

Miriam Calleja

Current work: Freelance Writer / Workshop Host

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Publications & Writing Experiences

Miriam Calleja Shaw is the bilingual author of poetry collections:

Pomegranate Heart (EDE Books, 2015)

Inside Skin (in collaboration with lith photographer Zvezdan Reljic, EDE Books 2016)

Remember (a long poem, Stamparija Reljic, 2020)

Stranger Intimacy (Stamparija Reljic, August 2020)

She has been published in several [journals and poetry anthologies worldwide](#) under the name Miriam Calleja. Her work has been translated into Arabic, Slovene, Greek, Romanian, French, Norwegian, Italian, and Frisian.

Her work has been published in translation in the collections:

Wara Settembru (Slovene Writers Association, 2018)

Anthology of Young Maltese Poets (Vakxikon, 2019)

Incontri Incrociate (Mosaique Press, 2022)

Curente La Rascruce (Mosaique Press, 2022)

She regularly facilitates creative writing workshops, private and group mentoring, poetry groups, literary salons, and poetry performances. She has read at events in Malta, Berlin, UK, Italy, San Francisco, Alabama, and New York.

She has appeared as a special guest during the Malta Mediterranean Literature Festival (2020, 2021), Versopolis Festival of Hope (2020) and Schamrock Festival for Women Poets (Munich, 2020). She has

also read during Poetry at the Lake (Orta, Milan, 2018 & 2021).

Miriam believes that poetry and prose are tools for storytelling that encourage unity. She has great faith in collaboration as a key to communication. She is the Vice-President of PEN Malta, and the editor of the Alabama State Poetry Society.

Miriam is also a nonfiction writer, contributing to poetry and pedagogy book reviews. Access her portfolio [here](#).

Collaborative work

Following an artist residency awarded by The Municipality of Munich, Schamrock Festival, and with the help of the Malta Arts Council, a publication called *Luftmeer* (self-published, 2021) with Miriam's poetry and photography by two artists was produced.

Mentoring/Public Engagement

Upcoming: Reading at AWP conference with Tupelo Press, Seattle, March 2023

Mentoring of YA group with Tupelo Press (upcoming, 2023)

Mentoring of YA group at The O'Neal Library in Mountain Brook, Birmingham, Alabama (ongoing, 2023)

Mentoring of YA students through the program Chiasmus by Aġenzija Żagħzagħ (Malta) Jan-Oct 2022

Creative writing workshops have been held for intimate groups fortnightly or monthly since October 2016 (Malta, Berlin, Alabama, ongoing).

Borrow an Idea/ Issellef Idea - A series of 20 workshops conducted online during the pandemic, 10 with adults and 10 with teens. The workshops were based on Ekphrastic writing, with themes developed through the host's visits to different libraries around Malta. February-April 2021

You Are What You Buy - research & group / solo performances - March 2016 - March 2017
Part 2 Remote Re-visit (2020) commission to write poetry based on interviews and workshops conducted with participants.
Part 3 (ongoing, 2023) commission to conduct a workshop with children who have grown their product to sell.

Creative Writing Workshops with the National Book Council (August 2019) for children ages 12-15

Creative Writing Workshops with Heritage Malta (July 2019) for children ages 8-12

Nimxu Mixja - February 2019 - conducting a creative writing workshop for 4 Year 5 (ages 11/2) classes, based on walks in Birkirkara held by Kristina Borg and Rafaella Zammit as part of their project.

Dal-Baħar Madwarha - performer of Kristina Bonnici's *No Man's Land* - June 2018 Creative

Writing Workshop held in Berlin in collaboration with Spoken Word Berlin - April 2018

Creative writing workshop and poetry reading at the 2017 Book Festival on Campus, University of Malta.

Recording of books at the Special Needs section (Talking Books) at the Public Library, Floriana.

Reading at the April 2016 National Book Council book festival Festival tal-Ktieb on campus, University of Malta.

Reading/Hosting with British poet Ian D. Hall at The Pub Valletta February 21st 2016

Reading/Performing of published poetry in English and Maltese at The Bowery Poetry Club in New York on the 17th August 2015

Poetry Club – an activity held at a secondary school for girls between 10-14 years, aimed at introducing poetry as a means of artistic and personal expression. Sessions started in October 2015 and lasted until January 2016.

Solo Readings of published and new original poetry held between June 2015 to date Reading of published and new original poetry at various open mic sessions in Malta, London and New York. Notte Bianca street theatre in 2014

Burlesque shows by Creative Island in 2013, 2014, and 2018

Stage manager for MADC one act play in 2011

MADC one act plays in 2010 directed by Justin Fenech

Four years with the theatre group Nonsuch Players - (leading roles) 2 plays a year between 2005- 2009

Salon - an artistic form of socialising, where a group of like-minded people meet to showcase their art, interest or idea on a given topic. Emerging or new artists are encouraged to share their work and obtain feedback in a safe and friendly environment. Events held with different topics held regularly between 2012-2018. Roles: concept, hosting, PR, logistics.

Awards

First place in the freestyle poetry competition by the Alabama Writers Cooperative in 2022

In 2022 her villanelle 'I was with him at the end' won 1st prize in a competition by the Alabama State Poetry Society. In 2018 her poem was long-listed for the [Troubadour International Prize](#). In 2018 she also received an honourable mention for the national poetry competition [Mons. Amante Buontempo](#). In 2015 she was shortlisted for a literary excellence award for her poem 'Burying the Dark', which has been published in an anthology by Magic Oxygen in the UK.

2-month residency at Villa Waldberta awarded by the Municipality of Munich, with the support of Schamrock Festival and Malta Arts Council. Sept-Oct 2020

Travel grant by the Malta Arts Council to attend 1 week poetry workshops at Garsdale, UK. Tutor Roger Robinson (TS Eliot Prize Winner) October 2018.

In 2017 she was recognised by the Network of Young Women Leaders as a leading female artist in Malta.

Exhibitions

September 2015 'Valletta Streetscapes' held at Palazzo Pereira– a collaboration with photographer Jacob Sammut

July 2015 'Birgu – Will You Remember?' was a collaboration with photographer Jacob Sammut at Auberge de France, Vittoriosa.

February 2012 – 8 poems written by Miriam Calleja in the Maltese language were performed by herself and other actors around a private home during a 'Le Salon' event titled 'Invisible Threads'. Roles: Artistic direction, writing, co-hosting

August 2011 – The Palace Hotel 'Notebooks' was a collaboration between photographer Kurt Paris and poet Miriam Calleja. Roles: Concept, artistic direction, PR, writing

Education

Writing retreat at Garsdale UK (November 2018) under the tutorage of Roger Robinson (T.S. Eliot poetry prize winner)

Certificate in Maltese Proofreading - Qari tal-provi bil-Malti (2017/2018)

M. Pharm (Hons.) - University of Malta, Faculty of Medicine (2000-2005)