

Dear Corporeal Writing Community,

As a micro arts organization, we remain committed to building a polyphonic, feminist, intersectional and environmentally-conscious art space and practice. We are not afraid of change and we welcome ideas.

We recognize that the intimate space of a “writing community” or “workshop” can be a vulnerable space. We strive to co-create a welcoming and creative environment conducive to our multiple being-nesses. These spaces are meant to be generative, opening, compassionate, and elemental. But because of the type of work we are here to do, there may also be resistance, difficulty, grief, and breaking open. As we are all bringing our various experiences and wounds into this space, the outcomes of this convergence are unknown. In creating this container, we are consciously opening to uncertainty in the conversations and interactions that will unfold.

As this community may hold differences in cosmologies, worldviews, cultural backgrounds, and so on, tensions may arise. These tensions can lead to new insights, possibilities, and connections; it can also lead to conflict, fragmentation, and even wounding. We ask that you try to hold these tensions as potential places of growth.

In hopes of supporting a positive experience, we offer the following guidelines for community engagement in all of our offerings, workshops, & creative labs:

- **Share generously.** These spaces, like the ocean, are calling for you to share your stories, dreams, questions, failures, ideas, and challenges. Speak what needs to be spoken. Please share openly and honestly while trying to stay connected with heart, mind, body, and spirit.
- **Step up / step back.** Your contributions are a valuable part of the experience. But this is a community space. So be mindful of how much of the group's time you're taking so that others can also participate fully. If you tend to be shy or quiet, see if it serves you to participate more, even if it may be uncomfortable. If you have already contributed, see if it might serve to allow others to step up and to allow the silence to remain as an invitation to others.
- **Stay with the trouble.** You are invited to sit with the possibility that we don't always know what's needed. Can we soften the urge to fix, solve, or transform our reality? Try to observe, listen and honor what is shared without trying to explain, advise, or offer solutions. If you strongly disagree or feel resistance rising, can you inquire what is at stake for you? If you choose to respond, how can you do so in a way that best serves you and the whole community? What is a constructive way of engaging?

- **Remember that communication is variable.** Be aware that various cultures and individuals have different ways of communicating and engaging in conflict. Some may be more passive, quiet, or avoidant, while others may be more direct, expressive, or assertive. How can you leave more space for silence and stillness, and also different ways of expression and emotionality? How can we listen more attentively with our whole bodies?
- **Be aware of cultural and identity differences.** As individuals, we all have different language for, understandings of, and experiences with the oppression and systemic inequity that exist in our world. In this space, how can we acknowledge both our individual biases & privilege, and our personal experiences & woundings? Can we be more reflective of and sensitive to the differences in our social contexts, our legacies, our lands, and our material conditions? Can we be more curious about each other's worlds and the social, spiritual, political, environmental, economic, and historical forces that shape them?
- **Be committed to anti-racism.** We recognize that as individuals and as a community, we have all been complicit in the racist structures that organize both American and global culture. Allow yourself to listen, to be aware, to reflect, and to be open to stepping into change. ([Read more about Our Commitment to Anti-racism here.](#))
- **Don't romanticize, idolize, marginalize, or generalize.** Remember that romanticizing or idolizing marginalized cultures, including treating Indigenous and/or First Nations peoples as the bearers of salvation, is another form of othering and dehumanization. Always speak for yourself, not as someone with authority to speak on behalf of a group of people. And be careful about universalizing your experience or making universal statements about all humans.
- **Honor others in the ways they want to be honored.** Please be careful about making assumptions about people's genders, ethnicities, or backgrounds based on superficial characteristics like appearance or name, especially as these assumptions show up in our language and usage of pronouns. We suggest adding the gender pronouns people should use to honor you in your profile names (Zoom, Wet Ink, etc.). Refer to others by their name instead of assuming gender pronouns if you aren't sure. Feel free to introduce yourself with your own pronouns, correct pronunciation of your name, and anything else you want others to know to be able to honor you.
- **Be aware of access and ability.** It's not always clear what mental, emotional, psychological, physical, or somatic state someone is in. Please keep in mind that some people's disabilities are invisible, and that something that is easy for you might not be easy for someone else. Beware of your language (ie. don't assume that everyone has the same level of physical access, mobility, or use of senses like sight & hearing) and be open to all the different modalities that are

present in the community space. Keep your mind open to using alternatives to imperative statements that use words like *stand*, *see*, *listen*. ([Read our Ability As Portal Statement here.](#))

- **We don't know what we don't know.** However much we might think we've broken free of dominant culture or colonized mindsets or oppressive ideologies, we remain entangled in conscious and unconscious ways. Let us be kind with each other around our places of pain and ignorance. And let us stay open and gentle with ourselves when others shine a light on things that were previously outside our awareness. (For more, see ["Five propositions to decolonize the unconscious"](#))
- **Aim for kindness, settle for curiosity or even avoidance.** Beware of your own tendencies to please others, to be liked, or to be validated. It's not necessary to become friends with everyone around you, but you are encouraged to try to be kind and compassionate to one another. If that feels too difficult, try to stay respectful and curious. If that feels too difficult, then maintain a safe distance and carry on. (Read about [Mindfulness of Attitude by Gil Fronsdal](#))
- **Take responsibility for yourself, your well-being, and your boundaries.** Please take exquisite care of yourself and exercise caution and discernment if you ever feel unsafe or hurt. You're welcome to contact any member of Corporeal Writing if you need emotional support and/or feel triggered. Remember that it is always fine to step back, redirect your attention, or take a moment to breathe. You absolutely have permission to *be* in whatever way you need to be. Tend to yourself with kindness and generosity, and trust yourself to know what is best for your own self-care and well-being.
- **Honor the stories and the learnings.** Consider the personal stories that anyone has shared to be held anonymously/confidentially, unless explicitly discussed otherwise.

(The above are inspired by and built on Bayo Akomolafe's Community Guidelines.)

Guidelines For Engaging With Work

At Corporeal Writing, we don't believe in the top-down, writer-as-guru method. We don't use the typical workshop conventions and traditions, and we don't believe in critique for critique's sake. Though most of our offerings and labs have a focus on generating writing, there may be opportunities for engagement with your work in the form of "peer feedback" or "workshopping." Though suggested guidelines may vary from instructor to instructor, we offer the following as a preliminary starting point to rethink what "workshopping" might mean for you and your writing practice:

- We aim to support you in generating work, articulating your story, and expressing your truth.
- We don't believe that there are "correct" or "right" ways to tell your stories, and so don't believe in hierarchical or critique-based models of judging your work.
- We encourage self-inquiry, reflection (both on your own and in a communal, supportive space), compassionate and honest conversation, and re-visioning.
- When giving feedback, it is NOT your job to tell anyone how to improve their work. There isn't one reading of a work that should be privileged over others, and the *responsibility* which you are being given should not be confused with *authority*. Rather, the intent should be about honest articulation of your direct experience with the work, dialogue and questioning, and an opportunity to address global concerns alongside more minute details.
- Describe how you read the piece and describe your direct experience of the text. What did the work do to you and what strategies did you employ in reading it? Talk about the "heart" of the piece – what are the ideas about life or art that are being explored? What is this piece doing that deals with ideas in a way other people haven't?
- If you don't understand the work or feel like you can't respond adequately, deeply explore your own state of perplexity or anxiety – discover when and where in the piece you're getting confused or your buttons are getting pressed, then ask yourself why the piece might WANT to disorient or provoke you at particular moments. How and why is the piece working your edge? What state of being or complexity of sensations might the writer be trying to provoke in you? The disorientation may be a part of the overall staging or performance of a "narrative" or system of meaning. Be honest about your discomfort, your places of confusions, and use these as opportunities to investigate why these responses are being provoked in you.
- Determine what "rules" the piece is making for its own reading (the making of its own ecosystem), and how it's teaching you, the reader, what the rules are, as you read. How is it teaching you to read it? What worlds or concepts is it bringing together, onto the stage? How do these worlds and concepts relate to one another, how do they interact, and how does their interaction affect you? What are the stylistic or aesthetic rules of the text?
- Avoid talking about whether you LIKED or DISLIKED something, or whether something was GOOD or BAD. Instead talk about how specific moments, words, or events AFFECTED you as a reader and human being.

Further suggested reading:

- ★ *Craft in the Real World* by Matthew Salesses,
 - ★ *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* by Felicia Rose Chavez
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Digital Land Acknowledgment

[S]ince our activities are shared digitally to the internet, let's also take a moment to consider the legacy of colonization embedded within the technologies, structures, and ways of thinking we use every day. We are using equipment and high speed internet not available in many indigenous communities. Even the technologies that are central to much of the art we [make] leaves significant carbon footprints, contributing to changing climates that disproportionately affect indigenous peoples worldwide. I invite you to join me in acknowledging all this as well as our shared responsibility: to make good of this time, and for each of us to consider our roles in reconciliation, decolonization, and allyship.

[text from Adrienne Wong of SpiderWebShow]

Photo/Video

Please be mindful about taking photos or videos when participating at events in the space (or on Zoom). If you plan to share photos/screenshots publicly or to social media platforms, please obtain permission and consent from relevant parties first. Thank you!

Current Covid Guidelines

Due to continued concerns about the spread of Covid-19 and its variants, for all of our in-person events and labs:

- We strongly encourage KN95 masks in any events we host at an indoor space. We will have extra masks available for anyone who needs them.
 - In addition, for some of our retreats and multi-day labs, you may be required to provide proof of vaccination as well as proof of a negative PCR Test taken within 72 hours of the event's start date, or a Rapid Antigen test taken the morning of the event.
 - Please see each event/lab's page for specific details or get in touch with any questions.
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AI, Note-Taking & Accessibility

We request that you NOT record any of our time together online or in-person, as participants share sensitive material.

If you have a need to record as a matter of accessibility, please get in touch with us prior to the offering and we will offer some guidance that aligns with our values.

Transparency: AI notetakers are part of our collective consciousness now, but we don't have to be in their service. Let us take into consideration the needs of all participants while also maintaining the safety of these sessions. In our shared spaces, we'd like to seek transparency while safeguarding the generosity and privacy of our instructors and participants.

Please reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or further discussion.