

AND SONGS THAT WILL FOREVER MARK MY PLACE IN THIS BIG OLD WORLD THROUGH YOU I HAVE LEARNED TO PAINT MY FUTURE IN BIG BOLD STROKES

WORDSCAPES!

Good writers learn from reading other writers and discovering what styles and genres grab and keep their interest. Students in this intermediate-level workshop will combine in-class writing exercises with outside assignments to develop critical skills and sharpen their individual writing techniques. Students will be expected to complete one short story or several poems during the ten-week session. Those interested in participating are requested to fill out the application included with this catalog.

“The handouts are extremely useful when my critic starts to interrupt the writing. I am always impressed with how thoroughly Ayofemi prepares for each class.”

—Cassandra Christensen,
New Words student

WORD ARCHITECTURE

Most of us know what we want to say when we write, but how can we tell whether we have succeeded? This class provides a supportive environment in which to receive feedback on your writing and suggestions of how to strengthen it. In addition, you will read the work of published authors to study their technique. This is an advanced level workshop; participants should have previous writing experience and a body of work that they want to complete. Those interested in participating are requested to fill out the application included with this catalog.

“I have loved every course of Ayofemi’s that I’ve taken. Writing is fun again. The critique provided by the other class members has maturity and depth. The students are serious about improving their writing.”

—Mike Varady, Word Architecture student

OF BLACK AND WHITE TRANSFORMED INTO THE IMAGES OF MY PEOPLE BECAUSE OF YOU, EVERYTHING I WRITE IS GOOD EVERY WORD, SENTENCE, THOUGHTS I CREATE HAS DISTINCT VALUE YOU DESTROYED ONE MORE LIE FROM MY CHILDHOOD, THE LIE

All the World’s a Stage

DRAMATIC WRITING CLASSES

taught by Mary F. Casey and Sharyn Blumenthal
Writing for theater and film is a highly specialized and very challenging skill. Unlike many other genres, dramatic writing is rooted in the collaborative process. Learning to write for stage and film is learning about the process of working with actors and directors. It’s about studying human nature to create and develop characters and dialogue. It’s about interpreting the world around us and presenting that world on the page and on the stage in ways that reach, move, and entertain audiences. And it’s about exploring the creative process with a community of writers who support and nurture the creation of new work.

The four workshops in the Dramatic Writing Program are designed to guide and nurture writers at all levels of craft. The workshops meet weekly from October through June and culminate with a series of public readings in July. While advance registration is required, the classes are open to everyone, although some workshops may have specific requirements. Gay and lesbian people of color are especially encouraged to participate; diversity is honored and welcomed.

Class Descriptions

TAKING THE PLUNGE: INTRODUCTION TO DRAMATIC WRITING

Members of this workshop begin by learning the fundamentals of dramatic writing common to both playwriting and screenwriting: development of character, dramatic structure, plot, conflict, and dialogue. Participants will explore the monologue form and learn to structure scenes as well as to develop unique, three-dimensional characters. Specific elements of both screenwriting and playwriting will be explored, and participants

will be encouraged to undertake a longer project (for example, a one-act play or the first half of a screenplay). Emphasis will be placed on the collaborative nature of dramatic writing, with guest appearances by actors, directors, and other theater professionals. No previous knowledge of dramatic writing is necessary.

ADVANCED DRAMATIC WRITING

For writers who have already completed either a play or screenplay, this workshop offers a chance to hone their craft and complete a longer project (a full-length play or screenplay). Fundamentals of both screenwriting and playwriting will be reviewed and emphasis will be placed on the rewriting and adaptation processes. Experimentation with form and content is encouraged. Theater professionals as well as entertainment industry figures will make guest appearances. Applicants must submit a ten-page writing sample of their work along with the application and must be prepared to make a serious commitment to weekly attendance for ten months.

DRAMATIC WRITING FOR WOMEN

This is a playwriting and screenwriting workshop for women who want to focus on their craft in a gender-specific environment, a safe place to turn highly personal work into monologues and scenes, plays and screenplays. The goal is the creation of a supportive community of writers who expand and strengthen their dramatic writing skills through the exploration of the elements of dramatic writing: development of character, dramatic structure, plot, conflict, and dialogue. Experiment with form and content is encouraged. Applicants must submit a three-page writing sample of their work along with the application and must be prepared to make a serious commitment to weekly attendance for ten months.

WRITING AND DESIGNING THE SHORT FILM

Noted independent filmmaker and film professor Sharyn Blumenthal offers workshop participants an opportunity to explore the entire filmmaking process, from writing the script through budgeting, production, and the marketing process. Workshop members will analyze, critique, and create two short scripts (one original and one adaptation) for a short narrative video or film project. The second half of the course will concentrate on designing student films from pre- to post-production, including understanding the role of the director and working with the film crew.

Requirements

FOR DRAMATIC WRITING STUDENTS

Please begin by filling out the application form included with this catalog; both the Advanced Dramatic Writing workshop and the Women’s Dramatic Writing workshop require the submission of a writing sample. Unfortunately, there are often more applicants than available spaces in the workshops, so it is important to demonstrate your interest and commitment when completing the application. Once a workshop has begun, new students will be admitted only at the instructor’s discretion, and then only as space becomes available.

Participation in the *All the World’s a Stage* workshops should be viewed as an ongoing weekly commitment from October through July. Each participant in the class is valuable, and when someone stops coming or attends intermittently, that person breaks down the group’s shared trust as well as depriving someone else of an opportunity to participate. A writing workshop is a major commitment, and participants are urged to think carefully about their ability to fulfill it.

AN INVITATION TO DEVELOP YOUR CREATIVE POTENTIAL



For anyone with the desire to write stories or essays, plays or performance pieces—but without the guidance or knowledge necessary to take those first steps—the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center offers the **Artist-in-Residence** program. Designed to promote and foster the development of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender artistic expression, this series of classes began in 1983. It offers instruction by experienced and accomplished artists, published authors, photographers, actors, playwrights, and painters who work with hundreds of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV-affected people each year.

This year, two talented individuals lead the program: wordsmith and actor-vist Ayofemi Folayan and playwright Mary F. Casey as well as guest instructor Sharyn C. Blumenthal. Funded through the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, and private donations, the **Artist-in-Residence** classes are offered free of charge. Classes range from beginning to advanced levels, with several classes targeted to meet the specific needs of seniors, youth, lesbians, and people of color.

The **Artist-in-Residence** program has nurtured the development of many writers and artists who have since been published, exhibited artworks in galleries, and seen their dramatic works performed. Just look at the walls of The Village at Ed Gould Plaza, where the **Artist-in-Residence** program is now housed, for a taste of the impressive work of past and present painting students. Writing students have been similarly featured in published chapbooks, staged readings, and public performances.

Please examine the class descriptions in this catalog and fill out the appropriate applications

if you are interested in signing up for specific courses. Note the application deadlines for each course, and call **323/860-7300** if you have any questions. This is just the first step to learning new skills to more freely express yourself and to share your stories and visions with the community. Please join us!

The Artists

AYOFEMI FOLAYAN was first inspired to write fiction in high school but was discouraged by hypercritical teachers who were more concerned with form than content. Because she was dyslexic, Ayofemi's undeveloped reading skills kept her from the vast treasure contained in printed text for much of her life. Then, at age 30, she participated in a special research project that improved her reading comprehension dramatically. Not long after that, Ayofemi was inspired by the exhortation of Audre Lorde, who asked, "What are the silences that we swallow day by day? If we wait to speak until we are not afraid, we will be sending messages back from the grave."

Since her first dive into the waters of creative expression, Ayofemi has expended her energies as a wordsmith, performance artist, cultural actor-vist, musician, stage director, curator, and teacher, knowing that others who have vital stories to tell need only some encouragement and tools to express themselves. Her short fiction has been widely anthologized, and her essays, reviews, and columns have appeared in gay and lesbian, feminist, and African-American publications. Ayofemi has been part of the Artist-in-Residence Program at the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center since fall of 1991, when she introduced the *Writing as a Healing Art* program, which has since evolved into the *WordPlay!* curriculum currently offered.

MARY F. CASEY, M.F.A., is a graduate of UCLA's film school, and is an award-winning screenwriter, produced playwright, and theater professional. She is the co-author of the play *Healin' Dirt Diner*, which has had numerous productions around the country, and her rodeo screenplay, *Smoke*, has won several prestigious awards, including Women in Film's Eleanor Perry Award. Mary has a deep commitment to nurturing the work of lesbian and gay playwrights and screenwriters. In addition to helping workshop participants learn and develop traditional and nontraditional elements of dramatic writing, Mary also encourages writers to become acquainted with the production process. Her classes feature informal readings of workshop members' work, leading to an annual staged reading festival in the summer.

SHARYN C. BLUMENTHAL, M.F.A., is an independent filmmaker and professor who has been part of the Artist-in-Residence program's Dramatic Writing Program since 1998. A director and writer, Sharyn's work has been featured on Showtime, and she currently has several projects in development. A professor at CSU Long Beach, she has mentored many filmmakers and helped develop numerous award-winning student films. Her workshop offers a rare balance of expertise and hands-on experience in the filmmaking process. This year, Sharon will lead a workshop in writing and designing the short film.

WordPlay!

CREATIVE WRITING CLASSES

Taught by Ayofemi Folayan

Have you always wanted to write but worried that you didn't have the talent? The *WordPlay!* program is designed to help you find your story, your voice, and the tools to express yourself in effective and powerful ways. In-class and at-home

exercises will give you opportunities to expand your imagination and develop the technical skills of plot, character, dialogue, and imagery.

Many of us have been discouraged in the past when we tried to express ourselves creatively. Each *WordPlay!* workshop is a place where individuals encounter mutual respect and support. The program consists of 10-week-long sessions of weekly class meetings. Sessions begin in October, January, March, and June. Continued participation is dependent upon attendance and fulfillment of homework requirements. In addition, monthly seminars on special topics (such as getting an agent, submission guidelines, query letters, self-publishing, etc.) will be offered the second Saturday of each month.

Class Descriptions

FIRST WORDS/NEW WORDS

These workshops are designed for the individual who wants to write yet is afraid to dive into the water. In-class exercises will help each participant to wade through the fear of writing, writer's block, and the discouraging voices of former teachers, parents, and loved ones to experience the joy of expressing ideas in a variety of written formats, including essays, poems, and short stories. No prior writing experience is required. Pre-registration by telephone will be accepted until the first class meeting of each 10-week session; others will be admitted depending upon available space.

"I have learned more from this class than just writing: information about black history, lesbian lifestyles, and the healing powers that writing has. It's a great catharsis for me in my life."

—Lance Laden, *First Words* student



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The writings featured in this brochure are excerpted from *Silent No More: An Anthology of Writings by Students in the Writing as a Healing Art Program Created and Taught by Ayofemi Folayan*. Copies of this chapbook are available through the Community Outreach and Education Department of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, located at:

The Village at Ed Gould Plaza
1125 N. McCadden Place
Los Angeles, CA 90038
(one block east of Highland, just north of Santa Monica Blvd.)

For more information, call **323/860-7300**.
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