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New Mexico Epic Poem Project Info

About the **Epic Poem Project**:

New Mexico Poet Laureate, Lauren Camp, and Michelle Laflamme-Childs, Executive Director of New Mexico Arts, are traveling to cities, towns, and villages across New Mexico to host poetry reading and writing workshops with the goal of creating poems from lines written by the local workshop participants and assembled by Camp and Laflamme-Childs. The workshops start with a short reading by the Poet Laureate of her own work followed by a conversation with the participants about poetry in general. There is an open mic component where local folks can read a poem, either one they have written or one they simply wish to share with the group. Each workshop concludes with Camp leading a prompted writing exercise about the local community which she and Laflamme-Childs will use as the source material in assembling the poems for and about each community in the words of those who live there. These poems will be printed as broadsides by the historic Palace Press at the Palace of the Governors/New Mexico History Museum with one gifted back to each community and another displayed as part of an exhibition showcasing the different community poems from around the state. In addition, there are plans to publish the poems in a book and to include artwork from counties, Pueblos, or other communities where workshops were not held to ensure as much of the state is represented as possible.



About New Mexico Poet Laureate, **Lauren Camp**:

New Mexico Poet Laureate Lauren Camp is the author of eight poetry collections, most recently *In Old Sky* (Grand Canyon Conservancy, 2024). She was awarded a 2023 Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship. Other honors include a Dorset Prize and finalist citations for the Arab American Book Award, the Housatonic Book Award and the Adrienne Rich Award for Poetry. In 2022, she was Astronomer in Residence at Grand Canyon National Park. Lauren is the recipient of fellowships from Denver Botanic Gardens, The Taft-Nicholson Center for Environmental Humanities and Black Earth Institute. She was a visiting writer at the Mayo Clinic, and artist in residence at Lowell Observatory and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. Her poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies, including *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Mid-American Review*, *Missouri Review*, and *The Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day*. Her work has been translated into Turkish, Mandarin, Serbian, Arabic, French and Spanish. She teaches for Poetry Out Loud-New Mexico and leads her own community workshops. She has pivoted from a successful career as a visual artist (1996-2008). Her portrait series, "The Fabric of Jazz," traveled to museums in ten cities. More artwork can be found in cultural centers, hospitals, museums, U.S. embassies and other organizations around the world. For 15 years, she was a producer and host for Santa Fe Public Radio. You can learn more about Lauren at <https://www.laurencamp.com/>



About New Mexico Arts Executive Director, **Michelle Laflamme-Childs:**

As executive director of New Mexico Arts—New Mexico’s federally authorized state arts agency—Michelle works to develop creative ideas to strengthen, evolve, and diversify programs at the agency while forging new partnerships to address the changing needs of artists and arts organizations across the state. With a focus on better serving rural and other historically underserved and excluded communities, Michelle and the New Mexico Arts team explore innovative ways to address issues of access and equity in their grantmaking, public art programming, and field capacity building efforts. An arts administrator for more than 20 years in both the private and public sector, Michelle is also a member of the Creative West Board of Trustees, working to ensure the unique needs of the 13 western states and three Pacific jurisdictions are considered at a national policy level. She holds a BA in English from the University of Massachusetts, an MA from St. John's College in Santa Fe, and hopes someday to complete her MFA in creative writing at the University of Texas, El Paso. Michelle is also a poet with her first full-length manuscript in the works. Her typically small and compact poems tend to be personal though not confessional. She strives to play with language and image in a way that is highly specific to her own lived experience while still holding space for readers to find their own stories in her work. You can learn more about Michelle at <https://michellelaflamme.com/>



About the **New Mexico Poet Laureate Program:**

New Mexico’s Poet Laureate Program was established with funding provided by the New Mexico Legislature through State Senator (and poet) Bill O’Neill in 2018 as a shared program between New Mexico Arts and the New Mexico State Library, both divisions of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. Each Poet Laureate serves a three-year term and is selected through a public open application process. The State Poet Laureate works in community to support literacy and enhance education while promoting personal growth and arts enrichment to every part of the state grounded in the understanding that poetry transcends boundaries and provokes thought, dialogue, and understanding. Learn more about the Poet Laureate Program and the New Mexico State Library’s Poetry Center at <https://nmstatelibrary.org/poetry-center/>



About **New Mexico Arts:**

New Mexico Arts (NMA) was created by the New Mexico legislature in 1965 after the establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts as New Mexico’s federally authorized state arts agency. NMA administers the state’s Percent for Public Art program; awards grants with state and federal funds to nonprofit, government, and public education organizations for public facing arts and cultural programming; and provides technical assistance, educational opportunities, and direct programming for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico. NMA’s mission is to provide public support for the arts to ensure the arts are accessible and central to the lives of New Mexicans and is a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. Learn more about New Mexico Arts at <https://www.nmarts.org/>



About the **New Mexico State Library:**

Established in 1929, the New Mexico State Library is a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, under the guidance of the New Mexico Library Commission. Programs and exhibits are generously supported by the New Mexico State Library Foundation through the generous support of donors. The New Mexico State Library provides services that support public and tribal libraries, delivers direct library services to rural populations, state agencies, the visually impaired and physically disabled, and students and citizens conducting research. The library supports public libraries by providing consulting services, offering training and continuing education opportunities, administering the librarian certification program, coordinating a statewide summer reading program and tribal library program, and administering state and federal grants to public libraries. Learn more about the State Library at <https://nmstatelibrary.org/>



About the **New Mexico History Museum and Palace Press:**

The New Mexico History Museum is a statewide educational resource, nationally significant local landmark, and destination for anyone who wants to understand the diverse experiences of the people of New Mexico, the dynamics that have shaped our state, and the relationships that connect our region with the rest of the world. Located on the north side of the historic Santa Fe Plaza, the New Mexico History Museum campus includes the Palace of the Governors, the Pete V. Domenici Building, the Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, and the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives. Learn more about the New Mexico History Museum at <https://nmhistorymuseum.org/>

Located on the north side of the New Mexico History Museum courtyard, this former stable is now home to a working exhibit dedicated to preserving and promoting New Mexico's printing and literary traditions. Working in the tradition of such noted New Mexico presses as the Laughing Horse Press, the Seton Village Press, and the Rydal Press, the Palace Press is the longest-running operation of its kind in the state and is today a center for contemporary book-art activities. Learn more about the Palace Press at <https://nmhistorymuseum.org/programs/the-palace-press/>



About the **New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs:**

Created in 1978 by the New Mexico Legislature, the Department of Cultural Affairs (NMDCA) is New Mexico's cultural steward, charged with preserving and showcasing the state's cultural riches. With its eight museums, eight historic sites, arts, archaeology, historic preservation, and library programs, NMDCA is one of the largest and most diverse state cultural agencies in the nation. Together, the facilities, programs, and services of the Department support a \$5.6 billion cultural industry in New Mexico. Learn more about The Department of Cultural Affairs at <https://nmculture.org/>