

BAO

Brampton Arts Organization



Brampton Poetry Project

May 2025

THE BRAMPTON POETRY PROJECT

The Brampton Arts Organization (BAO) believes in the transformative power of words to inspire and enrich our daily life. In 2024, BAO began the Brampton Poetry Project, which placed poetry in unexpected places across the city.

For 2025, twenty local artists' poems can be found on dozens of buses across the city!

Together with these poets, we hope to bring moments of literary beauty and contemplation into everyday life in Brampton.

#BramptonPoetryProject

PARTICIPATING LOCAL WRITERS

a.c yeboah	@acyeboah
Arianna George	@ar1xanna
Jennifer Lam	Wattpad: @JH_Foliage
Miles Macabre	@macabremiles
Saira (another aesthete)	@another_aesthete
Furqan Mohamed	@furqanamohamed
Harshal Desai	https://harshaldesai.ca/
sanyu galabuzi-kassam	X: @webspinnax
Kelvin Ajayi	@kelvinajayi
Arjun Kalra	@arjunkxlra
Brianne Carroll	@briannecarroll
Rija Waqar	@rijawaqarr
Arshdeep Sandhu	@arxhdeepk_
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Efia	@efiaorun
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Mehr Thakkar	@_mehr_t
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Divyam Prasad	

ABOUT THE

BRAMPTON ARTS ORGANIZATION

The Brampton Arts Organization is a registered non-profit that champions Brampton's diverse arts, culture and creative industries and advocates for the #BramptonArtist. We work to build a thriving, confident, valued, and empowered creative scene by offering a range of programs, services and resources. In this, BAO is a key partner in fulfilling the City of Brampton's strategic vision and Culture Master Plan.

Throughout the year, we offer free in-person and virtual programming for all creative disciplines. These programs focus on helping artists build and professionalize their practices. We also create opportunities for artists to show their work through regular calls. In addition to these programs for individual creatives, we offer programs for Brampton-based creative businesses and arts and culture organizations.

PROGRAMS

- Quarterly Town Halls & Community Check-Ins
- Power Hours, monthly lunch & learn workshops
- Open Studio+, monthly community studio every last Wednesday
- PIXEL: Digital Art Exhibit in Garden Square & Postcard Series
- BAO Artist Booths at the Brampton Farmers' Market
- Brampton Summer and Winter Artist Markets
- Professional Practices for Artists Program
- And much more!

Memories

a.c yeboah

the memories bloom bright here
on your last visit they greet you like a friend
back then you skipped in and out of the flower garden
and downed slushies so fast you got brain freeze
by the splashpad you played silly games
as droplets teased your feet

a.c yeboah
@acyeboah

a.c yeboah is a Brampton-based writer, creative facilitator, children's lit fan, learner for life, and quiet disruptor. She is currently using her curiosity to embark on newfound paths of creativity. Her essays and poetry explore cultural identity, self-acceptance, and playful discovery. You may visit her online at acyeboah.com.

Set up to fly

Arianna George

They paved the streets with chances,
laid every step like a ladder to the sky.

Teachers, strangers, even the old bench by the park-
they all whispered you can be more.

I grew in the shadows of their belief,
a town that built wings before I even knew how to fly.

Arianna George
@ar1xanna

Arianna is a writer and artist who navigates the liminal spaces between culture, memory, and self. Drawing from her Pakistani roots, her work questions the boundaries of identity- how it is shaped by both what is remembered and what is forgotten. With a mind attuned to the fragility of human experience, she crafts narratives that echo the tension between personal and collective histories, often exploring how we construct meaning in a world that constantly shifts. Through unconventional art, Arianna challenges the viewer and reader to confront not only the space they inhabit, but also the unseen forces that shape their understanding of belonging and existence; illuminating the chaos and complexities of what it means to belong, to create, and to be seen.

Phật Quan Âm

Jennifer Lam

gentle is the moon who rises at night
the breeze to gather outside she beckons the stars,
her mantra we sing under curved tiled roofs
the runes of our hearts the sorrows we soothe the
love that is our compass
she is the earth, the reason, our compassion
we are her light her resilient might

Jennifer Lam

Wattpad: @JH_Foliage

Jennifer Lam (she/her) is a writer, poet and digital artist who grew up in Brampton. Creativity is the medium through which she expresses complicated emotions around mental health, cultural identity and urban life. She is proud to have her original illustration “Swimming in Canh Chua” featured in the 2023 Brampton Foodie Art Exhibition at the Rose Theatre.

Forgiveness

Miles Macabre

i'm catching all the bricks i've
thrown at myself from a distance.
i'm stockpiling all the pieces,
offering them the kindness they needed.
so later on i can build myself a better home.

Miles Macabre

@macabremiles

Miles is an artist. They enjoy a quiet life.

Ghar ki khushboo

[the scent of home]

Saira (another aesthete)

Night-blooming jasmine whispers the calling of home
and for a moment, I am back in the streets that raised me.
A whiff of karak chai warms my nostalgic heart
and for a while, I cherish the home I have built here.
Every inhale and exhale is a push and pull
between the home that was and the home that is.

Saira (another aesthete)
@another_aesthete

Saira (another aesthete) is a multidisciplinary artist and social worker born and raised in Pakistan and currently based in Brampton. She enjoys making various forms of art and is passionate about exploring the intersections of art, mental health and social justice.

Staring Contest

Furqan Mohamed

There is an ocean between this woman and me— one of linoleum, with waves of fluorescent light and echoes of late 90s music over a PA system. We shuffle through this grocery store, while I wonder if any of these songs were on the charts the year she arrived. I watch her watching, as she looks for home in my face. I let her. She is nosy, but not cruel. She is searching for a return. An exchange. At this moment, I am a translator. Her in-between. There is no longer an ocean between this woman and me. It is a river. A puddle. A portal. A bridge. “Salaam, how are you?”

Furqan Mohamed
@furqanamohamed

Furqan Mohamed (she/her) is a writer, educator, and arts worker interested in all things culture, kinship, and abolition. Her writing has appeared in Canthius, Maisonneuve, The Local, and C Mag. She loves asking “Who’s Afraid?” as often as she can as well as chatting about poetry and translation, especially when working on sales and community for trace press. She is currently the guest curator for the 2025 Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts and is completing her graduate studies at the University of Toronto.

Marbles

Harshal Desai

When I was a child,
my grandfather and I played a game.
He used to bury marbles in his home garden
and I would have to find the treasures.
I believe even now; he is burying marbles in the soil.
After every winter, they rise like flowers.

Harshal Desai
<https://harshaldesai.ca/>

Harshal Desai is a multi-genre writer, visual artist, and editor. He earned a Masters of Design in Digital Media from Raffles College of Higher Education, Singapore. His writing has been published internationally, including in *Former Cactus*, *Phenomenal Literature*, *Tell Me Your Story*, *Riggwelter Press*, and *Peacock Journal*. His multiform photography has been showcased in *National Geographic*, *Indianapolis Review*, *Shanghai Literary Review* and featured in Grimsby Public Art Gallery, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, THREADS 2024, Existere, and elsewhere. He is a juror at the Art Selection Committee in Mississauga and a founding editor at *Parentheses Journal*.

Between Dusk and Dawn

sanyu galabuzi-kassam

Cool and quick, a soft shiver slithers up his spine, splintering the stillness of the night after a rain. Soft chatter amongst the earliest birds brim, he muses at songs of another world, tracing his finger through dew gathered on a bench arm.

sanyu galabuzi-kassam
X: @webspinna

sanyu galabuzi-kassam, also known as webspinna, is a queer gender non-conforming Black woman who explores decoding themselves and others through short stories and poetry. She is a story weaver, someone who can create an intricate tale with pieces that are all connected to one another by a single thread. In other words: a web spinner. They have work in *Camwood Literary Magazine*, *Zora* zine by the Centre for Women & Trans People, and Sonya Mwambu's installation "Perpetually Ubiquitous" in 'The Breadth of' for the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (CFMDC).

Three Things

Kelvin Ajayi

Three things are certain in life.
Death.
Taxes.
“Can everyone see my screen?”

Kelvin Ajayi
@kelvinajayi

Kelvin Ajayi is a finance professional. In his spare time he loves to write poetry, play the guitar, and go to the gym.

Papa, Mujhe Naachna Hai (Dad, I Want to Dance)

Arjun Kalra

“A boy shouldn’t dance like a girl, he shall watch them”.
I do; I grow jealous on the field.
I throw my gloves to the floor and lift my heels to float amongst them.
My old man guides me down. I rejoin the boys who now ridicule my sorrow.
Soon, I return home to borrow Mama’s make-up and skirts,
Turn on sangeet tunes and mould a spirit from my ruins.

Arjun Kalra
@arjunkalra

Arjun Kalra, or अर्जुन कालड़ा (he/him) is a queer, Indian multidisciplinary performer who yearns to express creativity as artistic expression, primarily through theatre and film. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in Performance: Acting at Toronto Metropolitan University. Aside from acting, he sings, hip-hop dances, writes poetry, styles fashion, and graphic designs.

Fireflies

Brianne Carroll

Hidden from dreamers
Waltzing to music unheard
Holding hushed lanterns.

Brianne Carroll
@briannecarroll

Brianne Carroll is a Brampton-based multidisciplinary artist and creator. She has tried everything from making stained glass projects to oil painting, to bookbinding and more, but currently spends most of her time sewing clothes from thrifted fabrics and watercolour painting. She has dabbled in writing short fiction, poetry and prose over the years, and has published a book of self-illustrated haiku called “the poetry of living things.”

The Woman on the 501 at 6:58PM

Rija Waqar

A bottle of pinot noir sticks from her bag,
her hands hold it like it's a pinky promise.
Eager eyes watching the road,
I wonder if she's going to her lover,
or meeting her friends for a pasta dinner.
The bus stops, she rushes off, the pinot noir disappears
around the corner.

Rija Waqar
@rijawaqarr

Rija Waqar is a film student at Toronto Metropolitan University, with a passion for the ways art can capture raw, intimate moments in everyday life. As a storyteller, she finds inspiration in both visual media and the written word, drawing from her experiences in urban spaces, and the connections formed between strangers. Rija's work often explores personal transformation, existential angst and the fleeting nature of human emotions. As she continues her journey as an artist, Rija is excited to share her writing with a broader audience, inviting others to reflect on their own experiences.

ਆਪਣੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਿਖਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਕੁੜੀ (The Girl Who Wrote Her Own Freedom)

Arshdeep Sandhu

ਉਹ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ	She didn't find her freedom
ਕਸਿ ਦੀ ਥਾਲੀ 'ਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭੀ	On anyone's plate.
ਉਹ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼	She didn't unlock her voice
ਕਸਿ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਖੋਲੀ	With anyone's permission.
ਉਹ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਹ, ਖੁਦ ਬਣਾਈ	She built her own path,
ਮੱਟੀ ਵੱਚੋਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਰਗਾ ਰਸਤਾ ਕੱਢਿਆ	Pulled a road from the soil like a poem.
ਜੱਥੇ ਲੋਕ ਆਖਦੇ ਰਹੇ	Where they said,
'ਕੁੜੀ ਤੇ ਆਕਾਸ਼ ਨੀ ਛੂਹ ਸਕਦੀ'	'A girl can't touch the sky,'
ਉਹ ਉੱਥੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਲਿਖ ਗਈ	That's exactly where she wrote her flight.

Arshdeep Sandhu
@arshdeepk_

As a first-generation immigrant, Arshdeep found herself navigating unfamiliar spaces, from language barriers to cultural expectations, all while holding onto the dreams that got her across the world. It was in these moments of isolation, resilience, and self-discovery that she turned to writing and acting, using her words to make sense of her struggles, evolving identity, and the raw beauty of life's unexpected turns. Her work reflects the stories of migration, womanhood, and healing, infused with the emotional honesty of someone who has lived between worlds and found her voice within them. Today, her writing and art stand as a testament to survival and creativity, proving that even in struggle, there is inspiration waiting to be found.

Rubber Band

Varinder Kaur Paul

They try to hold me back,
but I'm a rubber band.
The harder they pull...
the farther I will land.

Varinder Kaur Paul
@mstiqe

A multidisciplinary artist, writer and certified therapeutic arts practitioner, Varinder Kaur Paul explores themes of self-discovery, emotional resilience and creativity. Her work bridges the personal and the universal, creating spaces for introspection and connection. In her words, she makes art "for the parts of us that hide."

About The Sun

Efia

...and if you wanted the sun,
I would kiss you gently on the lips
and whisper in your ear
that I cannot give you
what you already are.

Efia
@efiaorun

Efia is an author, poet and creative from Trinidad and Tobago, who now resides in Canada. With a background in film, journalism and broadcast television, she is working on her debut novel. Calligraphy and baking are some of her hobbies.

The Flower City

Kurangi Arora

*Flowers bloom
in the heart of Chinguacousy Park,
waiting patiently for each resident
to grow in their own way.*

*Each person a petal,
blooming at their own pace.*

Kurangi Arora
@just_kur_

Kurangi Arora is a Brampton-based poet and writer studying English Literature at York University. Her freestyle approach to poetry embraces raw emotion, weaving themes of love, identity, and self-discovery into fluid, unfiltered verse. When not writing, Kur finds solace in baking and cooking, channeling creativity through both words and warmth.

SUBURBAN DREAMS

CYC

i spend my nights chasing stars in parking lots and
you spend your days finding a coffee shop that can wake us
up from a shared dream
if we wait long enough at this bus stop the streetlights will
morse-code blink a story
we retell as our fare to take us to cities too far to know or name
only to loop back home where we belong again

CYC
@clarinechan

cyc is an aspiring author and poet who primarily publishes short poetry and prose collections and chapbooks that speak to her experiences navigating adulthood, nostalgia, friendship, family, culture, and loss. She has always had an interest in writing, though she has dabbled in other creative forms of expression such as digital media, videography, photography, painting, and illustration. However, writing always calls her home and is her main method of creating. When she is not trying to find the right words for a constant stream of creative projects, she is working as a tech consultant, booking spontaneous trips, cuddling with her rescue dog, and bingeing shows on her couch she has affectionately named “bonnie.”

My Sari and My Blazer

Mehr Thakkar

When I was younger, I shunned the sari's grace,
Fearing tradition in a modern place.
Now, with blazer atop its fold,
I stand empowered, confident, bold.
Inspired by women, proud and true,
I wear this blend of old and new.

Mehr Thakkar
@_mehr_t

Mehr Thakkar is a student at Toronto Metropolitan University, where they are immersing themselves in the study of the creative industries. Originally from Dubai with Indian roots, they have always been passionate about writing and acting. Through their work, they aim to spread awareness, one poem at a time, striving to raise consciousness and inspire change.

reflections of a brown eighth grader on her first day of school in Brampton

Sri Prasad

they say sight is the first sense to slip away when you die, and sound the last.
and what a shock to realize how dead I truly had been, except now,
the veil lifted, I saw beyond the bitter pale;
the ringing faded, I heard tongues caress old-new, bone-rooted syllables,
and I breathed, for once, as though I had come up for air.

Sri Prasad
@sri.prasad23

Sri Prasad (she/her) is a healthcare worker by day and writer by night who lives in Brampton, Ontario. She currently works as an editor for *Augur Magazine* and Marketing Manager for Escape Artists Foundation. Her short stories have been published in *PodCastle* and *Cast of Wonders*. In her free time, you can find Sri attempting to learn various musical instruments, daydreaming, and trying to motivate herself to finish any of the numerous projects she has going.

हमारे प्रेम की भाषा (The language of our love)

Divyam Prasad

w wwwचोरी के इन शब्दों से क्या तुम्हारा श्रृंगार करूँ
तुम स्वयं इतनी सुंदर हो कैसे कोई अलंकार गढ़ूँ
वश मे होता जो मेरे तो मैं प्रिये कुछ ऐसा करता
सदरिों पीछे जाकर एक अलग सी भाषा रचता
अपनी एक नजिभाषा होती, होती अपनी ही बोली
उस भाषा के शब्द सारे केवल अपने होते हमजोली

Should I adorn you with these stolen words
You are so beautiful yourself, how can I create any ornaments
If it were in my control, my love, I would have done something like this
Going back centuries, I would have created a different language
We would have had our own language, our own dialect
All the words of that language would have been only ours, my love

Divyam Prasad

Divyam Prasad works in the IT department of MNC Bank. Poems are their way of experiencing and expressing this world. It is one of the ways this world will remember them.



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