

Art United Poetry and Art Workshop

April 12-13, 2024



Photo credit: NC State University Libraries

Lead Entity: Creative Writing MFA Program; **Supporting Entities:** NC State University Libraries, Sustainable Futures Initiative, Global One Health Academy, Shelton Leadership Center

Number of Participants: 46 students (COE, CHASS, NDS)

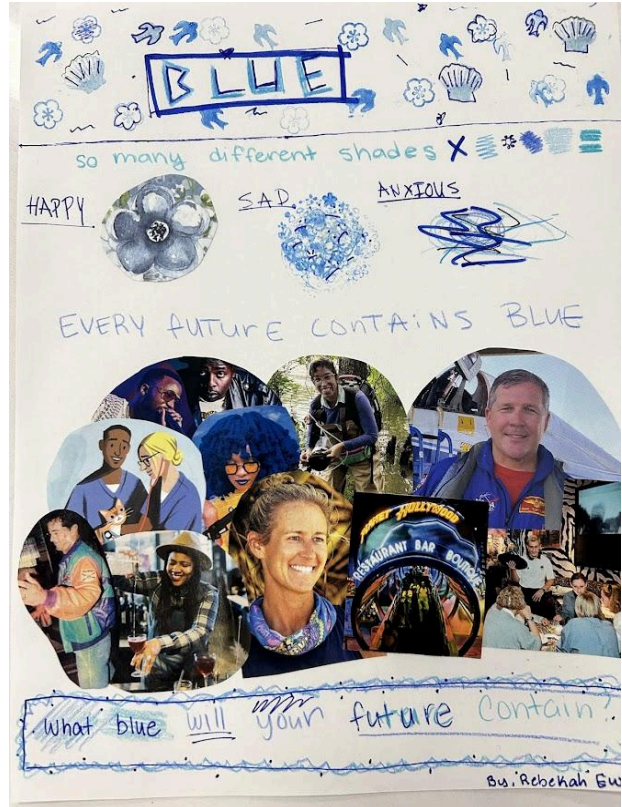
Total Direct Cost: \$6,000

Description: Art United is an interdisciplinary, poetry-and-art workshop started by the MFA program in 2017. Originally funded by a University mini-grant, the program has offered students, faculty and staff a welcoming, collaborative space to think and write about challenges facing the campus community. Since its inception, it has paired artists and writers to provide immersive, experiential learning and with art and literature.

Outcomes: The focus of 2024's Art United was on [climate and eco-anxiety](#). Over the course of two days, 46 students from multiple departments and colleges worked with artists Aaron Angello, Sommer Browning and Melissa Crowe on individual and collaborative poems, comics and zines. The event served as a community-building and reflection creativity space for students to talk to others outside of their classroom, explore art, and learn a new technique. As one student put it, "I really enjoyed getting to learn from and alongside such generous artists and to have the space to mediate climate anxiety through poetry and art." Said another, "I was not even aware of some of these emotions that have come from our changing climate." Several

of the event's resulting creations were included in a [digital exhibit](#) created for the Art Wall in the Hunt Library, which began its run on July 1, 2024.

Lessons Learned: Though the 2024 event was the first time a two-day event was considered, participants expressed preference for a one-day event, split between lecture and creation time; a two-day timespan is difficult to retain participants, with some even treating the event as a drop-in. Participants likewise required more direction and structure in creation activities, particularly for those not familiar with the process. In the future, it might be beneficial to incorporate elements of the activity into coursework or develop a student how-to guide ahead of time. From an administrative perspective, the diversity of participants required close coordination among supporting entities and funding channels, a process that could be improved in the future. Lastly, there are opportunities to better capture the final products, explicitly requesting permission to share and reuse at the outset, creating dedicated temporary or permanent exhibits, and/or establishing an anthology of past works.



Blue Art credit: Rebekah Ewing, NC State student

Next Steps: The Art United Planning Committee is working on organizing the 6th Art United workshop scheduled for April 2025. The potential topic is on "Climate Justice" with the inclusion of BIPOC artists. The Planning Committee has expressed an interest in broadening participation to include interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs on campus, as well as other NC State community members (i.e. Honors, EcoVillage, EnVFY, Citizen Science group, Agroecology students, Sustainability Stewards, Affinity and Wellness Groups, and various university Fellows). To the extent that internal or external sources of funding can be identified, future years should also consider the potential to provide mini-grants to further pursue creations or to commission specific works of art.



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