

ABOUT

REENAH GOLDEN (SHE/THEY)

FOUNDER, AVENUE BLACKBOX THEATRE

Reenah Golden is an accomplished spoken word artist, actor, activist, and educator based in Rochester, New York. With a career spanning nearly two decades, she has dedicated her life to using the stage as a powerful tool for education, social change, and fostering new perspectives. As the Founder, CEO and Artistic Director of The Avenue Blackbox Theatre, Reenah is leading a transformative effort to revitalize the Joseph Avenue neighborhood from an art-desert to a vibrant arts nucleus through collaborative, multidisciplinary, and socially-conscious programming.

Reenah's impact on the community has been recognized through numerous accolades, including the prestigious 2019 Essie Calhoun Diversity in the Arts Award from Geva Theatre Center. This award acknowledges their unwavering commitment to promoting and encouraging diversity in the arts, a cause she holds dear. Reenah's inclusive approach and dedication to making a difference, particularly in the lives of children, have enriched the Rochester region and inspired others to follow suit.

As a professional actor, Reenah has captivated audiences with her performances in various productions, including the highly acclaimed one-person show "No Child..." by Nilaja Sun. They have toured extensively, gracing stages at Geva Theatre Center, Syracuse Stage, Kelly-Strayhorn Theater in Pittsburgh, Indiana University, NW Theatre on Grand, and several universities. In addition to her acting career, Reenah has presented collaborative works such as "To Mothers of Sons" for TedX - Flour City in 2014, showcasing her ability to weave powerful narratives through art.

Reenah's passion for education extends beyond the stage. She regularly teaches, presents, performs, and guest-lectures at schools, organizations, colleges, universities, and cultural institutions both locally and internationally. Reenah co-founded Kuumba Consultants, an arts-in-education agency dedicated to connecting artists of color with youth agencies and schools in need of quality arts and cultural programming. Reenah's visionary work also includes the establishment of "Slam High," a nationally acclaimed performance poetry program for Rochester area teens, which was featured in the HBO docu-series "Brave New Voices" in 2009.

Reenah's impact extends beyond the artistic realm. For many years, she actively contributed to local and national education and youth development boards, committees, and planning, advocating for cultural inclusion and addressing critical issues.



In 2016, Reenah designed and founded the Achieve Blackbox Theatre at PUC Achieve Charter School, a platform promoting literacy, cultural responsiveness, and community engagement. Her youth performance troupe, the noDrama club, is now based at The Avenue Blackbox Theatre and also tours their plays, remixes, improv sketches, and spoken word performances regionally.

A prolific writer, Reenah has authored two chapter books, "Revelations from the Single Mama Tribe" and "All Me," as well as a collection of poems co-written with her own child, titled "Mother to Son." Her work has been internationally published in academic texts, including "The Rhizome of Blackness: A Critical Ethnography of Hip-Hop Culture, Language, Identity, and the Politics of Becoming." Locally, her writing has been featured in publications such as Post, Rochester Magazine, and several anthologies produced by Writers & Books, including "A Woman's Voice." In 2022, Reenah was commissioned by the Eastman School of Music for a collaborative work with renowned composer, John Clayton. Their collaborative commission, Keys are Black, Blacks are Key, premiered as the closing event of the EMS Centennial at Eastman Theatre.

Reenah's work as a Teaching Artist and cultural worker in Rochester public schools has been documented in two international documentaries, "Why Critical Pedagogy" and "Slam School," which highlight her profound impact on students and the transformative power of the arts.

Reenah's voice is amplified through her active involvement in the black women's writing collective known as We All Write. This powerful group represents the strong, resilient, and often marginalized voices of black women, contributing to a more inclusive literary landscape.