

Museum Art Educator of the Year: Marissa Reyes



Marissa Reyes serves as Associate Director of Education for the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. She leads the design, evaluation, and growth of the museum's programs and resources for students, teachers, families, and teens. Prior to this appointment, she was the Associate Director of Programs at Urban Gateways: Center for Arts Education, where she developed an integrated program of creative residencies, curriculum development, and artist and teacher professional development.

Marissa holds over 20 years of experience and expertise in the arts with education, program development, community building, and non-profit management as her areas of focus. She has presented numerous times at conferences and other academic settings, including most recently at IAEA, NAEA, and Goucher College. She has served as a panelist and grant reviewer for the Illinois Arts Council, the Denver Council on the Arts, the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, and the Illinois State Board of Education. Her committee work includes service on the Chicago Arts Educator Forum Leadership Committee, the Terra Foundation Common Core Learning Community, and the Museums in the Park Education Committee among others.

Marissa is a committed arts advocate, educator, and cultural worker. Her colleagues have noted her many contributions to the field. Of her work with educators, Professor Olivia Gude from the University of Illinois at Chicago noted that "Marissa has created a museum education culture that doesn't just work for teachers; it works with teachers, engaging them in action research, respecting the depth of their knowledge of and commitment to art and education as well as to their students and communities." Her work with artists has been just as impactful. Artist Annie Heckman explained "Marissa has the unique capacity to show an enduring respect and warmth for us while simultaneously challenging us, and really pushing us to constantly reconsider our practices. When I think back about the growth I have experienced throughout our work, I am amazed at how painless it has been, given that growth is not always a comfortable process." Marissa was born in the Philippines and credits a childhood filled with music, art, and books for providing her life's direction.