

Liz Richter

Arts Programming Overview + Teaching Artist(s) Bio

Liz Richter was born in Paducah, KY and raised in rural southeast Missouri. She graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with a bachelors degree in art education and began teaching in the Louisville area. Her mural practice grew out of working on large, collaborative installations with students in more than 50 local schools and community centers, as a teaching artist and museum educator for KMAC Museum. In 2016, she expanded into larger public art projects, completing a 1300 sq. ft. mural in Hikes Point, that utilized more than 100 students and volunteers. Richter has been commissioned to create murals by corporations like HGTV, Kroger Co. and Google Fiber and collaborated with many nonprofits in Kentuckiana, including Home of the Innocents, Louisville Visual Art, Speed Art Museum, Center for Neighborhoods and Kentucky School for the Blind. She has served twice as a Louisville Free Public Library's Collider Artist in Residence and was commissioned by Louisville Metro to create two murals for the Smoketown Imagine 2020 Mural Festival. In February 2020, she was recognized by Louisville Visual Art as the Emerging Artist of the Year. She was a 2022 recipient of the Great Meadows Foundation Travel Grant. Richter has been featured in many regional newspapers, magazines and news outlets, as well as an HGTV episode of Hometown Takeover, in La Grange, KY. She recently designed and led a team in the creation of a large, multi-sensory mosaic installation in the Clifton neighborhood, designed to consider and engage blind and visually impaired (B/VI) neighbors. Her extensive experience in both public art and teaching gives her the perspective of a seasoned educator and the authenticity of a working artist.

Artistic Content of Programming

I utilize educational methods such as SWBAT (Students will be able to) to set goals for the experience, as well as daily goals within a longer engagement, such as a scholastic residence. I frequently collaborates with partners to choose goals that are interdisciplinary, and connect to over-arching themes that align with the values of the organization, building an educational experience out from the core.

I believe in open-ended, non-graded experiences with beautiful results. However I choose to focus less on technical skill development and more focused on artistic expression, experimentation or communication of ideas for students. I am also a believer in modeling for students how to talk about art (art criticism), referencing historical context, and connecting the content to daily life. I refer to the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS): Create, Perform/Present/Produce, Respond and Connect as a model to foster artistic literacy and build cultural understanding into lesson structures.

Educational Content of Programming

I frequently tie in STEAM themes, or grade-appropriate Kentucky Standards in core contents such as social studies, science, math or literacy. In building lesson plans, I refer to NAEA standards as well as the Standards for National Visual Arts. As a visitor, I usually do not grade work in these settings, but I am always willing to collaborate with teachers on a rubric if it is appropriate for the educational experience. I weave in critical thinking skills, problem solving and cultural awareness using NCAS as a framework for comprehensive and memorable learning experiences.

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

I frequently share ideas with a close network of seasoned local educators, follow and study workshops and content by national and regional leading art education resources like NAEA, Kentucky Arts Council, and public art related cultural organizations such as Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program, Cincinnati's ArtWorks. Post-teaching opportunity, I request feedback from collaborators, parents and organizations to improve skills and streamline educational offerings.

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

I am committed to creating a welcoming and equitable educational setting where all students feel valued, respected and seen. I believe everyone deserves access to learning, and while acknowledging we come from diverse backgrounds, we should foster community and view each other's differences as strengths. Art is a natural place for fostering individuality and celebrating our differences through the united experience of creative expression. I value communication, respect and support of individual needs of students.

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

Collaboration is an enjoyable part of educational programming to me, and I study my cultural partners to understand key stakeholders, history of the organization, values and goals before a project begins. Observing the environment and listening carefully to partner's concerns, creates a genuine partnership in which I can connect overlapping core values and build a plan that satisfies everyone's needs. My primary form of communication is email, but I schedule zoom calls and site visits before beginning a partnership, especially for installation or more lengthy opportunities, to ensure that space and other logistics have been properly considered in the planning.

I see my role as a visitor, who should show respect for the space while also getting settled in enough to create good art educational experiences. I see the importance of establishing solid relationships with collaborators, from principals to maintenance teams, and making requests in advance to allow on-site staff and faculty time to work through proper channels. Having project managed large operations, I understand the importance of anticipatory communication. While capable and trained in classroom management, I also understand the more developed relationships that teachers might have with students, as well as liability concerns in educational settings, and refer to full-time staff members when

needed for discipline, safety or health concerns. Building a good working relationship with the teachers is vital for a successful student experience.

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

As an art lover, first and foremost, I connect students to the subject matter using the delight of large-scale public art, a fascinating art making process, a great story, or other attention grabbing element to create a curiosity gap where students are eager to learn more or further engage. I believe in the importance of providing relevance to the student early on, so they can relate to the content and see how the experience will benefit or value them. My experience growing up in a rural community with limited exposure to art allows me to connect to the inner child who was looking for excitement, freedom of expression and BIG artistic projects. The joy-of-making approach brings a natural excitement to my offerings, and students quickly adapt my enthusiasm for making and experiencing art on a grand scale.