

Youngblood Harmonizing Arts

Arts Programming Overview + Teaching Artist(s) Bio

PROGRAMMING

YHA serves young people from age 6 - seniors. This year I have worked with 200+ participants at Maryhurst, Dreams with Wings Summer Camp, Dreams with Wings Seniors, Summer Camp at Beechmont Community Center, Seniors at Chestnut Street YMCA through Genesis Arts, Black Achieves, YHA Adult Retreat Participants, UofL Theater Department Faculty & Staff Retreat, and Seniors at Molo Village.

Teaching Artist(s) Bios(s)

Julia Youngblood, of Youngblood Harmonizing Arts, is a nationally recognized KET and Corporation for Public Broadcasting American Graduate Champion; a recipient of the University of Louisville African American Theater Department Lift Every Voice Award; 2022 InSightFull Business Accelerator Equity in Arts Cohort; and 2022 Indiana Arts Commission On-Ramp fellowship recipient. Youngblood has a BA from Bennington College and MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is an arts educator, photographer, Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner, and multidisciplinary exhibiting artist with solo and group shows in Kentucky, Vermont, New Mexico, and California. Her most recent solo exhibition of paintings and printed textiles, *Held in the Sway*, was at Lodgic Everyday Community Loft Gallery April, 2022. For sixteen years Julia directed ArtsReach, a community arts engagement program at Kentucky Performing Arts. She has served on panels for the National Endowment for the Arts, The Kentucky Arts Council, LexArts, and is currently a KPAN advisor on cultural equity. Youngblood facilitates arts engagement with the community and provides Jin Shin Jyutsu wellness sessions. She is passionate about individual and community healing, the transformative power of art, and living our best lives through harmonizing mind, body, and spirit.

Artistic Content of Programming

I facilitate art making processes that ensure each participant will feel confident, take risks and create something they can take great pride in. These processes include jewelry making, bilateral drawing, decoupage, mosaic, painting, creations comprised of textual elements, collage, book/zine making. I also teach poetry writing classes and photography.

Educational Content of Programming

Workshops include informational content about composition, cultural relevance, expression, color theory, story-telling, texture, engaging the senses and creating to soothe the mind, body and spirit. I measure success through engagement, learned vocabulary, excitement, the art created, pride in created works. I document sessions, the art created, and keep attendance. If the same group is worked with repeatedly, we can measure learned technical skills through metrics.

Process for hiring, training, and evaluating performance/effectiveness.

I am the only teaching artist with YHA. I hired artists for many years while directing ArtsReach, a community arts program of Kentucky Performing Arts. Effective teaching artists are present while teaching, engaged with students, willing to take risks alongside their students, encouraging of all creative expression and someone who facilitates using high quality supplies and clear instruction, but not cookie cutter projects. The unique humanity of each student should shine through the process. I always like to ask center staff what I could have done differently and ask students what they would like to do next.

How are participants of all backgrounds and abilities included in programming?

Showing up without pretense goes a long way to ensure participation by all participants. Bringing high quality materials and ensuring that all will create something they love, creates an environment of respect and mutual risk taking. Understanding the time constraints of community art is helpful. What can happen in the time given? Respect everyone's time and arrive early to get settled. Be organized and show examples of the project the group will be making. Teaching with a soft voice and gentle way is helpful, while also holding the form and defining expectations of respect for all in the group, and each person's expression. Making sure each artist had autonomy over their piece is important. This action creates a space where every voice is included and honored. When choosing supplies and imagery to work with I make sure there are images to mirror the students I work with. This can include race and ethnicity, culture, LGBTQAI+, age, neuro-diversity and those living with physical disabilities.

How do we engage teachers and community center staff before, during, and after programming?

I like to communicate with staff before, during and after. I like to have all arrangements in an agreement or email so there is less chance of confusion. If staff are unengaged, or inserting themselves into the art of students, I invite them to make a piece of their own. It's important to check in with staff after to see what could be done differently and always be teachable. Since the staff are with students full time, I am respectful of their place in the community and their feedback. It is important to keep professional boundaries with students and adhere to any rules/protocol the center has in place.

How do we engage participants in the creative and learning process?

I let students know what we will be doing, how much time we have, and how my instruction will happen. I start with selection of materials and overview of process, followed by step by step instructions as we progress through a technique. When I am not engaging the whole class there is often an excitement level in the room which I do not tamp down. This is the creative process at work. Often conversations take place which are helpful to participants. I move around the room and assist as needed, or answer questions. I give time checks so students can successfully finish their work. I leave time for reflection during which everyone looks at the work created and participants can talk about what they created and how the process was for them.