, Community Voices Initiative: participated in training for advocates in community project planning and the process of conducting ethical oral histories, 2025
- National Arts Strategies: chosen as a Creative Community Fellow in New England Cohort, trainings in strategy, equity in design thinking, community-driven social change for artist change-makers, 2019—Ongoing
- Americans for the Arts: trainings in arts advocacy, arts in education, arts in civic life, 2025
- CT Center for Nonviolence, Kingian Non-Violence Teaching Artist trainings, 2022
- The Pollination Project, Greenhouse Global Cohort of Artist Change-Makers, chosen among 33 countries, 2022' Named "one of 14 Organizers who create equity in the face of inequity"
- Narrative 4: a global non-profit using storytelling for empathy across the globe, trained as a story exchange facilitator, 2021

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COLLABORATIONS | SOCIAL PUBLIC ARTIST

- Founder & Director of Poetry on The Streets | A Socially-Engaged Public Art Practice: 2017—Present
- Refugee Stories: developed oral history and multi-lingual creative writing workshops for refugee women from multiple countries; in partnership with IRIS-CT, Hartford Public Library, CT Office of the Arts, Artist Responds Grant, and Poetry on the Streets, 2024
- Global Collaboration with Nigerian Youth: in partnership with Child Shield Initiative and Poetry on the Streets, developed virtual poetry and storytelling opportunities for displaced girls in Nigeria, 2023
- The Poetry Bus: in partnership with Charter Oak Cultural Center's City School of the Arts, CT Transit, Vector Media and Poetry on the Streets; designed initiative for a public wrap with students' poetry about social justice, acted as lead teaching artist and developer on project, 2022.
- Banner Mural on Non-Violence with Community Voices: in partnership with CT Center for Non-Violence, CREC Schools, RiseUp, and HPL; created an intergenerational community event for public responses about non-violence to be translated onto a public mural, on permanent display in HPL @ the Lyric, 2023
- Pandemic Voices: created an initiative for public responses during the pandemic, to share, document and preserve community voices, through writing, art, photography, 2020-2021
- MLK Beloved Community Poetry Mural: created with students from COCC's City School of the Arts, in partnership with RiseUp for the arts, taught poetry workshop centered on MLK Principles of Nonviolence to use youth words in mural at Parkville Market, Hartford, 2022
- City Mural with Youth Poetry: curated student work from previous creative writing workshops at COCC's City School of the Arts for integration into large-scale mural on Asylum Ave, created by RiseUp, Hartford, 2022

- Activated Vacant Storefronts, exhibited Poetry on the Streets' typewriter poems created by community alongside their candid street photos, arranged by emotion words; and other public gallery exhibits, 2020—2024

CURRENT COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- The Community Poem Project: developed a national project engaging people across the country in a collaborative poem to be transformed into a large-scale public participatory art display, 2026—present
- Hartford Writes: developing oral history, storytelling, and creative writing workshops in various community sites, including senior homes, civic workers, healthcare, shelters, in partnership with and sponsored by Hartford Public Library, 2026—present
- Sonder Reading Series: creator, host and curator of monthly reading series featuring five writers across genres each month to foster literary and creative community in Hartford, 2026—present
- Transit Stories: street documentary-style oral history recording of everyday riders and community members' voices to preserve and share Hartford's community stories, 2025—present
- Hartford Studios Collaboration: community initiatives through pop-up oral storytelling booths for HPL studio labs at local branches to share and preserve community stories, 2026—present

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Book

- [*Everybody Needs Something*](#), March '26 (Columbus State University Press | University of Georgia Press), Recipient of the Donald L Jordan Prize for Literary Excellence

Selected Fiction & Creative Non-Fiction

- Hippocampus, "Notes on a Debut," 2026; Electric Literature, "How to Love a Widower," 2026; Fail Better, "A Nice Place to Retire," 2024; Swamp Pink, "Flotsam," 2024; Hippocampus, "The Shape of Grief," 2024; Vol1. Brooklyn, "In Giron," 2024; HuffPost Personal, "365 Days," 2024; Catamaran Review, "What Would Odysseus Do," 2023; Mom Egg Review, "Becoming," 2023; StoryQuarterly, "El Coup," (Pushcart Prize Nomination) 2022; Vestal Review, "My Father, My King," 2022; Pedestal, "Paper Tiger," 2022; HuffPost Personal, "Here's What I Learned about Grief," 2021

SELECTED INTERVIEWS & REVIEWS

- [Poets & Writers](#), 2026; [NPR, Where We Live](#), "Exploring Poetry's Power to Connect Communities," 2026; [Black Lawrence Press](#), 2026; [Chicago Review of Books](#), 2026; [The Masters Review](#), 2026; [Cleaver Magazine](#), 2026; [How We Spend Our Days](#), 2026;

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING ARTIST: (Creative Writing, Poetry Writing, Story Exchanges, Oral History, Zine Making, Intergenerational Storytelling, Teen Voices, Social Justice Poetry, Senior Voices...)

- City School of the Arts, Charter Oak Cultural Center, Hartford, CT, 2016-Present
- Hartford Performs, Hartford Public Schools, Hartford, CT, 2018-Present
- CT Center for NonViolence, CREC Schools, Hartford, CT 2022-2024
- Kingswood Oxford School, Summer Camp, West Hartford, CT, 2017, 2023, 2024
- The Mark Twain House: YWCA; Federation Square Housing; Story Studio Chicago, Gallery 37, After School Matters, Chicago Poetry Center Poet in Residence; HPL, NYC Parks, 2001-2018

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR: (English Literature, Reading and Writing, English Composition, English as a Second Language, Master's Thesis Seminar, Creative Writing...)

- University of Chicago, Graham School of General Studies, Novel Writing, Chicago, IL
- Goodwin University, E. Hartford,
- Roosevelt University, Chicago
- American Academy of Art, Chicago
- Int'l Academy of Design, Chicago
- Katherine Gibbs College, New York City
- Parsons School of Design, New York City
- Centro de Estudios Interamericanos, Ecuador

HONORS/AWARDS

- Donald L Jordan Prize for Literary Excellence, 2025
- Writer in Residence Award, Monson Arts, 2024
- Writer in Residence Award, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center, 2024
- Artist Responds Grant for Community Healing, CTOA, 2020 & 2024
- Pushcart Prize Nominations, 2013, 2023, 2026
- Marianne Russo Award for Novel-in-Progress, Key West Literary Seminars, 2022
- Artist Fellowship Award in Fiction, CTOA, 2018
- William Faulkner-Wisdom Competition in Novel, shortlisted, 2018
- Petrochor Reprint Award, shortlisted, 2018
- Dana Awards for the Novel, finalist
- Whidby Writers Award, finalist

CONFERENCES/PRESENTATIONS

- Kingswood Oxford School, Power of Women Panel, CT, 2026
- Goodwin University, Humanities Day, CT, 2026
- Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Panelist & Moderator, "Radical Empathy: Writing as a Form of Resistance," Seattle, 2023
- Association of Writers & Writing Programs, Panelist and Creator, "Debuts After Fifty" Baltimore, 2026
- Key West Literary Seminar, Full Merit Scholarship, 2022
- Wesleyan Writers Conference, Full Merit Scholarship
- Sewanee Writers Conference
- Bread Loaf Writers Conference

BOARDS/AFFILIATIONS

- Guest juror for Ragdale Writing Residencies, 2026
- Guest judge for Key West Literary Seminars' Emerging Writers Awards, 2024
- Artist Network, Narrative 4, 2023-2024
- Grantee Community & Greenhouse Global Cohort, The Pollination Project, 2022
- Artist Advisory Committee, Greater Hartford Arts Council, Hartford, CT, 2020-202
- Creative Community Fellow, National Arts Strategies, 2019-2025
- Advisor for Grant Applications, Free Center, 2021
- Hartford Events Grants Advisory Panel, CT, 2019