



Media Release

for immediate release

April 2, 2019

Edmonton Arts Council Seeks Edmonton's Eighth Poet Laureate

Edmonton — The Edmonton Arts Council, City of Edmonton, and Edmonton Public Library have issued a call for Edmonton's eighth Poet Laureate. As an ambassador for the literary arts, the Poet Laureate incorporates poetry that reflects Edmonton, its people, and its diversity into official and informal city activities.

"As a cultural ambassador for the City of Edmonton, our Poet Laureate celebrates and promotes the many stories of this city," Mayor Don Iveson says. "This role enables them to create a lasting artistic legacy that will enrich the lives of Edmontonians today and for generations to come."

Edmonton's current Poet Laureate is spoken word poet Ahmed Ali, a social activist whose work has empowered youth and diverse communities around the world. He is also the co-founder of Edmonton's spoken word collective Breath in Poetry. During his time as Poet Laureate, Ahmed has spoken and performed at events around the world and been honoured with awards including a John Humphrey Centre Human Rights Award and the Fil Fraser Award for Outstanding Work in Literary, Performing, and/or Visual Arts by the National Black Coalition of Canada. In 2017, Ahmed worked with the City of Edmonton to formally acknowledge April as Poetry Month in Edmonton.

"We are grateful for all of the work Ahmed has done to introduce diverse perspectives and ideas to events and activities in our city through the captivating medium of spoken word poetry," Edmonton Arts Council's Executive Director Sanjay Shahani says. "We are excited to see how the next Poet Laureate will use poetry and the power of language to engage Edmontonians."

"Edmonton Public Library is proud to support Edmonton's Poet Laureate program in our role as a catalyst for learning, discovery and community building," Edmonton Public Library's CEO Pilar Martinez says. "Ahmed is an accomplished poet and storyteller and a tireless community activist who has showcased the power of words and storytelling to inspire positive change. We are amazed by the depth of talent in Edmonton's poetry community, and we look forward to supporting the city's next Poet Laureate."



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Ahmed will perform in Council Chambers on April 16 at 9:30 am, and during Edmonton Poetry Festival at two events on April 24 and 27.

The next Poet Laureate will serve a two-year term beginning on July 1, 2019. This is a part-time, flexible role with an annual honorarium.

Edmonton writers and poets are invited to apply for the role. The deadline for applications is 12:00 pm MST on Monday, May 6, 2019. Full details for the call and a link to apply can be found at bit.ly/EACPoetLaureate.

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The Edmonton Arts Council is a not-for-profit organization that supports and promotes the arts community in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of our community life.

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