



Hello, I'm Arji Manuelpillai

Poet, Faciliatator & Performer

<https://www.arji.org>

MY JOB DESCRIPTION

I am a poet, performer and creative facilitator based in London. For over 15 years I have worked with community arts projects nationally and internationally. Recently, I was the Jerwood Arvon Mentee mentored by Hannah Lowe.

Poetry

My poetry has been published in magazines including Cannon's Mouth, Strix, The Rialto and Bath Magg. He has also been shortlisted for the BAME Burning Eye pamphlet prize 2018, The Robert Graves Prize 2018, The Oxford Prize 2019, The Live Canon Prize 2020, The National Poetry Prize 2021 and Winchester Prize 2021. I also come runner-up in the Robert Graves Prize 2020. I was provided a Develop Your Creative Practice grant from Arts Council in January 2022 and I have been using the time to interview and discuss extremism in its many forms.

I am a member of Malika's Poetry Kitchen and London Stanza. My debut pamphlet 'Mutton Rolls' was published with Out-Spoken Press in 2020 and my new book 'Improvised Explosive Device' is set to be released in October 2022.

This has given me the privilege of working with some of the world's most interesting people. In everywhere from prisons and Immigration Removal centres to schools and youth clubs I have continued to push creativity and self-expression.

Creative Facilitator

I've been a creative facilitator for over 15 years. After finishing my degree in Drama and English I began facilitating workshops with Apples and Snakes learning quickly the merits of poetry in the classroom.

At the same time I was running drama workshops with The Young Vic, Mousetrap Theatre Projects, Finchley and Lewisham Youth Theatre. This theatrical angle runs into my approach which encourages learning to be a physical and energetic act. This led to me gaining training and experience teaching in more challenging settings like prisons, Immigration Removal Centres, Pupil Referral Units, Secure Children's homes and Refugee camps.

My strengths lie in my ability to connect with people from all walks of life, to empathise and build lasting bonds. I pride myself on my ability to inspire and encourage self-expression using an array of games and exercises built up over years working with Drama, Storytelling, Music and Creative writing.

I believe every art form has its benefits and I truly believe and advocate for the power of the arts to strengthen relationships in communities across the world.

Performance

I have been performing for as long as I can remember. From beginning my career as The Leano (a folk/rap band) to becoming lead vocalist for Oojami (an international touring sensation) I have always enjoyed performing to a crowd.

My poetry shows try to immerse an audience in language. They encourage crowd participation and combine rap, story and poetry into one big celebration of language.

In the past I've performed with artists such as Ed Sheeran, Raymond Antrobus, Nizlopi, Tim Westwood and many many more. I've performed at venues nationally and internationally including Oulu International Theatre in Finland, Estonia's International Theatre, The Troubadour, Glastonbury, Secret Garden Party and many many more.

Inspiration of the Week

Each week I post something to inspire your writing. Expect films, songs, playlists, podcasts, articles and much more.

There's no better way to get your creative juices going!
<https://www.arji.org/creative-inspiration>