



WATERWORKS

2025 Reader Guidelines and Information

The readers for the WATERWORKS festival are volunteer groups of educators, students, and passionate community members who are excited about community engagement, and nurturing creative efforts. Readers will assist in carefully crafting a strong festival program that showcases the artistic talent and cultural diversity of our community. Our readers are privileged to read hundreds of submissions from a diverse pool to assist in the creation of the three-week WATERWORKS festival.

Join the 2025 Reader Committee!

Contact waterworks@livearts.org to join the team.

Overview:

Strong readers are individual volunteers working to achieve a collaborative goal, and who value diversity and open dialogue in the arts. Readers like have familiarity with scripts and theatrical storytelling, but is not required that they are writers, performers, or technical theater artists. Live Arts encourages beginners and artists from all backgrounds to dive in!

Participation will occur remotely and in assigned teams of two during a reading window (mid-December to late January). Readers should have a level of digital literacy and need to feel comfortable reading and responding to an assortment of scripts that vary in development, format, subject matter, and length. This volunteer role work may be completed at the reader's pace, subject to applicable deadlines.

We apply an anonymous submission process to ensure no unintentional bias on behalf of our qualified readers' team. *Readers may not have submitted work to WATERWORKS in any New Works category during the year of their participation and should disclose personal connections to playwrights that may result in conflict and/or bias.*



New Works Director Adrienne Oliver curates finalized programming in collaboration with the Live Arts artistic production team, other organizational staff, and selectors, highlighting the community's rich culture and knowledge.

The timeline for the selection process is as follows:

December 1, 2024 *Submissions close.*

December 8, 2024 - January 15, 2025

- Reading and scoring period. Reader materials are distributed to committee members.
- Virtual office hours with New Works Director Adrienne Oliver are available upon request throughout the reading process upon request.

January 15, 2025 *Deadline.*

- Finalist nomination forms due to the director of the new work via email.

January 30, 2025 - March 1, 2025

- Selections are finalized by Live Arts, and programming offers are distributed to playwrights.

Interested in reading?

Contact waterworks@livearts.org.



Reading and Selection Process

General Guidelines and Expectations:

The volunteers on the Reader Committee are responsible for nominating finalists to be “long-listed” for WATERWORKS 2025 across all categories, which include *Emerging Artists*, *Debut Works*, and *Unstaged Works*. All works submitted within the categories are original, unpublished, and vary length-wise. Selected works will be presented and staged in Live Arts venues according to production needs.

Emerging Artists: For writers and writing teams between 16 to 25 years old.

Debut Works: For writers over 50.

Unstaged Works: No age restrictions for writers or writing teams.

Scoring and Nominations:

All scripts will be assessed by multiple readers to ensure the prioritization of artistic distinction to select finalist nominations. The scoring rubrics and comments will be completed individually and submitted confidentially directly to the New Works Director, Adrienne Oliver. Many works that satisfy important requirements and whose total score accurately reflects their merits may be nominated by the committee and will comprise our “Long-Listed” finalists. The artistic uniqueness of each piece will be the primary factor taken into account for short-listing and selection.

The Readers Committee hopes to love each new work! Live Arts aims to satisfy audiences with new content, characters, structure, subject matter, and voice/s. The motivation behind this process is to celebrate new theatrical works by identifying, uplifting, and sharing the brilliance created by artists.

- Pairs of readers are assigned a shared digital dossier of scripts to read and consider with provided materials.
- Each pair may be assigned 40-60 scripts depending on submission volume. Scripts will vary in length, genre, category of submission, and other factors.
- Using a rubric focused on artistic distinction, readers are responsible for determining a batch of no more than 10 finalists to nominate for programming selection.



- Readers are **not** expected to collaborate or coordinate their reading or to calibrate their feedback or nominations with one another. Paired teams may choose to connect for discussion; script scoring remains an independent activity.

Deadline for nominations: January 15, 2025.

Artistic Distinction:

Our readers appreciate re/imagination, discovery, humor, thrill, awareness, and complexity in addition to the artistic distinction described below. We are reading with empathy, celebrating the fragility of creation, and showing compassion for the diversity of human experience and narratives, all while maintaining an inclusive mindset and stimulating our minds.

Live Arts values:

- Works that explore culture, humanity, and justice-minded themes.
- Works that celebrate theatricality, expression, and connectivity.
- Works prominently centering marginalized voices, narratives, and ideas.
- Age-embracing works, with opportunities for senior and/or junior artists.
- Innovative and thought-provoking material.
- Works exploring language, dialogue, communication, ideas, and energy.
- Works by historically erased artists and writers.

The WATERWORKS programming team is steadfastly committed to disrupting practices and patterns that continue to harm and erase our processes. Recognizing intentions and impact are not synonymous. Live Arts takes responsibility for the failure to effectively protect and champion underrepresented artists historically. We seek accountability in our cultural competency and will remain upfront in our actions as we earn community trust in representing new works.

Questions?

Contact waterworks@livearts.org.



FAQs:

- Committee members are not responsible for the selection, programming, or curating decisions. All final programming is determined by Adrienne Oliver, in collaboration with Live Arts Artistic Director Susan E. Evans, production staff, and local artists committed to representing the cultural wealth and expertise of the community.
- A note regarding time commitment: **Volunteerism takes time, and Live Arts highly values yours.** With the volume of scripts for consideration, their variety, and readers' outside responsibilities, we cannot provide an estimate of an exact time commitment. We ask readers to consider their capacity with consideration of the demands of the process. *If, for any reason, you are unable to complete your readings and/or submit the necessary materials, please immediately contact us.* **Please communicate any issues promptly so that we may re-distribute scripts and/or re-assign readings urgently.**
- A note regarding confidentiality: Our reading process is anonymous, ensuring the elimination of unintentional bias; however, during reading and selection periods, readers may already be familiar with the plays and playwrights, given the nature of our community at Live Arts and in Charlottesville. Readers are urged to respect the privacy of each author, the play, and their volunteer work by not sharing any information they have discovered with anyone outside the committee. *If you are aware of any personal familiarity with a submitted piece or playwright, please contact our team.*

Questions or support?

Contact waterworks@livearts.org



About the Festival:

WATERWORKS is a celebration of new theatrical voices at Live Arts and beyond the Charlottesville community! The new works festival continues Live Arts' extended history of producing local and upcoming playwrights. As a new endeavor within a predominantly white theatre, Live Arts seeks to craft diverse teams and programming representative of the impressive talent that spans the lively community. Informed by #WESEEYOU, WATERWORKS will sincerely encourage readers to “invest in a multiplicity of cultures and many permutations of form to reimagine what is possible in the theater.”

Interested in volunteering for WATERWORKS?

Email Aldrian at volunteer@livearts.org for more information.

About Live Arts:

Live Arts is a welcoming hub for stories and their storytellers. Our commitment and engagement with local communities is deeply rooted, and we excitedly attract participants and audiences across the span of Central Virginia. Live Arts is known for exceptional productions that are reflective of our volunteer actors and production teams.

For the past three decades, Live Arts has committed itself to our mission of “*forging theater and community*” in Charlottesville, Virginia. We acknowledge the land we occupy is stolen land and is the Monacan and Manahoac nations’ ancestral homes. Live Arts seeks to recognize the indigenous nations as the original stewards of this land, and we pay our respect to elders.

We further work to acknowledge that we have benefited from and worked with systems that have reinforced institutional inequities at the expense of many Black, Indigenous, and communities of color. We acknowledge and defer to the scholarship and knowledge of BIPOC artists, educators, and leaders both in the Charlottesville community and beyond.

Questions or feedback?

Email waterworks@livearts.org

for more information.