

Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing

Annual Report 2024



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Piper Staff



Alberto Ríos
Director



Christie Swedbergh
Associate Director



Sheila Black
Assistant Director



Iliana Garcia
Events Manager



Susan Nguyen
Senior Editor
Hayden's Ferry Review



Jacqueline Balderrama
Fellow-in-Residence



K'Ehleyr McNulty
Senior Coordinator for
Outreach Programs



Laurel Streed
Digital Marketing Specialist



Sasha Hawkins
Coordinator for
Educational Programs



Evan Senat
Operations Coordinator



Ayling Zulema Dominguez
Graduate Research Assistant

Letter from the Director

Alberto Ríos

“Writing is our way forward. Thinking, writing, speaking—we can each contribute something good to the story of the world.”

Dear Friends,

I am excited to share this report, which shows how active Piper has been this year. This past October, our annual conference Desert Nights, Rising Stars welcomed 318 lovers of literature to the ASU Tempe campus for three days of workshops, classes, readings, and panels. A further 371 joined us for Distinguished Visiting Writers Series events which featured diverse writers reading their work and engaging in wide-ranging, entertaining, and substantial conversations. In addition, 180 community members enrolled in Piper Writer Studio for fair-cost non-credit classes providing instruction in all major creative writing genres. Piper's Outreach programs served an even larger number, 480 in total! Outreach programs sends trained teaching artists to work in a variety of community settings, helping diverse populations of LGBTQIA+, youth, and seniors to tell their stories.

This year CantoMundo, an organization to support and celebrate Latinx poets and poetries, became part of Piper. From May 31–June 2 ASU and Piper hosted the annual CantoMundo retreat where 20 fellows, all published and gifted Latinx poets, came together for four days of workshops, classes, roundtables, and community-building. Faculty poets Rodrigo Toscano and Yesenia Montilla were joined by keynote speaker Roque Salas Rivera. This gathering of hearts, minds, and words also hosted free public readings that drew over 100 people to campus. One attendee wrote: “This retreat was profoundly impactful for me. The preparation was worth it, and I’m deeply grateful to everyone involved. I’ve made many new friends, and it’s changed my perspective on my ‘public’ and who I’m writing for. The sense of being welcomed was incredibly powerful.”

Piper’s reach is growing. We hope you will be part of our movement to make creative writing a part of your everyday life. I’ve provided a lot of numbers here, but the reason we do this work goes far beyond numbers. Writing and storytelling are essential parts of what makes happy, healthy communities. Simply put, sharing our stories builds our common understanding. We need this more than ever in a world full of so many changes and challenges.

At Piper, I feel lucky to be part of a team who believes that together with you we can enhance and build the role of storytelling and writing in all our lives. Wherever you are in your journey as a storyteller, writer, or reader, Piper is here to help. I’ve been a writer most of my life, and one thing I’ve learned is that every pencil is filled with a book. When writers gather, pencils talk. We hope you will join us in the beautiful conversation that results, something so different from the world’s headlines today. Writing is our way forward. Thinking, writing, speaking—we can each contribute something good to the story of the world.



Who We Are

Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing provides pathways for readers and writers of all levels to engage with the literary arts.

Housed in the historic 1907 house where three ASU Presidents have lived, Piper became a creative writing center in 2003 with a historic gift by the Virginia G. Piper Trust. Our vision is to make literary exploration possible for everyone.



The Historic Piper Writers House

PROGRAMS



CantoMundo

A new home at Piper

CantoMundo, a national poetry organization that cultivates a community for Latinx poets, joined in a three-year collaboration with the Piper Center in 2023. This was especially significant given ASU's recent designation as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). Piper Center celebrated the collaboration with a roundtable discussion at the Latinx Studies Association Conference on April 20, 2024.

Jacqueline Balderrama, Piper Center Fellow in Residence, was named CantoMundo's inaugural director. She worked in concert with CantoMundo's National Advisory Board – Willie Perdomo, Norma Cantú, and Pablo Miguel Martínez – to address community needs on inclusivity and plan the 2024 annual retreat.

From May 30 to June 2, 2024, Piper Center at ASU successfully hosted the CantoMundo retreat, gathering established and emerging poets from across the country. CantoMundo fellows joined at ASU Tempe campus. Retreat faculty Yesenia Montilla and Rodrigo Toscano offered workshops and readings, and keynote lecturer Roque Raquel Salas Rivera delivered an impactful keynote address. Fellows visited the Hispanic Research Center and were welcomed to Hayden Library with a

CANTO MUNDO

featured book display in Luhrs Reading Room and a tour at Distinctive Collections. ASU students and community members volunteered and attended public readings and receptions.

Programming was made possible by the Hawthornden Foundation, the Academy of American Poets, Latino Poetry at Library of America, the Poetry Foundation, the University of Arizona Poetry Center, and the Poetry Coalition, a national coalition supported by the Mellon Foundation.

20 fellows
attended
the annual
retreat



Faculty speakers Rodrigo Toscano and Yesenia Montilla

2024 Retreat on Tempe Campus



“This retreat has been so nourishing, supportive, and inspiring. I'm grateful I got to attend, take a risk, and meet such kind, talented, and giving artists.” – CantoMundo 2024 Retreat Fellow

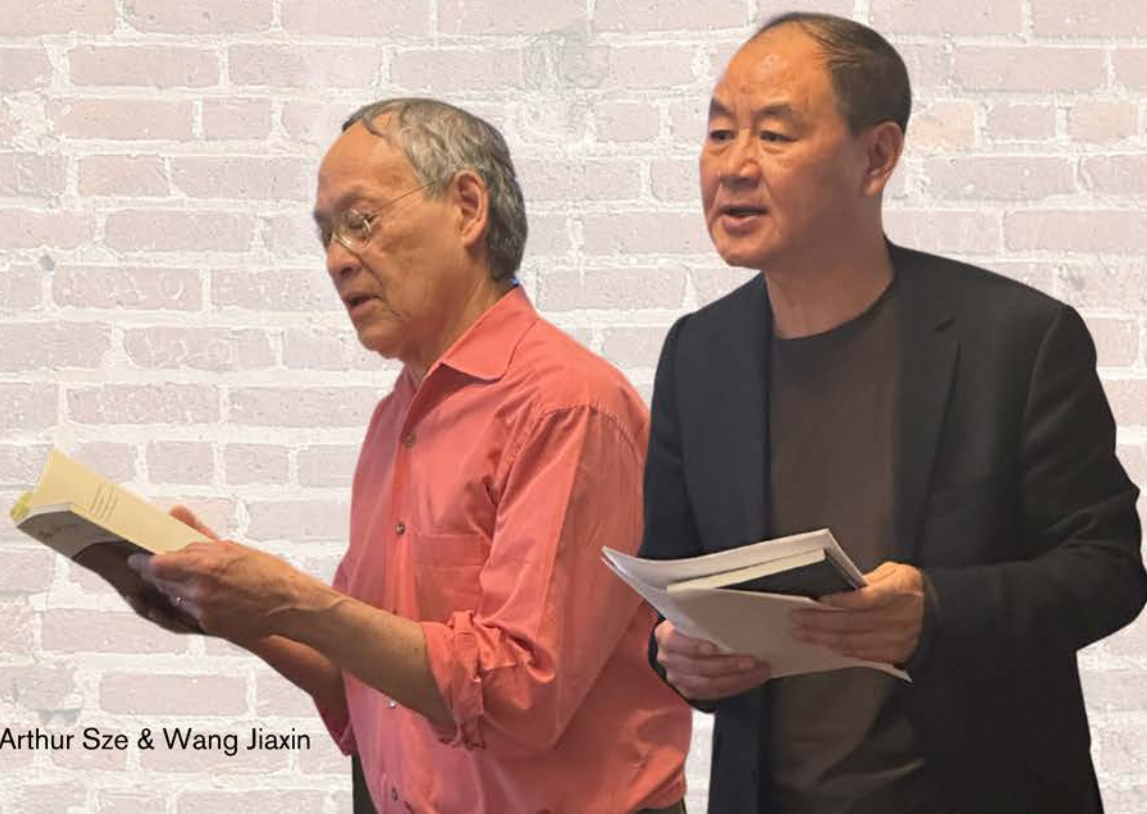
Distinguished Visiting

Writers Series

The Distinguished Visiting Writers Series (DVWS) presents iconic writers alongside emerging voices for talks, readings, and other innovative and multi-genre literary engagements.



Jennifer Bartlett, Petra Kuppers, Ellen Bryant Voigt, Sally Ball, Michelle Otero, Edward Vidaurre, Kelli Russell Agodon, Sati Mookherjee, Arthur Sze, and Wang Jiaxin



9 events

17 diverse authors

Over 371 attendees

What people are saying . . .

“Loved the discussion after the reading!”

“Loved the focus on translation.”

“Thank you so much!
Would love more events like this!”

“Such a lovely event!”

Looking forward...

Next year DVWS will welcome poets Mark Wunderlich and Joni Wallace, novelists Fernando A. Flores and ASU’s own Matt Bell, poets Ilya Kaminsky and Katie Farris, a reading and translation panel with Susan Briante and Farid Matuk and an event on poetry and wild spaces with Lauren Camp and Jodie Hollander. Stay in the know by joining the Piper mailing list at piper.asu.edu

Events

2023

July

July 3: What to the Slave is the 4th of July? Reading hosted by Clottee Hammons	July 13: Workshop at Camp OUTdoors with one-n-ten	July 18: Veterans Writing Circle
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August

Aug 1 and 15: Veteran's Writing Circle	Aug 26: First Annual Teaching Artist Orientation
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September

Sep 2: Workshop at Camp OUTdoors with one-n-ten	Sep 5 & 19: Veteran's Writing Circle	Sep 13: BASIS Scottsdale workshop	Sept 21: DVWS Norma Cantú and Denice Frohman	Sep 27: Indigenous Poets Prize Reading
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October

Oct 12-14: Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference	Oct 14: Joy Harjo reading, conversation moderated by Alberto Ríos	Oct 26: Thousand Languages Issue 3 Launch	Oct 27: DVWS Eileen Myles and Jenny Irish
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November

Nov 9: DVWS Douglas Kearney and Octavio Quintanilla	Nov 16: ASU Book Group with Douglas Kenrick & David Lundberg-Kenrick	Nov 29: Vulnerable Vision Boards
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December

Dec 5: Dunbar Elementary workshop	Dec 7: Virtual Open Mic	Dec 7: Thousand Languages Fall Spotlight	Dec 13: Vulnerable Vision Boards, Fall Open Mic
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January

Jan 11: Workshops at **one-in-ten**

Jan 19: **DVWS** | Jennifer Bartlett and Petra Koppers

February

Feb 15: **DVWS** | Ellen Bryant Voigt and Sally Ball

Feb 24: ASU Open Door feat. Typewriter Poets

Feb 7-10: **HFR** tabling at AWP Conference in Kansas City, MO

Feb 28: **Crafting Connection** workshop

March

March 5: **Veteran's Writing Circle**

March 14: Workshops at **one-in-ten**

March 15: **DVWS** | Michele Otero and Edward Vidaurre

March 27: **Crafting Connection** workshop

April

April 12: **DVWS** | Kelli Russell Agodon and Sati Mookherjee

Apr 13: Generative Workshop with **HFR** and **TLP** at Northern Arizona Book Festival

April 18: **DVWS** | Arthur Sze and Wang Jiaxin,

April 20: "**CantoMundo** and the Placemaking of a Latinx Poets & Poetry Organization" roundtable at Latino/a Studies Association Conference

Apr 27: Reverse Ekphrasis Art Show, Orlando Florida

Apr. 30: **Thousand Languages** Spring Spotlight

May

May 1: **HFR** issue 74 Launch

May 29: **Crafting Connection** Poetry at Piper Workshop

May 30 - June 2: **CantoMundo** 2024 Retreat

May 31: Public Reading with Rodrigo Toscano

June

June 1: Public Reading with Yesenia Montilla

June 28: Kelly Houle's "Hummingbirds" Opening Exhibition

June 28: Tortured Poets Afternoon with Phoenix Public Libraries

55% increase in total enrollment



The Piper Writers Studio offers creative writing workshops covering genre fiction, surrealist poetry, memoirs, and more! All skill levels are welcome, and students gain hands-on experience with industry professionals from across the country and around the world.

PWS offers community discounts for seniors, veterans, current ASU students, and members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at ASU, Arizona English Teachers Association, and the Phoenix Writers Club. For more information email Sasha Hawkins, Education Coordinator, at shawki31@asu.edu.

PWS now accepts applications from community writers to teach workshops online and at the Piper Writers House. To remain accessible to all communities, we consider publication, teaching, education, and performance experience in deciding whether a workshop would be a good fit!

“PWS is an oasis for me. I love every workshop I've taken.”

“Workshops are a great opportunity to learn from and meet other writers, based on their topics you can have discussions and exercises which can expand your knowledge.”

Fellowships



"What attracted me to all of these works is how close to "finished" they all felt, not in a way that one has reached an apex in career, rather that one has reached a formidable height that demands space and time for more nurturing.

Each brief portfolio made me want to read more pages, **learn more about these poetic speakers** and curious narrators whose impeccable intelligence and wholly original voices fill a void in me that has lasted for years: **a desire for ambition and more risk.**"

-Phillip B. Williams



Judged by
Phillip B.
Williams

41 total
applications

\$65,125
awarded



Outreach

Outreach programs are ever-evolving. From hosting events and connecting with community to hiring teaching artists, we strive to create a space for community expression and healing. Outreach provides creative writing workshops at no cost that support artists and writers of all backgrounds and experience levels.



Over 50
events


Over 600
attendees



“My year at **BASIS Scottsdale** as a poetry teaching artist consisted of working with students in various forms of poetry throughout the school year. I utilized different expressions of these works...encouraging students to **use their voice in the art of spoken word**. I was given the opportunity to co-coach one of the students from the class in Poetry Out Loud, and this student went on to win 3rd place in the state for their amazing efforts.” - Ryan Files

Thousand Languages Project

A living, ever-developing database of literary translation, Thousand Languages Project (TLP) features works originally from *Hayden's Ferry Review (HFR)*. TLP has grown to be an active community of students invested in language from all over the globe who work to share literature in their own languages with diverse audiences. Continuing under the leadership of Piper Fellow in Residence Jacqueline Balderrama, TLP celebrated the launch of its third issue, *Artifacts of Connection*, with guest appearances by *HFR* contributors Kevin Phan, Eric Schlich, and Sandy Fontana.

A portrait of Chris Hoshnic, a young man with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green and yellow foliage.

TLP intern Chris Hoshnic was named 2024's The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Medalist. He credits his work with TLP as "opening the door to the world of poetry as a possibility to explore creativity, philosophy and my own relationship to Diné Bizaad."

Serving
13 interns

Publishing
50 new
translations

Representing
7 languages

TLP Issue 4 will include 8 prose pieces and 13 poems

Fall 2023 Intern Spotlight

"As a first-time translator, navigating "what it means to translate" has been an eye-opening and more complex question than I ever thought before being part of the Thousand Language Project."

- Anthony Shaw, Spring 2024 Intern

"Overall, this experience challenged my intermediate Japanese abilities to a different level. "

-Michael McIver, Spring 2024 Intern

"Learning the complexity of translation and working with languages in a hands-on manner has been a great learning experience for me."

- Spring 2024 Intern

Desert Nights, Rising Stars

Writers Conference

“Truly a great experience.”

- 2023 featured presenter

Keynote Speaker Joy Harjo

October 12-14, 2023, Piper hosted Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference (DNRS) in the historic quarter at ASU. Keynote speaker Joy Harjo joined with 40 other featured writers, including renowned authors Raymond Antrobus, Robert Boswell, Victoria Chang, Ramona Emerson, Brandon Hobson, Patricia Spears Jones, Naomi Shihab Nye, Chana Proter, and Vauhini Vara. Participants could choose between 72 sessions, a vibrant mixture of workshops, classes, readings, and panels in all major genres.

DNRS 2023 sold out before the Early Bird rate had ended. The conference drew 318 registrants from 16 states. **Of these, 12% were students, 19% were seniors, 5% were Arizona educators, 12% were people with disabilities, and 21% were ASU alumni.** In post-conference surveys, attendees ranked the conference as very good or excellent, with an aggregate score across all categories of 4.36 out of 5.

318 attendees
from **16 different states**

Alberto Ríos at closing ceremony





“Thanks again for a wonderful few days and for all the hospitality, community, and art.”

- 2023 conference attendee

“Perhaps my favorite conference ever.”

- 2023 conference attendee

Looking forward...

As part of our mission to make ASU a writing community, for DNRS 2024, we are pioneering a special discounted \$50 rate for all ASU affiliated persons, including students, faculty, and staff.

DNRS 2024 will take place October 10-12. We are now hosting it in the larger space of Memorial Union in the heart of the ASU Tempe Campus. Keynote speakers this year will be Nicole Sealey and John Murillo.



Desert Nights, Rising Stars

Hayden's Ferry Review



HFR issues 73 and 74



Founded in 1986, *Hayden's Ferry Review* (HFR) is the international, semi-annual literary journal curated by the MFA students in creative writing at ASU. The journal publishes poetry, fiction, nonfiction, translation, art, and interviews by emerging and established authors, artists, and translators.

73

writers, translators, and artists

2

published issues

20

student interns



Other Piper activities

**7
grants**

The Academy of American poets, Amazon Literary Partnerships, Arizona Commission on the Arts, the Hawthornden Foundation, the Latino Poetry Grant from Library of America, and the Poetry Foundation.

**\$1,000
donated**

Piper supported the 2024 El Día de los Niños, El Día de los Libros/Children's Day Book Day



Kelly Houle's "Hummingbirds" exhibition inspired by poetry of ASU professor emeritus Norman Dubie. More images on next page.



Marketing

8,400+ email subscribers
2,000+ Instagram followers
1,200+ Twitter/X followers



“Marketing isn’t just about posting on social media or sending newsletters, it’s about telling our story in thoughtful ways. It’s about reaching a hand out to our audience and asking them to come along for the ride.”

-Laurel Streed, Digital Marketing Specialist

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PIPER TEAM BUILDING



SUSAN WITH HER BOOK



FOX FRIEND ON THE PORCH



DNRS 2023



Image credits: Laurel Streed, Kevin S. Moul, and Meghan Finnerty.

