



Bringing Worlds Together



A RETHINKING RESIDENCIES READER

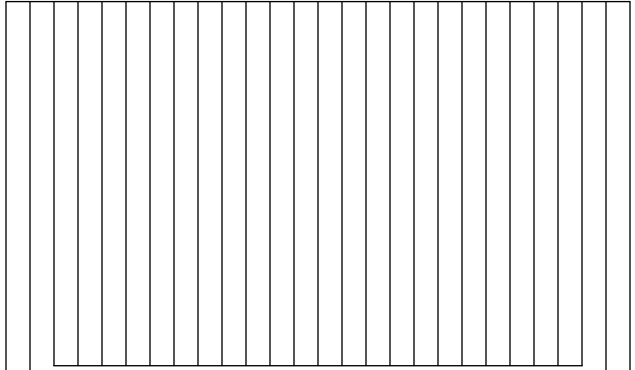




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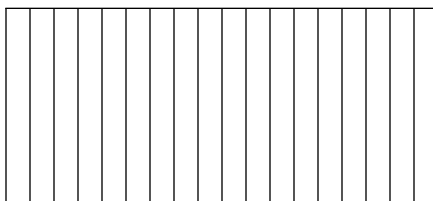
A RETHINKING RESIDENCIES READER



Rethinking Residencies, *Commissioning Editor*



Kari Conte and Susan Hapgood, *Editors*



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Introduction

KARI CONTE and SUSAN HAPGOOD

The impetus to share resources and document best practices exemplifies the spirit of generosity that is ideally part of communal institutions such as arts residency programs.

What makes them work?

*What are the challenges and benefits of these programs?
What is their impact on the world?*

After seven years working together as a collective of New York-based residency programs, members of the Rethinking Residencies group saw a need to openly offer their combined knowledge about the critical role that residency programs play as sites of production in the field of visual arts. We invited a range of innovative practitioners in the field to discuss their work, to capture clear impressions and discourses, so that others can adopt and borrow, or perhaps even start their own residencies with enough gumption. The more arts residencies there are in this world, the better, as far as we are concerned.

Our Rethinking Residencies Symposium took place in 2021, engaging speakers from divergent backgrounds and reaching thousands of audience members from equally far-flung places. Over three days, more than 20 international speakers shared their insights on residencies with us. While the symposium was originally intended to take place in physical space, the shift to online allowed us to invite speakers beyond the United States, from Colombia, Ecuador, Finland, Israel, Morocco, the Netherlands, Palestine, and Taiwan. It is important to note here that all Rethinking Residencies member institutions are based in New York, and thus we have geographic blind spots, as does this book, which does not address all existing residencies or all their structures and aims.

Growing and branching out from the symposium, this book began with transcriptions of some of the discussions, condensed and edited for readability, and adding from there.

The eleven essays and three conversations in *Bringing Worlds Together* reflect on art residencies at present—at a time when residencies play a critical role in art’s ecosystem despite continuing uncertainties as the COVID pandemic subsides. While the essays follow the 2021 Rethinking Residencies Symposium in spirit, they are not all direct outcomes of this gathering. They address a cross section of ideas about residency programs, bound together by a deep concern for the care and ethics that go into shaping residency programs and hosting artists and curators.

The publication begins with two histories: of the Rethinking Residencies group in New York and, more broadly, residencies in 19th- and 20th-century Europe and the United States. Mutual aid practices sustain Rethinking Residencies, a working group founded in 2014. Kari Conte and Nicholas Weist write about this group; the programs, initiatives, and events it has convened; and the nonhierarchical, self-organized structure of this, the first New York residency network. Irmeli Kokko provides a foundational history of residencies as they relate to globalization and in light of her long-term engagement in the field. She maps how residency formats have evolved into what we know today, follows how they developed in tandem with art movements, and details how they have become increasingly significant for artists. And in looking forward, her text connects early rural artist colonies to the current demand for residencies located in nature.

This publication’s second section features short texts and longer essays by members of Rethinking Residencies. Eileen Jeng Lynch recounts how new communities are formed through residencies both in real life and virtually. Nat Roe’s short historical account of mixed-use buildings in New York City illuminates how architecture shapes residencies. He argues that the breaking down of architectural boundaries dissolves the borders between art and life and engenders art-making. Residencies are sometimes conceived so that the public has direct day-to-day contact with artists-in-residence, as described by Christina Daniels. Writing about guest and host complexities, Dylan Gauthier contemplates the malleability and reversal of such fixed categories in residency programs. Galen Joseph-Hunter reflects on the delicate balance for artists between production and public programming in residencies.

In the extended essays, Nova Benway and Susan Hapgood address the often-overlooked care issues in residency programs through the lenses of ethical frameworks and curatorial residencies. Benway calls for residencies to reconsider their caretaking practices, drawing on novel connections between medical ethics and residencies. Surveying current curatorial residencies globally, Hapgood articulates how critical they can be for curatorial practice.

Three conversations form the third part of this publication. Two are condensed transcripts from the 2021 symposium and include a diverse range of viewpoints and positions from international speakers on residency programming and artist support. They delve into some of the most pressing issues for residencies today: ecological responsibility, developing meaningful relationships between local communities and residents, accessibility, and the value of process. The conversations underline that residencies are not neutral spaces and that they should be mindful of gatekeeping while working toward full transparency. A conversation between artists Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Dylan Gauthier links Ukeles’ unprecedented 40-year residency with the City of New York Department of Sanitation to her work and to other residency structures.

Finally, in “Residencies Epistemologies” Viviana Checchia draws on her personal experience as both a resident and a residency curator to outline what art research centers and residencies have in common, and the profound potential for both to support artistic research. The publication ends with artist Tania Candiani’s poetic text that captures the newness, rhythms, and realities of residencies, offering artists wisdom on how to make a residency one’s own.

The impetus to share resources and document best practices exemplifies the spirit of generosity that is ideally part of communal institutions such as arts residency programs. What makes them work? What are the challenges and benefits of these programs? What is their impact on the world? Given our close proximity to artists’ fertile thinking as well to their vulnerability, we are dedicated to finding ways to champion not only their art, but the importance of providing safe and generative spaces where they can thrive.

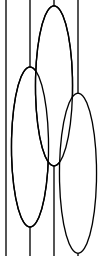
Rethinking Residencies

KARI CONTE and NICHOLAS WEIST

In March 2014, the first meeting of the Rethinking Residencies working group was convened by Kari Conte, then Director of Programs and Exhibitions at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP), and Laurel Ptak, then Executive Director of the Triangle Arts Association. The group was initiated to bring together leaders of residencies in New York, share knowledge and resources, and cultivate critical thinking and discourse about the field. Although the representatives of the ten organizations who attended knew of each other's programs, when we began the discussion by each describing our activities, it became clear that in fact we didn't know each other's work in depth—and that we had a tremendous amount to learn from one another. A throughline in all our early conversations was the invisibility of residencies, resulting from so much of our work emphasizing process, support, and research rather than production or presentation. Our first meeting was held at ISCP, and subsequent meetings were hosted by different member organizations on a rotating basis.

Residencies have been part and parcel of contemporary art's ecosystem since their proliferation in the 1990s, a history that

How can we work together to support one another's programs and residents? How can we address the lack of critical writing about residency programs? How can we make residencies more equitable? Can residencies (and art institutions) adapt in real time as artistic practice and artists' needs change? How can community engagement and artist residency programs successfully intersect? What are the outcomes of residency programs—both tangible and intangible? What is the role of public programming in residencies?



Irmeli Kokko articulates in the next essay. However, despite three decades of rapid developments in the field, a lexicon of residencies does not yet exist. Although the body of shared knowledge on art residencies has expanded, scholarly, practical, and historical texts are still few and far between—a lacuna in our field that this book and our work aim to fill.

Rethinking Residencies' first meeting included staff members with various responsibilities representing programs that spanned diverse institutional models and approaches—residencies as young as two years old and those that had been founded more than three decades prior sat together at the table. All the invited programs had offices in New York City, with residencies in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and farther afield in Upstate New York and Long Island.¹ Each also faced similar questions: about what artists need from residencies, how to grow responsibly and sustainably, how to make the best use of institutional capacities, and how to engage audiences, to name a few.

Since then, we have continued to ask: How can we work together to support one another's programs and residents? How can we address the lack of critical writing about residency programs? How can we make residencies more equitable? Can residencies (and art institutions) adapt in real time as artistic practice and artists' needs change? How can community engagement and artist residency programs successfully intersect? What are the outcomes of residency programs—both tangible and intangible? What is the role of public programming in residencies?

We met five more times that first year as a whole group and in smaller groups that convened to think together about “what we are.” It was clear from the beginning that we aimed to be an intentionally small, geographically focused group, unlike larger (and equally vital) national and international networks such as the Artist Communities Alliance or Res Artis. This enabled Rethinking

1 New York has nearly a hundred residencies—from small, site-focused programs like Green-Wood Cemetery's in Brooklyn, to long-established programs like Yaddo. Some are stand-alone organizations, while others, such as the residencies offered by Manhattan's New Museum or the Studio Museum in Harlem, are part of programming within a larger institution.

Residencies to respond to local conditions and function smoothly. Through several conversations, we decided that the term “working group” most closely aligned with the values and undertakings of Rethinking Residencies—a group of specialists coming together for discussion and activities to achieve specific goals. Over the years, the group has met every few months, remaining informal, flexible, and mobile, with a nonhierarchical organizational structure. Rethinking Residencies functions somewhat like a co-op, a para-institution, or, as one member remarked, an “organism.”

And here we are, nearly a decade later. While most working groups generally have shorter lifespans, the critical outcomes and collegiality inherent in Rethinking Residencies keep all member institutions engaged. The consistency and longevity of the group is also a testament to the need for more knowledge and resources for residency staff, and the importance of our goals. Nine of the ten organizations at the table for our first meeting have remained active participants.

Rethinking Residencies' culture is rooted in the desire to collaborate instead of compete, and our methods are modeled on mutual aid practices. We aim for transparency at every level, prioritize process over product, and encourage all participating individuals to assume a leadership stance. We recognize that a decentralized exchange of knowledge tends to uplift cultural actors working in parallel, while top-down circulation of best practices tends to narrow the field of possibility for our work by relying more and more on professionalization.

Participation in Rethinking Residencies is free and always has been. Production budgets for our public programs are fulfilled through grant writing and passing a hat. Constituent organizations may send whichever staff member(s) they choose to meetings, generally one or two people. These individuals are not compensated for their work on behalf of the group. Nominations are held biannually for new member organizations—we limit the group's size using the “two pizza” theory of management (in other words, the size is right when two pizzas will satisfy one meeting, roughly speaking). To maintain membership, organizations must send a representative to at least 75 percent of our whole-group meetings, typically held bimonthly, but other participation is voluntary. We favor consensus decision-making, relying on Black

Mountain College’s discursive system of finding a “sense of the meeting” to arrive at actionable plans on which we vote. We have found that electing a rotating steering committee from a pool of volunteers, usually two people serving as co-chairs, helps the group to stay focused and accomplish goals. We maintain a communal, cloud-based file database and a strict confidentiality policy regarding any conversations or information shared in a group setting. Rethinking Residencies is not legally incorporated—in fact, the working group doesn’t technically exist, except, as Andrea Fraser described in a talk we presented in 2018, as “[an idea] produced and reproduced intersubjectively and systemically.” We embrace her description of institutions being constituted within the minds of their participants and audiences and from their engagements with their fields.

Is working with a mutual aid mentality easier than doing it other ways? Of course not! In fact, it’s generally harder for a group of accomplished professionals to employ intentionally less streamlined methods. But we could not achieve our goals without these principles as the foundation for our work.

If we didn’t have a bedrock of deep trust cultivated through voluntary commitments to horizontal relationships, we couldn’t share sensitive information or feel safe enough to admit that we don’t know the answers to professional questions. One of the most rewarding opportunities of participating in the group is seeing other organizations’ crucial internal documents, like jury instructions, community care contracts, or exit interview questions. Sharing is opt-in but once shared, documents are available to all. We also maintain a very active listserv so that group members can seek informed, impartial advice on any residency-related subject.

Starting in 2015, Rethinking Residencies began offering private events for our residents as well as public programs. We visited art institutions, held workshops, and even attended baseball games with our local and international residents. We also organized free discussions on organizational practice, publics, counter-publics, partnerships in residencies, and hospitality—events conceived as forums to widen our discussions and publicly address the questions we were asking ourselves internally as a group. The topics on which we have engaged our brilliant interlocutors in public programs, and the ways we have hosted our artist networks

at events, have emerged from a mutual aid perspective that prioritizes self-cultivation over professional development.

When COVID-19 struck New York in early 2020, our six years of work together was the foundation on which we built new forms of collective action to survive. In the first phase of the pandemic, art nonprofits everywhere were in crisis—especially those focused on bringing people together, as most residencies do. Postponed programs, deferred galas, and unfulfilled grant contracts left many organizations wondering if they could stay afloat until something like normalcy returned.

Rethinking Residencies participants offered each other critical forms of support during this time, including information-sharing about complicated government relief systems and opportunities to compare and revise language about cancellations, as well as shared feelings of togetherness despite a sudden shift from offices to “work from home.” Bimonthly meetings turned into weekly video conferencing, with many subgroups forming as staff with similar responsibilities or from organizations with similar approaches discussed topics of discrete interest among themselves.

In early May 2020, Rethinking Residencies collectivized to fundraise as a group. We discussed many strategies to apportion any funding that we received, eventually landing on a formula to divide grants among two scale-groups (as defined by total spending on program staff and occupancy expenses in response to grantmaker funding priorities) in proportion to their relative scale, and then further divide funds evenly among the organizations comprising each scale-group. With generous support from the Willem de Kooning Foundation, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and Teiger Foundation, Rethinking Residencies collectively raised \$900,000 during this time. The funds were a crucial lifeline for our organizations and a remarkable proof of concept for the power of our working methods. By helping one another, we also helped ourselves.

Sharing material resources with one another was an important development for Rethinking Residencies, but sharing ideas has remained at the heart of what we do. In 2021, with support and encouragement from the New York State Council on the Arts, we organized the three-day symposium on residencies that became

the foundation for this publication. The symposium addressed pressing issues in the residency field—such as community partnerships, the environmental impact of residencies, accessibility, how residencies can learn from social and political movements, how to best support artists and curators, and the decolonization of residency institutions—and was a crucial moment for us to connect with colleagues globally.

The symposium and this publication are important contributions to the discourse of residencies worldwide and the largest public offering Rethinking Residencies has produced. After these accomplishments, what is on the horizon for our working group? As Shandaken Projects' alumnus Dean Spade writes in his book *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)*, “Scaling up our mutual aid work means building more and more mutual aid groups, copying each other’s best [ideas] and adapting them to work for particular neighborhoods, subcultures, and enclaves. It means intergroup coordination, the sharing of resources and information, having each other’s backs, and coming together in coalition.”²

Whether you are reading this in our printed book or on the website we set up to freely circulate the newly public body of knowledge highlighted in our symposium, we hope you will consider applying some of the lessons we’ve learned from working together to your own unique context. We’re looking forward to hearing about it if you do.

2 Dean Spade, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)* (New York and London: Verso, 2020), 40–41.

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A Brief History of Artist Residencies

IRMELI KOKKO

Introduction

Public attitudes toward the international activities of artists are linked with how societies generally view outside influences. As we have learned, attitudes toward travel change at different times for political reasons to do with wars or economic, technological, or ideological change—and pandemics. Artists' travels contain poetics and politics and have contributed to the transformations of artworks, conditions of art production, and perceptions of art. Traveling and meeting other artists is about inspiration, influencing, and being influenced, but also about livelihoods and refugees.

My own story in the recent history of artist residencies has been affected by the end of the Cold War in the context of the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the new-found independence of Baltic and Eastern European countries. These events opened borders, allowing for free movement and new connections among artists, cultural workers, researchers, and writers.

I started working with artist residencies in the early 1990s as the initiator, founding member, and then director of the Helsinki

International Artist Programme (HIAP). My earlier studies in the education, philosophy, and theory of art had led me on a long internal journey—via the histories of performance art—to avant-garde movements and artists' routes and gatherings in European cities as a consequence of the First and Second World Wars.

To understand artists' residencies as a more contemporary cultural phenomenon, I began to read theories about cultural globalization, the Western cultural history of mobility, and cosmopolitan movements. Meanwhile, the global artist-in-residence movement greatly expanded. Res Artis, the international network for residency organizations, was founded in 1994. I first took part in its meetings in 1996. At that time, literature on artists' residencies did not exist. The Res Artis symposiums, meetings, and conferences were important platforms for information and knowledge exchange and gradually led me to the emergence of documents, articles, and other materials on residencies. I met people who worked on artist residencies, who reflected on their activities and missions, and who influenced how residencies were understood—people such as Jean-Baptiste Joly and Johan Pousette;¹ Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka, initiator of the book *Re-tooling Residencies*;² and Maria Tuerlings.³ Contacts with other residency organizations and activists in the field reinforced my view that, although the roots of artist residency activities in the 1990s are in the tradition of artists' travels and communities, cultural globalization and modern art practices turned them into something new.

Much later, in 2008, I completed my master's thesis on artist residencies for the University of Eastern Finland. It examined

- 1 Jean-Baptiste Joly is the founder and first director of the Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany; Johan Pousette is the founder and first director of the Baltic Art Center in Gotland, Sweden, and the former director of IASPIS in Stockholm.
- 2 Anna Ptak, ed., *Re-tooling Residences: A Closer Look at the Mobility of Arts Professionals* (Warsaw: Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, 2011). https://reshape.network/uploads/document/file/47/ReToolingResidencies_INT.pdf
- 3 Maria Tuerlings is the founder and first director of TransArtists in the Netherlands.

residency activities from the point of view of art history, cultural policy, and cultural production. In 2018, Taru Elfving, Pascal Gielen, and I started planning a compilation of articles about residencies, published in 2019 as *Contemporary Artist Residencies: Reclaiming Time and Space*, that is detailed farther below.

Changing Art Practices and the Wave of New Artist Residencies

In the early 1990s, artists' residencies seemed to correspond in both method and formula to many institutional utopias: creating art onsite, experimentation, international mobility, and interaction—in the spirit of the United States' famous Black Mountain College, founded in the 1930s. Residencies made it possible for artists to travel to and work in new continents beyond the Western map of art, and for different cultures to meet at a personal level. This renaissance seemed to be one of the best achievements of cultural globalization. Moreover, it also emerged in an unplanned fashion, a grassroots movement without guidance from governments.

In the 1970s and '80s, artist residencies were seen as communities of studios and apartments, where artists could retreat to make art for a specific period. The traditional operating model was based on the studio as a private workspace that provided the framework, time, and space for artistic creation without connection to an audience. Maaretta Jaukkuri, the first head of the Nordic Arts Centre in Helsinki (founded in 1981), has described how much effort went into keeping exhibition operations and guest studio operations separate from each other.

The first international catalogue of residencies, *Guide of Host Facilities for Artists on Short-Term Stay in the World*, was published in France in 1995, following a two-year survey to identify venues for creative work that had “a new spirit.” The hefty publication listed 200 residency organizations from 29 countries. To be included, organizations had to “provide workspace for research and experimentation and to encourage creative activities to create new contacts, either with other artists or with a specific environment. Openness and access to artists of all nationalities was also a fundamental criterion for the Guide.”

Residencies representing the “new spirit” fostered encounters, exchanges, and even confrontation. They were seen as arenas in which the unpredicted could materialize, and as studios that embodied art in transition.

From an Object of Art to the Presence of the Artist

Connections between residency activities and other actors of modern art have become closer since the 1990s. Before that, residency activities existed mainly outside the institutional art system, as artist communities, artist houses, and studio complexes or via private patrons of the arts.

Miwon Kwon has said that the huge increase in artist residencies in the 1990s relates to the increase in art practices based on travel.⁴ According to Claire Doherty, this is when artistic practices tied to location and residency-hosting organizations found each other.⁵ Residencies adopted new discourses and remolded their programs to correspond to how artists worked. According to Charlotte Bydler, international residency programs from the late 1980s were designed to offer a ready-made infrastructure for the needs of increased international mobility and work.⁶

These interpretations might be true, but they describe residency activities from an instrumental angle, ignoring the traditions, intentions, and values arising from the starting points of residency activities themselves.

Artists' Mobility—A Pendulum Between Rural and Urban

In many cases, conventions in the arts are transformed by artists themselves, either as a reaction to existing working conditions or actively through means aimed at modifying the structures of art

4 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 1–19.

5 Claire Doherty, “The New Situationists,” in Claire Doherty, ed., *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2004), 7–15.

6 Charlotte Bydler, *The Global Art World, Inc.: On the Globalization of Contemporary Art*, Figura Nova Series 32 (Stockholm: Uppsala University, 2004), 50–55.

production. In fact, changes in residency operations can be considered in relation to their own tradition: artist communities.

No consistent reports are available on the background and history of artist residencies. However, there is plenty of information about artist colonies of the 19th and 20th centuries and about the history of avant-garde movements and artist communities. When outlining the evolution of residency operations from the 19th century on, there seems first to be a shift away from urban society toward the rural, and then, in the 20th century, a shift back to the cities. This pendular motion involves historical changes and transitions. During the Industrial Revolution, artists flocked to the countryside to find better conditions for creating art; then the First World War forced artists to take refuge in cities, where they often formed new communities. Others sought to find better intellectual and productive conditions for creating art, which often involved artist communities.

Artist Colonies in the 19th and 20th Centuries

In the United States in the 1880s, artists, authors, and scientists discovered the nature and landscapes of New Mexico as well as its Native American culture. Artist colonies sprang up in Santa Fe and Taos, inspired by the local communities. People from many fields and countries came to investigate and document the disappearing way of life, religion, and art of the local Pueblo people. All were impressed by “the spirit of the place,” as D. H. Lawrence put it. The Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela worked in Taos and Santa Fe for three years.

The MacDowell Colony was the first artist colony in the United States to be founded in an organized manner. Inspired by the American Academy in Rome, it was established in 1907 by composer Edward MacDowell and his wife Marian on a farm in New Hampshire. After the death of her husband in 1908, Marian had 32 artist studios built near the farm. MacDowell still exists and has the same task: “The Colony’s mission today, as it was then, is to nurture the arts by offering creative individuals of the highest talent an inspiring environment in which to produce enduring works of the imagination.”

In her book *Rural Artists’ Colonies in Europe, 1870–1910*, Nina Lübbren writes about how some 3,000 artists moved from cities to establish artist communities in rural areas of Central Europe—mainly in France, central Germany, and the Netherlands, but also in Hungary and the Baltic Sea region. Rural nostalgia as a reaction to urbanization and industrialization formed the ideological framework for these artist villages or colonies in the countryside.

The idea of creating new sensory experiences of nature was central to these projects. The experience of surrendering to the countryside and being immersed in nature’s sights, sounds, smells, and details led artists to develop their own brand of plein-air painting. They came up with new tools, such as a movable studio on wheels, and new ways of painting landscapes (which preceded Impressionism). The immediate foreground became unfocused; the idea was to lead the viewer’s gaze to a sensual experience of nature, to evoke admiration and amazement.

These artist colonies (some national, some international) ranged in size from a few dozen artists to more than 500. Movement between colonies varied: some artists lived permanently in one place, others lived and worked in a colony for a specific period, and some moved like nomads from one colony to another.

The early 20th century saw a shift to the modern era of urban bohemian artists, whose rebellious attitudes were not suited to a peaceful rural village setting. Rural artist colonies didn’t disappear, but after the First World War, they lost most of their significance in terms of art production, and the remaining villages became destinations for cultural tourism.

From the Countryside to the City

In the 20th century, new artistic movements—Der Blaue Reiter, de Stijl, Cubism, futuristic movements in Italy and Russia, Dadaism in Zurich, Surrealism in Paris, the Russian avant-garde, and Constructivism—created new aesthetic and political concepts, artist communities, art production methods, and works of art. Constructivism in Russia, for example, turned art into “production art,” the artist into a “production artist,” and studios into “laboratories.” The Bauhaus school in Weimar, founded by Walter Gropius, offered a new model of academic education for artists. Surrounded by an international artist community, the school

offered workshops that straddled different art forms, as well as practical and theoretical art lessons.⁷

In the first three decades of the 20th century, international urban artist communities were intellectual homes across national and language boundaries in a Europe dominated by antisemitism, nationalism, restricted mobility, and patriarchal power.

With the advent of the Second World War, many European artists and intellectuals fled to the United States. New forms of educational and collaborative production emerged—notably at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, which ran a Summer Art Institute from 1941 to 1957. Here, the U.S. avant-garde—visual artists, composers, authors, dancers—created the optimal model for how an artist community and collaborative artistic work should operate. The college was outside the institutional system, but it redefined the conventions and content of art. The summer schools of Black Mountain upgraded the idea of the artist colony, from a rural retreat into a collective laboratory for experimental art.

Experimentation and experience were fundamental. Transcultural awareness and collaboration were the basic positions. Openness to failure and chance was seen as a pre-condition for experimentation. Moving from object-based to process-based thinking, where the artist's presence is an important part of both making and presenting art,⁸ living and working together for different periods in temporary communities—all are part of the legacy of Black Mountain College, not only in art education but also in artist residencies.

I'm not suggesting that the residencies of the 1980s and 1990s directly adopted the goals and methods of Black Mountain College. Still, it might have provided a backdrop against which they could envision their activities.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the emerging minimalism-related art conventions changed how an art object's nature is interpreted.

7 Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900–1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992, reprinted 1998), 221, 339–340.

8 Daniel Späti, “Shared Campus,” *On Curating*, no. 43 (December 2019), 20.

A new kind of connection was established between a work of art and the site of making it, a connection that could also require the presence of a spectator. Since the 1990s, art institutions have been increasingly interested in a site-bound approach as the starting point for creating artworks. This requires artists to be willing to travel and create art onsite.⁹ Starting in the late 1990s, the word “process” became the key concept, frequently appearing in artistic statements by residency organizations. The visible presence of the artist became important. Innovation and creating new things now constituted the core of the operations of urban residencies.

Mobility—Poetics and Politics

In 1995, the New York-based P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center International Studio Program (founded in 1971) described its global politics with reference to postcolonial theories and Gilles Deleuze's nomadology. At a seminar the same year, Michael Haerdter, then director of the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin and also chair and founding member of the Res Artis network, said, “Making postmodern art is the art of communicating the ideas and feelings of life—the studio of postmodern artists is the world.”¹⁰

In the tradition of avant-garde art, the international mobility of artists has represented various meanings in artistic and art-theoretical narratives, such as emancipation or escape. Russian avant-garde film director Sergei Eisenstein used the desert and Bedouin characters as a metaphor for inventing a new revolutionary socialist film narrative. The character of Nomad has been used in literary and philosophical texts as a metaphor for a mental journey through the desert. In a seemingly illogical condition, the Nomad can identify the path without tripping over the nation-state and/or bourgeois system.

Deleuze's concept originally meant the critique of capitalism based on industrial society: displacement and nomadism

9 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another*, 1–19.

10 Michael Haerdter, “Post-modern Nomadism” (lecture, annual meeting of Res Artis, Dublin, Ireland, 1996). <https://resartis.org/res-artis-conferences/past-conferences/berlin-2005/dr-michael-haerdter-residencies-and-nomadism>

Deleuze's concept originally meant the critique of capitalism based on industrial society: displacement and nomadism represented strategies of artistic critique of static power structures. In the 1990s, the character of a hasty nomad became a romantic artist's image of the late modern, supranational art world, replacing and alongside the earlier cosmopolitan artist's image based on the world of nation-states. The new image of the artist also contributed to the reshaping of the artist residency.

represented strategies of artistic critique of static power structures.¹¹ In the 1990s, the character of a hasty nomad became a romantic artist's image of the late modern, supranational art world, replacing and alongside the earlier cosmopolitan artist's image based on the world of nation-states. The new image of the artist also contributed to the reshaping of the artist residency. The 19th-century narrative of the artist met the new-millennium narrative about the place, situation, society, and culture of an artist who travels widely with a backpack carrying meanings and messages.

Contemporary Artist Residencies —Reclaiming Time and Space

By the start of this century, artist residencies were a versatile global platform by which artists from different fields traveled, worked, and spent time in different cultural and geographic environments. Today, residencies are their own art world within the ecosystem of contemporary art; they have their own institutional identity, their own history, operating methods, values, tasks, and goals. At both the countrywide and the E.U. levels, cultural policy sees mobility as a significant boost to artists' employment, to the interaction between cultures, and to the art market in general—basically, the goals of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

In 2018, when Taru Elfving, Pascal Gielen, and I were planning our book *Contemporary Artist Residencies: Reclaiming Time and Space*, we were living in a neoliberal world in which the production and reception of art and culture were part of a growing cultural-industries movement based on unrestricted international mobility. At the same time, the optimism of the 1990s about the globalization of culture appeared to have reached a saturation point. Accelerated climate change, ethical concerns about natural diversity, postcolonial points of view in cultural production, the refugee issue, and protectionist movements confronted residencies with new questions. Questions were being raised about

11 Niels Albertsen and Bülent Diken, "Mobility, Justification, and the City" (Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, October 2001). <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/resources/sociology-online-papers/papers/albertsen-diken-mobility-justification.pdf>

Community-Building

EILEEN JENG LYNCH

artistic work and images of an artist based on travel from the point of view of the conditions of creative work.

The direction had shifted from cities to nature and slower rhythms—new residency programs were being established in wildernesses, villages, and other remote locations. This was reflected in the interviews and essays in our book. A crossroads of sorts was approaching. How could time and space be secured for the creative process, for immersion, for encounters among artists across national borders and between continents, and for a sustainable aesthetic-intellectual exchange of information? How could residencies avoid being just one more cog in an accelerated culture-industry machine?

When the coronavirus pandemic stopped everything in 2020, residencies that rely on the physical presence of artists sharing and discussing work were no longer possible. The generosity of artists' residencies and their outcomes went silent. Things have returned to normal now, but uncertainty and discontinuity prevail, and future developments remain unknown. At the moment, the Artists at Risk¹² network is busy organizing residencies for refugee artists and cultural workers from Ukraine at risk from the Russia-Ukraine War. Maybe the world is dividing into two again. If so, how do we communicate over a new iron curtain? What kind of impact will this have on the mobility of artists, artworks, and cultures? Could climate change be a unifying force beyond walls and borders?

For artist residencies, we need to consider what kinds of international centers of art and creativity we want to build and what kinds of futures we can imagine for international activities.

Artist residencies can provide opportunities for community-building, a term used interchangeably with networking. However, the depth of connections differs between the two. The profound exchange enabled through community-building is more visible in our current networked society, where internet connectivity drives change. Before the arrival and extensive use of the internet, connections were made with those located nearby with shared interests—our families, neighbors, classmates, and coworkers, for example—and depended on in-person interactions and personal introductions through social circles. Since the digital era began in the 1980s, networks have grown, and now more than ever, we can reach people globally via email, video conferencing, WhatsApp, and other methods. Social media platforms have also provided the means to network without personal introductions, although mutual connections can still be beneficial.

While community-building may not be the focus of artist residencies, it can be facilitated or occur organically as part of their programs. These relationships often develop because of creative engagement and participant interaction over an extended

12 <https://artistsatrisk.org/?lang=en>

On Mixed-Use Spaces

NAT ROE

period. Artists connect with their cohort, residency program staff, and guests. During public events, artists have exchanges with visitors. Artists also have opportunities to attend a wide variety of residency types. Some include studios in places of isolation where artists can reflect inwardly on their practice; some are more communally located; others offer “live and work” spaces, which can foster deeper connections.

Community-building can be further developed and supported with technology, through a mix of in-person and virtual interactions. For example, in addition to face-to-face conversations and programs, Wave Hill’s Winter Workspace provides digital ways to connect, such as weekly virtual office hours and live-streamed sessions with verbal descriptions of the grounds for those not onsite. The residency comprises two sessions, in winter and early spring, each lasting six to eight weeks, when the gallery spaces are transformed into studios for five or six artists at a time. Each artist receives a financial stipend and access to the living collection and grounds, as well as to the horticulture and curatorial staff. As Director of Arts and Chief Curator Gabriel de Guzman reflects: “Through our residency program, artists develop lasting relationships not only with others in their cohort but also with our staff and visitors. For years to come, we support each other by attending each other’s events, sharing opportunities, or making introductions to other curators, artists, or cultural producers. Kinship grows from this type of relationship building.”

Artists ultimately build upon their communities. 2022 Winter Workspace artist Natalia Nakazawa discussed her recent experience with her fellow cohort in an Instagram post: “To say that we are living through a difficult time would be to oversimplify the complexity of being alive and present. When love and support abound, we can do anything. I am tremendously grateful for this community of people who have buoyed me through a stormy but profound moment and shown up in multitudes of ways! Gratitude to the whole Wave Hill crew.” Community-building is a significant aspect of residencies. Both in-person and virtual networks can continue supporting artists and preparing them for success as they progress in their careers.

Architecture creates a feedback loop that molds the world according to our thoughts, with the built environment reflecting and affecting our inner lives. We know a wall separates people from each other physically and mentally, but we still often don’t realize when the spaces creative people cultivate inadvertently divide us from each other. Distracted by life’s complexities, we forget the obvious things.

Distinctions between industrial, commercial, and residential zoning may be expedient for city planning. Still, these zoning distinctions—and resulting architectural norms—implicitly divide up our inner and social lives, making disparate what is naturally interconnected. Each of us has a distinct private residential self, a professional self, and a social self, our inner lives molded and commodified.

Urban theorist Jane Jacobs famously argued that small-scale, mixed-use neighborhoods allow for the spontaneous energy of city dwellers to self-organize into the kind of genuine community that attracts us to city living in the first place. Similarly, artist residencies should reconnect architectural use groups to

encourage a primordial reformation of mind. Analogously, I argue that artist-in-residencies should conjoin different architectural uses to again join together aspects of our minds that society has arbitrarily pulled apart. The alienation of modern life can find resolution through making a place that is designed to reconnect our disparate selves, enabling ideas to rise into new creative pathways, just like the people in Jacobs' small-scale city communities.

A residency space's architecture should combine private, common, and public areas. It should conflate places for making work, exhibiting work to the public, and serving the artists' personal needs, such as sleeping and eating. Art should encompass one's life and always be a work in progress. Creativity is related to a social zeitgeist rather than individually conceived in a vacuum. A mixed-use architecture for artists reinforces these dynamics and makes us creative in new ways.

Certainly, this model takes all of us out of our comfort zone and poses many challenges, especially as we grow older and yearn for quiet and creature comforts. But whether used as a temporary artist residency or as a long-term cohabitation, breaking down architectural boundaries breaks down boundaries in our minds and allows us to reset our thinking and begin new personal growth with deep flexibility.

In New York City, as in many other cities, post-industrial spaces have been converted for decades into lofts or other freely designed spaces. George Maciunas patented the Fluxhouse, whose modularity provided "considerable flexibility in customizing the space to commercial, working, or living functions." He also played a key role in establishing mixed-use Fluxhouses in downtown Manhattan in the 1960s, which became hives for artists now considered historically significant. In 1971, the A.I.R. law granted artists in New York City the right to live in abandoned industrial buildings; this gave rise to generations of artist-led squats and lofts that are now an integral part of what is quintessentially New York, and which were also a bedrock for the city's export of ideas internationally.

Underutilized post-industrial buildings are now scarce in New York City, and the familiar cycle of gentrification has (thankfully) brought self-awareness to artists' often counterproductive search for cheap rents. The regulatory climate around buildings

has also reached a boiling point in which unpermitted use of spaces is essentially impossible. The architectural freedom that was a silver lining to the city's dysfunction decades ago allowed artists to freely create their own worlds without fear of failure. New York City has become hostile to experimentation because emerging artists require startup capital and expertise—the young can't learn through trial and error to become entrepreneurs and are forced to over-professionalize their management instead of focusing on art. The provision of living space—the most relevant resource for artists—as part of a New York City artist residency is the rare exception in most programs, which are workspace-only. It is critical to the city's vibrancy to protect the spaces that rose through the tradition of mixed-use occupancy and to create new ways for young people to experiment along similar lines. We hang Fluxus artists on the walls of MoMA, but we've razed the fertile soil that would allow the next generation of artist-led spaces to similarly find their creativity together.

The Working Artist: Public-Facing Residencies

CHRISTINA DANIELS

Residencies come in many frameworks. Some focus on rest and respite, while others focus on production and output. Artist residencies provided by the Museum of Arts and Design, the Studio Museum in Harlem, and Rethinking Residencies' members Recess and Pioneer Works employ a public-facing residency model. While each residency differs in its approach, residencies with public-facing programs generally encourage visitors to see the artist at work and learn more about the residents' process and progress firsthand.

The Museum of Arts and Design's residency makes space for this by using glass-enclosed studios and having specific hours when visitors can meet artists and ask questions while they are working. The Studio Museum in Harlem's approach culminates in an exhibition of their residents' work. Recess' Session residency

allows artists two months to transform Recess into a hybrid of a productive studio space and a dynamic exhibition platform. From the day the artist moves in until they move out, the program allows for meaningful interactions between the artist and the audience at every stage of the creative process. Originally dubbed the Working Artist Museum, Pioneer Works offers its residents glass-enclosed studios so visitors can witness the artistic process and progress via monthly open studios. Because this residency emphasizes works in progress rather than finished projects, artists-in-residence benefit from community input and are involved throughout the formative stage of art-making.

In contrast, more traditional residencies that provide a private experience can serve a very different purpose: solitude, space for reflection and research—especially for particular mediums—and access to an environment outside of one's norm.

While both models have benefits, public-facing residencies offer a unique experience. They provide access to artists, demystify the artistic process, and invite artists and the public to convene as active and engaged thought partners.

Hospitality

DYLAN GAUTHIER

At some point in undergrad, I remember learning that the French word *hôte* can mean—implausibly—both “host” and “guest.” The fluidity of the term seems to point to the fact that we are all bound, at times, to be host and/or guest. This derivation relies on the Latin root *hospes*, which has the same double sense and is connected, mysteriously, to both the “hostel” (a place where the host and guest meet) and the Greek *xenos*—meaning “stranger,” “foreigner,” or even “enemy.” The Latin *hostis* carries the germ of the stranger and the foreigner (as in “hostiles”). But all of these words also relate to the word “hospital” (or *hôpital* in French), which at one time was chiefly a place of hospitality because there was no medicine, *per se*. Still, if you had nowhere to go, you could certainly find a bed there.

The question of who is hosting whom, and who is performing or (re-)producing hospitality, seems particularly relevant to how residencies (see the Latin *residere*: “to settle; remain behind; dwell for a considerable time”) work. Going on a residency means settling in and dwelling for however long one can. The offering of hospitality is a way to bring one in. It might originally have been a way to settle a “debt with humanity” (as the late anthropologist David Graeber has written), and also a means to undo a visitor’s foreignness to a place. The longer the guest resides and takes

hospitality, the less foreign they will be. Through this equalizing act, we learn what guests and hosts are made of.

Hospitality is also an act of empathy, and so extremely subjective. What passes for the right kind of hospitality in one place may be entirely inappropriate in another. Monolithic hospitality is the colonial invention of the global corporate hotel chain. One can find the same clean white sheets and towels, the same mint on the pillow, and the same cable news shows in every room in any corner of the world.

In the residency field, hospitality is less about providing a material baseline or an atmosphere of sameness than about opening up an exchange between host (the residency administrator) and guest (the artist-in-residence) where we might, for a moment, confuse roles and ask what it is that we need in order to share space with each other. We hosts become guests in our own residency programs, at least if things are going well. Likewise, the guest becomes the host at some point (the open studio event, the informal studio hang). The design of a residency should, ideally, increase this confusion as much as possible—at the end of the residency, who leaves and who stays?—and its main method is hospitality itself.

Engagement

GALEN JOSEPH-HUNTER

There exists an inherent, and interesting, tension between the public and private aspects of artist residency programs. Traditionally, residencies are designed to provide artists with the time, space, and support to focus on creation. This creation period typically occurs within a studio workspace, often in private. Yet, visiting artists become temporary residents of the communities in which their programs exist. As hosting organizations, what are our responsibilities to the community in which we are located, the artists we serve, and the funders who support our programs? And what are best practices for balancing these various areas of need?

When we consider community engagement, a significant goal is to open up opportunities for local audiences to interact with or access the artists who visit their community. These efforts are also often considered of high value to funders, especially those who are stewarding public funds. Workshops can be an excellent method of resident artist/community exchange. At Wave Farm, based in New York's Hudson River Valley, artists can propose workshops as part of their residency application, though this is not a requirement. Public performance at a partnering venue is another engagement strategy we often employ in an effort to simultaneously benefit a resident artist, a local venue, and local audiences. In each case, one must take care to ensure that these public

events stay within the primary intent of the residency opportunity itself. Too often, artists feel stretched thin when asked to teach or present in conjunction with a residency; having open lines of communication around capacity on a case-by-case basis is especially important.

Open studio events may serve as an elegant solution that achieves engagement goals and can be minimal work for resident artists. Creative approaches to what constitutes an “open studio” is an area that seems ripe for exploration and innovation.

Wave Farm is fortunate to have a unique resource that puts us in a good position to address public/private challenges with a transmission-based open studio of sorts. In our program, each residency concludes with a radio broadcast on our creative community station, WGXC 90.7-FM: Radio for Open Ears. The broadcast typically includes an interview introducing the artist's practice to the radio-listening audience, a discussion about the work that has been done while in residence, and then the sharing of that content—which at Wave Farm is typically sound-based. With our FM transmission we can reach a broad array of ears: intentional or dedicated audiences; accidental listeners driving through the area who may hit scan on their FM dial and pause at something unexpected; and incarcerated individuals in the area's correctional facilities, who have radios but aren't able to access other types of engagement offerings. Online streaming allows resident artists' own networks the opportunity to tune in from afar, casting an even wider net for public access, here often manifesting in private listening.

On Curatorial Residencies

SUSAN HAPGOOD

Although reasons to participate in a curatorial residency may remain constant, radical shifts are taking place within the curatorial departments of museums. Urgent topics of discussion include how to decolonize institutions throughout the West, where our museum models developed in tandem with colonialism, and how to fight racism and ableism within power structures that white elites have controlled for centuries.

Curators don't have quite as many approaches to their practices as artists do. Still, there are ever-multiplying ways to curate a project or exhibition or to organize programming for museums and other art institutions, biennials, and communities. Curatorial residencies worldwide offer differing services and benefits depending on their contexts and institutional missions. Curators are some of the world's most important cultural leaders. Perhaps their most important roles are to amplify artists' voices, to connect artists' work to audiences, and to generate new cultural models of presentation.

To provide an overview of curatorial residencies, I surveyed more than 50 program descriptions on websites and digital platforms to see what is out there.¹ I looked for recent changes to the field, given that curators are embedded in museums, themselves a Western construct predicated on exclusionary legacies of connoisseurship, colonialist plunder, and, at least in the United States,

¹ This research was undertaken by Sarah Mills and Minji Lee, who worked as interns at the International Studio & Curatorial Program in 2022 and 2023.

historical collecting practices skewed toward white men.² Among the transformations mentioned most often were a commitment to increased diversity and accessibility, and an intention to develop more collaborative and equitable curatorial methodologies.

How does a curator's residency differ from an artist's? At the organization where I work, the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) in Brooklyn, New York, there is much overlap in terms of benefits, but there also are some distinctions. Curatorial residencies provide time for reflection on one's professional body of work, and the positioning of one's practices within broader discourses. Most residencies for curators are shorter than residencies for artists, lasting from a few weeks to a few months. Allowing the curator to step away from their daily pressures and responsibilities, a curatorial residency can be like a mini-sabbatical that prompts new awareness relative to other contexts. In the words of one curatorial resident at ISCP, Bárbara Perea Legorreta, "The artists and art professionals I have met during this period will continue to inform my practice, potentially for years to come. I think of this moment as a bridge to new directions and possibilities."

Some programs encourage research, which may entail accessing local resources, archives, artistic communities, or specific collections. For a curator working on a forthcoming exhibition or publication, this can be a period of intensive study away from home. Nearly all curatorial residencies stress immersion in differing cultures and in local artistic communities, emphasizing the opportunity to establish new relationships with arts professionals. Whether this activity is characterized as networking or as cultural discourse and exchange, the host institution is often motivated to encourage new collaboration, to foster recognition and potential opportunity for local artists to present their work in differing contexts and places. In many cases, studio visits and professional meetings are arranged by the institution hosting the residency. In the most supportive programs, benefits include significant financial honoraria and related support, mentorship, and

museum resources.³ Some programs impose restrictions on who can apply—for example, the Berlin TURN2 residencies for curators from Johannesburg, Lagos, or Nairobi; Cincinnati's Wave Pool residencies for curators who are women-identifying people of color; and ISCP's Jane Farver Curatorial Residencies for curators from the Global South.

Emerging curators are often identified as ideal applicants, with the opportunity to gain professional experience cited as the chief benefit. Residents are invited or required to organize exhibitions, give lectures, develop digital or video projects, or write articles. Living costs, remuneration for curatorial work, project budgets, and logistical support—all these vary widely and should be carefully considered in light of the applicant's expectations. Intellectual labor deserves adequate compensation, especially in a profession that historically employed individuals from financially privileged backgrounds but is now working hard to level the playing field.

Several curatorial residency programs address specific needs. For example, at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, participants are encouraged to focus their research on themes of hospitality and the establishment of creative communities. They also work to facilitate alternative models for transnational collaboration between art initiatives that, due to geopolitical conditions, have less opportunity for cooperation. At Onassis AiR in Athens, the emphasis is on developing less product-obsessed arts policies. At the Luminary in St. Louis, Missouri, participants are encouraged to build more equitable systems and take apart failing structures. The institution wants curators to foster better modes of engagement that enact care, equity, and responsibility for the people, objects, and forms of knowledge that are part of arts infrastructures and institutions.

2 Mellon Foundation, *Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey 2022*, American Alliance of Museums website, accessed April 6, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.317927>

3 See the Whitechapel/Delfina Asymmetry Curatorial Residency, for example.

A 2011 study conducted in Europe showed that curators choose to participate in residencies for a range of reasons, which likely still hold true today:⁴

- dedicated time for research and writing in order to prepare or finish one's own curatorial project
- getting to know the local art world and expanding one's network
- having studio visits for a specific curatorial project
- the residency's specific theme, which matches the curator's interest
- being peer-reviewed by fellow curators and learning from experienced curators
- being able to collaborate on the spot with artists-in-residence
- being able to realize a curatorial project while in residence

Although reasons to participate in a curatorial residency may remain constant, radical shifts are taking place within the curatorial departments of museums. Urgent topics of discussion include how to decolonize institutions throughout the West, where our museum models developed in tandem with colonialism, and how to fight racism and ableism within power structures that white elites have controlled for centuries.

In museums with historical collections, curators are grappling with the restitution, reparation, and repatriation of plundered artifacts—as seen with the ongoing repatriation of the Benin bronzes to Nigeria from at least six countries (Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States), the return of a dancing Shiva statue to India from Australia, and the ongoing controversy over the Elgin Marbles in London's British Museum, to name just a few prominent examples.

4 Transartists, Johann Lundh, Anna Ptak, and students, "Curator-in-residence Opportunities" (findings, ON-AiR workshop organized by Artservis and SCCA, Ljubljana, December 6, 2011). Accessed April 9, 2023, <https://www.transartists.org/en/curator-residence-opportunities>

Curators serve artists and the communities and institutions they work within while modeling cultural leadership in its many permutations. Residency programs throughout the world provide frameworks and platforms for them to rethink and retool how they want to change their roles and responsibilities. The word "curator" stems from the Latin *curare*, meaning "to take care of." Following this line of thought, let us consider the American writer Saidiya Hartman's observation, in a 2017 panel discussion, that "Care is the antidote to violence."⁵

5 Quote attributed to Saidiya Hartman from "In the Wake: A Salon in Honor of Christina Sharpe," colloquium at Barnard Center for Research on Women, New York, accessed April 7, 2023, <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/videos/in-the-wake-a-salon-in-honor-of-christina-sharpe>

“The Political Struggle that Genuine Care Requires”: Artist Residencies in the Art World and the Real World

NOVA BENWAY

Residencies perform a singular role in the lives of artists. For a limited number of weeks or months, they provide essential resources for the selected artists, including space and time to work, while often helping them to build communities (their friends and support network) at a critical point in their careers and lives. Residencies often eschew demands for a finished “product” such as a completed artwork or exhibition. Instead, they promote attention to process and encourage experimentation and even productive failure. In a culture where art sales command high prices, yet artists are notoriously undervalued, residencies stand for the importance of supporting not just art but the people who make it.

In recent years, residencies have become both more numerous and more exclusive. Since most sites can only host a few dozen

people each year, only a tiny fraction of artists are afforded the privilege of participating. These are drawn from a rarefied pool of applicants, who often attend the same prestigious MFA programs, receive the same grants, and sometimes have personal connections to the same curators, critics, and administrators. Naturally enough, given their exclusivity, residencies occupy a prominent place on an artist’s CV: they can be one of the first signposts of an artist on the rise. They can pave the path to museum and gallery shows. At the same time, they can provide artists with brief respites from untenable real estate markets, offering free albeit temporary workspaces—it’s understandable that artists “residency hop” from one site to another to avoid renting a pricey studio.

Today, the traditional residency approach, in which care and support are meted out to artists individually once they arrive at the residency, contends with these increasingly obvious conditions of general scarcity: vanishingly few artists ever get to arrive in the first place. It has become clear that, too often, residencies unintentionally bolster sharp inequalities between artists who have the opportunity to participate and those who do not. Residencies must reconsider their traditional model of caretaking and ask how artists might be understood as a group rather than only as individuals. Or, to put it differently, residencies have a valuable opportunity to deepen and develop their admirable traditions of care into a better-defined ethical framework for the residency field as a whole.

An analogy from the field of medicine may be useful in developing a more robust ethical framework around artist residencies. Political anthropologist, psychoanalyst, and physician Eric Reinhart, in a 2021 text informed by Frantz Fanon’s 1959 essay “Medicine and Colonialism,” reminds us of the Western medical establishment’s traditional ethical code, which, “expressly divorced from politics, consists of two minimal injunctions: don’t override a patient’s freedom to choose for themselves and don’t cause harm.”¹ Reinhart goes on to argue for an understanding of medical care that acknowledges its imbrication in socioeconomic

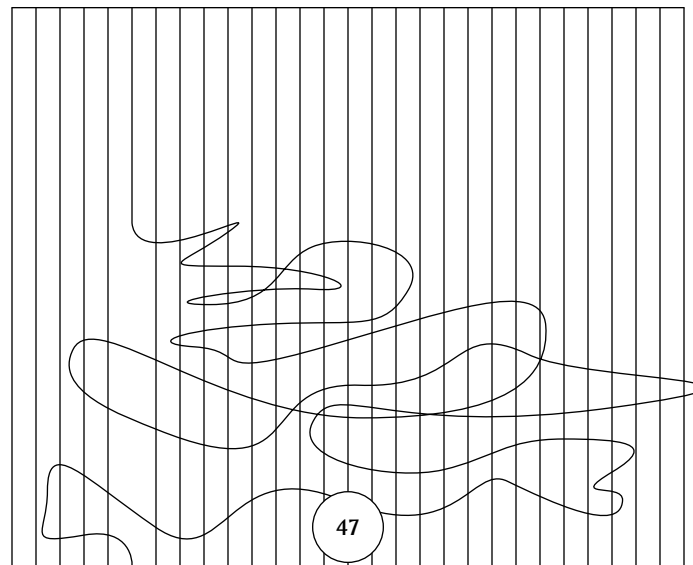
1 Eric Reinhart, “Medicine for the People,” *Boston Review*, March 22, 2021, <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/eric-reinhart-accompaniment-and-medicine>

realities: “But what of people who rarely make it to a doctor in America’s fee-for-service system? What responsibility does a physician have to safeguard the positive freedom of individuals—for example, the freedom to obtain high-quality healthcare or access to the means to prevent disease, like housing, income, and food security?” Reinhart advocates for a new medical ethics, one in which “ethical discourse is not allowed to serve as alibi for non-accountability to real-world effects and to the political struggle that genuine care requires.”

While it will be obvious that medical care and the care residencies provide differ dramatically, the analogy suggests that residencies practicing radical generosity and care for artists without positioning this care within a real-world context undermines the mission they hope to fulfill. Because residencies have a specific purpose, distinct from museums, galleries, and other structures in the art world, with care for individuals at its core, we are well-positioned to advocate for care as a model across the art world, in opposition to the exploitation of artists that so often occurs. This care does not exist in a vacuum: providing work and, at times, living spaces prompts residencies to be concerned with issues like affordable housing and gentrification, while the travel frequently required for residency participation necessitates an engagement with issues like climate change. (Acknowledging that these issues shape our work does not necessarily mean that residencies must shift their missions to center them.) While many residencies have no cost to attend, we cannot ignore that many artists cannot leave a job or family obligations to take advantage of this “free” resource. Perhaps the central issue residencies face—defining artistic merit and pairing that contingent definition with an assessment of need—will always evade any single conclusion, but recourse to a shared debate would enrich our work immeasurably.

Many residencies are already engaging with these questions. They tend to be those most overtly shaped by their locations, such as residencies in places marked by geopolitical conflict or those with directly stated social aims. These residencies may direct their resources toward specific groups or focus their programming on local histories. Such programs are often seen as effective and even admirable but too shaped by local factors or too focused on specific populations to hold broader lessons for

In a culture where art sales command high prices, yet artists are notoriously undervalued, residencies stand for the importance of supporting not just art but the people who make it.



the field. On the contrary, explicitly recognizing that all residencies exist within specific contexts will help us develop an ethics for the field as a whole. Too often, “generalist” residencies, with few demographic or other parameters for acceptance, fail to recognize the force with which ethical questions already shape their work. While a residency may choose to serve more or less specific groups of artists, considering that service through the lens of the most vulnerable populations or those least likely to arrive at the residency in the first place is a productive starting point.

Acknowledging our shared conditions will require each residency to see itself as part of an interconnected network and to engage in vigorous debate about the specific forms of care that residencies provide. Without a shared discourse around whom they serve and why, every residency awarded is a slim raindrop falling into a vast bucket of need—need for space, time, community, care—with minimal impact on the source of the need or the reasons for its vastness. The resulting debate may be contentious since care has different meanings in different residency contexts. Still, it may ultimately serve to develop meaningful solidarity across residencies, as a greater sense of a shared network may result in more shared resources. Residencies often do remarkably well at fulfilling the obligations they have set for themselves in relation to the individual artists they accept. We must now develop an ethics of residencies that situates this care for individual artists in the larger context of our field, with all its social, economic, and political dynamics.

New Models for Communing: Residency Programming and Strategies

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A Panel at the Rethinking Residencies Symposium

December 10, 2021

Moderator: **NICHOLAS WEIST**

Panelists: **ROBIN EVERETT, CATHERINE LEE,
SALLY MIZRACHI, AND SANNA RITVANEN**

Nicholas Weist: Hi, everyone; I am Director of Shandaken Projects and current chairperson of Rethinking Residencies. On behalf of my colleagues, thank you so much for attending the Rethinking Residencies Symposium, and thank you also to my colleagues at Rethinking Residencies who’ve worked so hard to commission and present the scholarship that you’ve been hearing about the last couple of days. I also want to thank our partner the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, and the New York State Council on the Arts, which is the major funder of this program.

Shandaken Projects is a founding member of Rethinking Residencies, which has brought New York-based organizations together to share resources and cultivate thinking about residency administration since 2014. In the United States, where we operate, even nonprofit organizations are encouraged to

compete for resources, so it's a very rare and special event when institutions decide to collaborate instead. And I'm proud to have stewarded this working group which prioritizes truly nonprofit logic like consensus-based decision-making. We seek out diversities of scale and approach and encourage warm interpersonal relationships as a foundation for professional bonds. And the longevity of our group is a testament to the power of these practices. When the working group began, Shandaken had the smallest budget and the least staff of any organization present but was given a full and equal seat at the table. Today Shandaken is comfortably in the upper middle region of the group's average scale, and Rethinking Residencies has welcomed a new generation of small-scale practitioners into our group.

Over the past seven years, member organizations have supported one another through simple practices like comparing internal documents, sharing how we've overcome challenges, and trading knowledge about opportunities. This kind of collaboration has significantly impacted our working lives and, remarkably, has happened without the group ever requiring members to contribute financially. Rethinking Residencies can do its work because all of our members center generosity, a willingness to trust one another, and open-mindedness in our convening, and we've aimed to bring these ways of engaging one another to this symposium. When you return to your workplaces and studios around the world, I urge all of you to find ways to collaborate with your peers as well. You'll be richly rewarded if you succeed.

Residencies are increasingly looking outwards and developing new programmatic and structural models centered on community engagement, local embeddedness, ecology, and civic partnerships. I am thrilled to hear from these colleagues about how they handle those questions.

Robin Everett: I'm one of the chairs of the Mustarinda Association board for 2021–22. I've been a member of Mustarinda for the last six years, and I've worked in many different roles within the association, as you'll see in the presentation.

Sanna Ritvanen: I'm Sanna Ritvanen, the other chair of Mustarinda Association for this year. We

are a collective, and we also want to represent whenever it's possible with more than one person. I have been doing various things for the association since 2018.

RE: To briefly introduce Mustarinda: the association was founded in 2010, and its activities are managed by an active collection of between 10 and 15 people within the 38 members, and these members consist of artists, researchers, educators, and activists, whose goal is to promote the ecological rebuilding of society, the diversity of culture and nature, and the connection between art and science. The association hosts an international residency program at the Mustarinda House, located in the Kainuu region of Finland, roughly the size of Belgium, but with a population density of about 3.5 people per square kilometer. So, it's slightly more remote. It's 628 kilometers north of Helsinki, just underneath the Arctic Circle at about 65 degrees north. I'm speaking to you from my home in Bergen in Norway. I generally travel to Mustarinda once or twice a year to spend time at the actual physical location. The association grows outwards from the house with events and activities. I'll go into a little more detail later with what these various activities are. Within the Mustarinda House, several projects are continuously taking place, and Mustarinda House and association are embedded within the local community of Hyrynsalmi, the closest town. This is 24 kilometers from the house and has a population of a couple thousand people. It's also very tightly linked with other cultural actors in the area, as Nicholas mentioned, a lot of the institutions within the cultural field have to compete for resources, so Mustarinda finds it very valuable to form these partnerships and links with other associations and institutions both locally and nationally and internationally. We go through the different stages of government, and our neighbors farther afield, and some of the arms of Mustarinda reach out into these, into dealing with the municipality through education and events programs. These are all inextricably entangled in the human and non-human communities of local and global spheres, in visible and invisible ways. And without this connection, the municipal contact, our partnerships, our neighbors, again, like the non-human and the human, the house, the residency, and the association would not function. The residency hosts between

30 and 40 residents a year, curated through several open calls. And these residents come from varying backgrounds, and we host artists, researchers, writers, activists, makers, thinkers, and any people whose practice needs space, time, environment, or connection given by their residency program. The residents are all hosted within the house, which acts as a living experiment, both artistically, socially, and ecologically. It's a testing ground or troubleshooting guide experiment for a transition towards a post-fossil society, which is one of the goals of the Mustarinda Association. And a large part of this is experimentation with the energy systems, as that's vital in the transition away from the fossil economy. And we have many different experiments going on with this, such as wind power, geothermal heating, compost heating, solar panels, heat recovery, ventilation, biogas and bioethanol, wood gas, and electric cars. We used a compost heater, which was an experiment that ran for several years and provided around 20 percent of our hot water for the house per year and worked with the local community of farmers to collect the silage that they couldn't use due to some malfunction in the packaging or something that would cause it to begin to decompose, which we, of course, can take advantage of. And through a similar process to composting, we could heat our water for the house through many meters of pipes that will run through this container. And there you can see the back of the house, which shows our solar panel array, where we get an incredible amount of daylight through the summer, which provides more than enough electricity for the house. And through the winter it can top up just a very small amount. In the middle of winter, there are maybe three hours of daylight on a clear day. So it's a good testing ground as it's quite extreme. We have many kinds of education and events programs, which include workshops, courses, classes for school children, summer art camp, lecture seminars, and concerts. We work with partners in the forestry commission and the nature league, to host courses and educational events in the forest surrounding the house and in the local schools. We hosted an event called Lichen Fest, which explored the many different aspects of lichen. We also work internationally with the Wood Opera in Lithuania, a program in 2019 where an opera was written to be performed among the forest of Mustarinda. It invited the whole local community there, and we provided transport up

from Helsinki to watch it. You can see that it's not only the art and culture that we work with, but the house also hosts social work seminars and cares for local communities. And this is in the same space as our exhibition program. All of these activities grow out from the house, the garden, and the soil, which are cared for by the residency guests, the Mustarinda members, the human and all of our non-human visitors, without which none would function. I think this symposium is a great chance to explore the many aspects of what it can mean to have a community and work with it.

Catherine Lee: I am the Director of Taipei Artist Village in Taiwan. It is my pleasure to be able to participate in this international symposium. The border of Taiwan has been locked down due to the pandemic since this May. So, I'm really, really excited to join such a great online event to share our experience and thoughts regarding residency programs. Taipei Artist Village is located in Taipei, the north part of Taiwan. We are the first publicly funded residency institution. Eighty percent of our annual budget is from Taipei City Government to support all the art production and cultural exchange via international residency programs. We have two sites. One is located in the center of Taipei, near Taipei's main station. The other one is located inside of a historical community in the southern part of Taipei. The mayor set up an artist residency in 2001 for international cultural exchange and office mobility. We want to invite brilliant international artists and cultural leaders to Taipei and provide them with a great experience in Taipei to explore the city, produce artworks, meet people, or understand this independent country. We provide live-in studios and working studios. The open call selection is around March to June each year. The art form can be visual arts, performing arts, film, theater, dance, literature, etc. We provide networks and administrative services based on the artist's proposal. At the end of each residency, the artists can join a group exhibition to share their artwork or residency results. The selected international artists can stay in Taipei Artist Village for three months for free. Taipei Artist Village has different facilities such as food, studios, dark rooms, piano room, and dance studios. Artists can use all kinds of facilities based on their own needs. Until now, we have received more than 600 international artists to Taipei Artist Village in the

traditional artist's village. We also sent about 200 Taiwanese artists to partner institutions in different countries, such as Tokyo Arts and Space, Bank Art in Yokohama, MMCA Residency in Goyang, Korea, Openspace Bae in Busan, South Korea, Silpakorn University in Bangkok, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art in Australia, the Grey Projects in Singapore, and three other partner institutions in Europe and Canada. This is what we called a bilateral exchange program in which we provide travel fees and daily allowance to support Taiwanese artists to go abroad, and provide free accommodation and local services to host the international artists whom the partner institutions support. We don't have any partner institutions in the United States currently. So, if you are interested in this bilateral exchange program, I will be very happy to connect with you.

The Treasure Hill Artist Village is called an "illegal housing community." The houses were built by original squatters around the 1950s to 1970s on a little hill. Some of the squatters came from mainland China in 1949 and settled down in this area just to survive and live under safety control. The whole community went through a long process of regeneration in the 1990s. And the city government has managed the site since the year of 2005. The whole Treasure Hill community has different parts, including the Treasure Hill Temple, the Artist Village, the high school, one hostel, and the 20 local families who were the original residents. It makes the whole community interesting and charming. It also attracts many visitors to the community on the weekends. Treasure Hill Artist Village has working studios, living studios, galleries, and outdoor spaces. Artists can decide on the space to exhibit their artworks. We welcome all kinds of site-specific production and community engagement programs. The local families are very friendly; they manage a grocery store, they grow vegetables, they raise chickens and geese. I notice artists like to join their activities and talk to them to gain more information on their daily life. This is how we operate the whole residency program. After the artists arrive in Taipei, we will organize a welcome party, artist talk, open studio, and group exhibit as a public event. We also have one-on-one interviews to understand everyone's project and proposal to be able to match different kinds of curators, organize field studies, or to connect with different groups. It is a great help for artists interested in community engagement to organize workshops or

interactions. We used to have open calls for 20 international artists every year, but the pandemic really slowed down the projects. Some artists are still waiting for the residency to re-open. We've discussed it with them, but it seems like a virtual residency is not a preference. They want to be here in Taipei. Therefore, we will not do another open call until 2023. We also host Treasure Hill Light Festival each year and invite all kinds of artists who are interested in site-specific production and use light to tell the story for around 40,000 visitors per year. We use online and onsite methods to present all kinds of public events. And we encourage artists to come up with some new ideas to present their works onsite and online simultaneously. We provide technical support to them.

Before the residency ends, we make a short film for each artist to share their residency experience in Taipei. It is just like an archive to keep their record in Taipei. It also promotes the residency programs to the public. You can check it out on our YouTube channel. Taipei Artist Village and Treasure Hill Artist Village are not the only residency programs in Taiwan. We have other partners in other cities in this country, we have a connection with all of our residency partners.

We welcome artists to travel around Taiwan to see all the beautiful sites and meet different art people. I'd like to introduce some projects this year. Since we cannot host international artists, we focused on inclusive art projects. We invite artists on wheels, artists who are visually impaired, and artists who have rare diseases to come to the Taipei Artist Village to develop their artwork. One artist used gauze and a bandage to create a huge installation, one artist put a camera on wheelchairs to make a performance, a blind artist drew a landscape painting with an audio description, and the way they use their body also inspires other artists and art students. The four joint exhibits brought in different types of audiences. It also encouraged disabled people to release their creativity from their bodies and mind. We will continue these projects for the next several years. We also paired two artists in Taiwan and two artists in Chile who are street art practitioners. They produced four public artworks together on the Taipei streets by virtual residency. It took a lot of time for online meetings and discussions. The project is still ongoing, we are looking forward to a real trip to Latin

America; we really want to learn more about the other side of the earth. And last, we built one virtual gallery in Treasure Hill.

Sally Mizrachi: Lugar a Dudas was established in 2005 as an independent, not-for-profit space in Cali, in the southwest of Colombia. The entrance of the building says, “this place is for you, come on, come on in!” I like to start with this because it is the strategy we use to invite people to the house. It’s very different from being in a public space that you can get in, but to enter through a house that is a private space is the way that we invite people to get in. We have relationships with the local context, activities, resources, desires, and challenges. We are in relation to the international and local context. We have some tangible resources and some that are intangible. We are a team of people who do passionate work at the place. We also have some challenges and some difficulties. We are not only a residency program. Lugar a Dudas aims to promote disseminated contemporary artistic practices. Its name, which means “Room for Doubts” is a space for thinking and reflecting on artistic practices and the complexity of the context in which we live. We work as a laboratory for research—with lively discussion, reflection, and critical analysis—and have a continuous program of exhibitions, workshops, talks, and other different events. We also house a big documentation center dedicated to the visual arts, which includes over 7,000 books, magazines, and videos.

The residency program was initiated in 2006 as one of the first residency programs in Colombia. The intention is to offer artists and curators different alternatives to explore through interaction during the creative process in a new context. The residency is in an interactive space that encourages the exchange of ideas and activities and facilitates experimentation. Residencies are based on process, with no rigid structure, allowing artists to develop projects in response to their experience with the city, the people, and the environment. The format is designed as an alternative for dynamic collective and interactive work, in which situations are built that welcome experiences and reflection from different perspectives and disciplines. Artists undertake projects that emphasize the creative process, experimenting with new ideas, freedom of artistic exploration and risk-taking. In this sense, our

residency house is more than an accommodation space. It’s a meeting place where various community sectors are raised and socialize. However, it’s not a place of exhibition as such, but a place open to experimentation, offering the conditions of a laboratory. Artists can visit our schools and give talks and have the possibility to make contact with other artists’ organizations, students, and art professionals in Cali, establishing a mutual exchange of ideas. They can exhibit all their process experience at the end of the residency via an open studio. The call is permanently open, and participants are selected by a committee of members of the working team. The minimum residency stay is six weeks, and there can be three to five residents in each period. To finish this presentation, I would like to highlight that we collaborate with other organizations and networks. The residency program began in 2006, generating work in collaboration with other spaces and different organizations at national and international levels. With Alessio Antonioli, Director of Gasworks, we formed the first network of residencies together with Capacete in Rio de Janeiro, El Basilisco in Buenos Aires, and Kiosko in La Paz, generating for the first time South-South exchanges. It was an Ibero-American network, a network of 28 organizations from South America, Spain, and Portugal, supported by AECID, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. In 2012, we began collaborating with the RESÒ network, a residency exchange network for artistic and educational programs in the Italian Piedmont region. And we are part also of Arts Collaboratory, a platform of 25 diverse organizations worldwide focused on art practices, processes of social change, and working with broader communities beyond the field of art.

NW: It was so wonderful to hear the thoughtful articulations of how each of your institutions intersects with community, and what that word means to each of you. I was particularly struck by Mustarinda’s proposition that the organization is a networked community segment that extends even to the non-human. And I’m wondering, could you unpack that a little bit for us, and share any experiences of how your relationships with non-human entities, government entities,

Residencies are increasingly looking outwards and developing new programmatic and structural models centered on community engagement, local embeddedness, ecology, and civic partnerships.

— NICHOLAS WEIST

Mustarinda wouldn't exist without the non-human community there. The house is surrounded by this old-growth forest, with the oldest parts nearly 2,050 years old, and there is also the strict nature reserve in that forest where the human is not even allowed to enter without a research permit.

— SANNA RITVANEN

[I]f we don't understand what our neighbors' interest is, or what our neighbors do, it's so hard for us to translate, or to make our artists understand, or to make our artists connect with our local context.

— CATHERINE LEE

neighbors, some of the other folks you mentioned have helped to shape the organization, and how you have shaped them?

SR: Mustarinda wouldn't exist without the non-human community there. The house is surrounded by this old-growth forest, with the oldest parts nearly 2,050 years old, and there is also the strict nature reserve in that forest where the human is not even allowed to enter without a research permit. I would say that our activities wouldn't exist without, or they are somehow also based on that community, and we also want to cherish and protect it, and embrace it as the core of what keeps us going. And since our work is based on this ecological rebuilding, this is an important thing to consider and focus on also when we are thinking about our activities. Do you want to add something?

RE: I'd just say that the way society is structured, these areas that a part of our activities are working to protect, are governed and owned. So, of course, in working to protect these areas, we deal with municipal bodies and government bodies on a national level such as the Metsäteollisuus, the forestry commission for Finland. These things are all really interlinked and very inseparable. If you are affected by the old-growth forest, whether it be on an artistic level or a spiritual level or any level, it doesn't stop there. You are then simultaneously affected by the government, the municipality, and Mustarinda, who's working with the forest. And then on a very basic level by the non-human entity, the forest. And everything that lives within it.

NW: I'm reminded of some of the currents in feminist biology that describe each of us as part of a network system. And the topic that you are specializing in is of critical importance to everyone around the world, and I'm going to ask a question for my edification and anyone else who runs an organization. What's your advice for someone who runs an organization to reduce their environmental impact in a way that can be accomplished within the kind of very restrictive systems we all operate in institutionally?

SR: Well, we released last year a list for art institutions and artists for decreasing or shrinking their carbon footprint

and working more ecologically. And I could find that, and share it with you. There are some concrete and simple things you can start from. And that's what I suggest rather than talking about some vague, beautiful, philosophical ideas here.

SM: I don't have advice, but this is something that we constantly question because residency means mobilizing. So how can we produce this—because, since Lugar a Dudas is a place for meeting, for being together, for being in presence, this is something that is a conflict. So more than an answer is a question that all the time is around us. How to continue with the residency where we want presence, no? So, I don't know.

SR: Are you struggling with the questions of traveling? How to create these physical connections between people from different parts of the globe?

SM: Yeah!

SR: We try to encourage people to travel to Mustarinda by slow travel. By land, and avoid flying, and we have these slow travel grants for people coming abroad that they can buy the tickets for land travel, which unfortunately is more expensive, more often than the flight tickets, and also for taking the time for the traveling because it takes more time. One concrete example is how we encouraged people to travel by more ecological means—we support their travels financially, and then another thing, we have made our residency periods longer. Robin, do you have anything to add?

RE: We just finished a three-year project with HIAP, the Helsinki International Artist Programme, called Post-Fossil Transition which was divided into three subsections that dealt with how to approach questions of transport, food, and energy. And these three considerations are for institutions working towards being more ecological. HIAP has several resources on their website and we also have a blog where we've updated a whole load of resources concerning this three-year project. And from that, there's also begun this eco-echo, eco circle or ring, which is several institutions within Finland that are grouping together to find

some way to collectively work out how to reduce all the institutions' carbon footprints; and how to standardize it so that it can be a model that can be shared with institutions of any size in any area.

NW: If anyone watching has yet to visit Mustarinda's website and see some of the wonderful documentation they've made of the slow travel, I encourage you to do so; it's a great way to spend an afternoon. Each of your programs welcomes artists internationally to specific places, and I'm wondering—Sally, you touched on this briefly—if you might be able to share some strategies of how you can create a meaningful experience of place when you can welcome artists to your site.

SM: The first thing that we do with artists is to welcome and host with hospitality as if they are at home, no? That the artist is at home, and we try to contact some artists before they arrive, or they send some intention of their research. We know with whom we can connect them, so we invite them for a dinner, a place to talk, to have a coffee and talk with the other artists from the local context and start to develop, to be involved with the people here. In Cali, people are very warm so it's very easy to be with the community, with the neighborhood, to talk with them, so this is a way that we start. We don't ask for a project, a rigid project that ends with something, with a final product, so they can research, and show what they did during the residency at the end. So it's very easy, and some may try to get another idea of what they will experience in the city.

NW: Would anyone else like to respond to that question? Catherine, you have welcomed many artists from outside your borders to your program, and you have a very complex context for those artists to be working within. Each of our institutions intersects in some way with our home governments or municipalities, and to what degree you feel you're able to shape that relationship and to what degree your organization is shaped by it? And how have artists responded to that process while you host them?

CL: My institution is intermediate between government and artist groups, so my supervisor is Taipei City Government. So

that's why we do a lot of public events, because we have to meet all of the KPIs [key performance indicators] from the government. But also, we host international artists, especially to understand what Taipei is about. And the two artists' villages; one is inside of the Taipei Court, which is near the Taipei main station. It is easy for us to connect to different kinds of artist groups, or communities. For instance, if they are interested in religious groups, we can find somebody we know in religious groups so we can connect the artist to the local religious people. And the other one is Treasure Hill, where we live inside the community. Here, we are so close to our neighbors, so if international artists come to Taipei, they can easily meet the local people. Maybe they can just cook together, eat together, dine together, or grow vegetables together, lots of things we do daily. So basically, we will review the artist's proposal because every artist, when they come to Taipei, they have different ideas about what they want to do, and what kind of people they want to connect to. Maybe they want to understand the LGBTQ groups, or they want to understand the political background of our country, or they want to understand the historical context of each local community. Then we will try to understand each program and try to connect with the suitable advisors or suitable consultant or suitable curators together, and for them to make work together. That is how we process all the residency programs here in Taiwan. And after they leave, sometimes they will have an exhibition in other cities, or they will contact us again to make sure the connection is still there and their process can be ongoing.

NW: I'm so glad that you touched on that idea because there is a wealth of thinking about the problems of the so-called parachute artist in our field. In a conversation prior to this one, Robin articulated a present issue for many artists seeking to work with communities outside of their host institutions, which is that artists can sometimes see neighbors as a resource to be mined, and that resource can be depleted. So, the prompt on the table is about how to bring artists out into the world. Still, I'm also curious about bringing your neighbors into your institutions, and wondering if any of you have an experience you could share about strategies or successful experiences welcoming folks who are proximate to your institutions into the process with the artists that you host?

SR: Maybe one thing is also accepting that you don't have always to try to welcome and include all the people in your work. It's fine if the neighbors are not interested in what you are doing. We host events at the house where we invite the local people and they are quite low threshold, with varying kinds of programs from workshops to concerts to art exhibitions to just like drinking coffee together. We also visit our neighbors ourselves, and to try to be human to each other, and forget the roles, our status or whatever that I am here now visiting you as—a Mustarinda person or an artist or a creator—but more showing a genuine interest toward people. I think that's the main thing, maybe. And in our case, we wouldn't survive without our neighbors. There are dozens of times when they have pulled our car from the snowy ditch when we have been stuck there, so it's also a life-saving community to us to keep good relations with them.

RE: We have a reciprocal relationship with them, for sure. I think to add to what Sanna was saying is that in thinking of them as neighbors that, equally, we are their neighbor. And you know, to treat them as you would want a neighbor to treat you, to give them agency and to try and act as some kind of mediator between what can be sometimes quite alienating, or a very foreign language, or visuals that are part of artistic practices. And just trying to work with the culture already in place there, rather than attempting to adapt that culture to the understanding of the international art world, which is not everyone's cup of tea.

NW: An interesting thing that happens when you offer agency to exterior actors is that you enter a place of indeterminacy with the artists you're supporting and the projects you're working on. We as administrators are tasked with a set of responsibilities from our funders, from our governments, from our other stakeholders, and we've heard a few times today in other panels that residencies are, as Sally puts it, they're places for doubt, or places for interrogation, or experimentation. The laboratory environment is a reference that's come up often, and I'm curious if anyone on the panel has been confronted with a conflict between that space of indeterminacy and the deliverables that we have been given by the powers that be, whoever those powers may be? Catherine, you

mentioned that [residents] work in a site that has inherited the legacy of squatter politics, which really informs some of what happens there. And even perhaps encourages this idea of indeterminacy.

CL: I have several stories. Treasure Hill was squatted, and occupied by the community, so they have been through a long process of confrontation with the government. In the beginning, when we entered the village, we had a very conflicted position with local neighbors especially, and I remember they were very angry at us for several years. Because “us” means government, and we were sent by the government to manage the artists. And for the local residents, they don’t understand why we have to host a lot of international artists who cannot speak the Mandarin language. So we are in the middle, as an intermediate person, we have to communicate or convince our neighbors, that we are trying to understand Taiwan. We invite international artists to come over, or we can work together or do something together. Not all of the neighbors understood this in the very beginning, so after ten years, the community gradually understood what we are trying to do. We have about 20 families who are currently living in the community. Two or three families like to host the international artists. Their language capabilities are better, and they like to interact with them, but the rest of the families, they still keep a little bit away unless we have parties, we have food, we have meals to share with everybody—it depends on everyone’s interest, I have to say. Not all of them can understand art, but I think the community is gradually changing because maybe the first generation, veterans, have been through the experience of moving from mainland China to Taiwan. But the second generation or the third generation, understand more about contemporary society, they know what art can do for them, or what art can connect us with. After they understand it, they will be more interested in what art can do, what we can do together in arts. It takes time to feel or to interact or to try to push a little bit in order to pull it back; seeing how we can negotiate with them.

NW: It’s interesting, it does strike me that not everyone can understand the extremely complex and advanced discourse surrounding contemporary art in our historical moment, but every person certainly can understand ideas. And as sites of ideas and

idea-making, residencies are uniquely positioned to welcome individuals into that process alongside our artists. Each of your institutions works with artists internationally, and as much as this is so, you have an extremely privileged position to be seeing currents of thought throughout the world coalesce in a particular place. And I’d like to hear if you have seen correspondences between challenges facing artists in contexts, in diverse contexts, throughout the world. If there are, if there can be a similar politic identified or particular opportunities that artists have created for themselves? Sally, you belong to an international network of programs. Perhaps you could start us off? Have you noticed similarities between the challenges or opportunities for your artists working locally and those you host from other countries?

SM: This is a very strong question because this is a big problem. This is a city, not a capital city, so it’s a province that does not have the same opportunities that they may have in the capital, Bogotá. And artists here are very resourceful with what they have, and we try to make these networks all these 15 years that we have had the residency program. We try to send our local artists outside to go for residencies, and the mobility for a Colombian artist is very difficult because we need visas—even if we have the visas, the people have no money to go, so we have to get a grant. Sometimes we are not in the same situation that we receive and receive and receive others, and how can we send some artists to go outside? The only thing that helps us is to be in a network. That’s why I highlight this relationship because it is the way that we send artists outside of Colombia. So those platforms are very important for the local scene for the artists to go out, and we are struggling with this. How to send artists abroad, so this is a very strong point that moves us all the time—struggling, for the local scene, no?

CL: I notice this too because we host different artists from different places, I noticed in recent years that they are interested in migration. Because I think international migration has become a trend, we host artists from Europe. They sometimes want to know more about their connection with Asia because some of their families may come from Asia because of the war or several past conflicts. They want to find out their own personal

history connected with Asia. For instance, we met several British artists. They had the blood; I think the blood in their family is from Vietnam, so they wanted to understand more about the Vietnam refugees in Taiwan, how they were treated back in the 1950s or 1970s. An artist wanted to compare how the Taiwanese government treated the refugees with the British government's treatment of refugees. He tried to find this kind of connection, and he wanted to understand why his family had to move or migrate from Vietnam to Britain. This is one part. The other part is environmental sustainability. We also find many artists are interested in water. Taiwan is an island, so they want to understand how we treat it, or our water system, or how a city treats the water, including what our policy is. The environmental protection policy on water reuse, how we feel about water, and how we construct different kinds of facilities or infrastructures to contain the water is of interest. These kinds of global issues are very interesting to artists. And I feel privileged to see different kinds of artworks produced by artists to show their sense or to show their feelings about water, so this is the way how we can present the artworks from international artists to interpret the water issues in Taipei in the context of global issues. I think migration and environmental sustainability are the ones they are very interested in. And the other one is the LGBTQ issue. I'm unsure if this is because Taiwan is the first country to agree to LGBTQ marriage. So, it attracts many artists interested in these kinds of groups or issues to come to Taiwan. But we also find many artists who want to know how our government sees the issues, or how our society or young people understand or accept the LGBTQ groups.

NW: So again, we see a proposition of a residency program as a prism, or a filter, a site of translation, and also environmental concerns returning as a topic of utmost importance for each of us. I could talk about this with you all day, but that would be immensely selfish. It is now time for me to cede the floor to some members of our audience who have come with questions. Question: What are the biggest challenges of running a residency program focused both on the local and the global level? The thrust of the question is balancing the tension between local concerns and international concerns. And we could

We're living in a time now where any concerns of the local are concerns of the global. These issues can easily be translated to any location and scaled up and down to fit any scenario. I think the only difficulty lies in mediating that translation between the particular locality we're in, or whichever residency program or institution there is, and the artist. You can't isolate the local so much anymore.

— ROBIN EVERETT

The most important thing for Lugar a Dudas is to work with the local context, because this is our community. When an international artist comes for a residency, we stimulate a relationship for them to know the people and to know the community, and it's the way to translate a global situation.

— SALLY MIZRACHI

tie this back to the question of inviting neighbors in, encouraging a sense of collective thought about questions at a global scale.

RE: We're living in a time now where any concerns of the local are concerns of the global. These issues can easily be translated to any location and scaled up and down to fit any scenario. I think the only difficulty lies in mediating that translation between the particular locality we're in, or whichever residency program or institution there is, and the artist. You can't isolate the local so much anymore.

SM: The most important thing for Lugar a Dudas is to work with the local context, because this is our community. When an international artist comes for a residency, we stimulate a relationship for them to know the people and to know the community, and it's the way to translate a global situation.

CL: I agree with Sally because we spend a lot of time to explore with our local context because it does take time. And when international artists come to Taiwan, they want to know the local history, they want to know more about your country, your city, your neighbors. So, if we don't understand what our neighbors' interest is, or what our neighbors do, it's so hard for us to translate, or to make our artists understand, or to make our artists connect with our local context. I think global issues and local issues are really easy to connect. For instance, I'm talking about migration and home—everybody has a home. So, when we're talking about the family, the home, the feeling about the home, the connection about the home, everybody can connect. Whether you are local people or international people. So if we understand the local context, we can share more with our international friends.

SR: One thing that I think is sometimes challenging is when there comes global guests or people from bigger towns in Finland to Mustarinda—a remote location—is this kind of an exotic gaze that people have. They come to the local community and somehow see it in a wrong way, or in a bit awkward way and somehow exoticize the local community, which then for a residency host, feels a bit bad. People are living their

regular everyday life there, and then there comes this group of people who are like, “Oh, look how they dress” or “Oh, this is how they live their lives,” and that I think is one challenge that I would like to grasp onto in the future in our activities.

NW: It's an excellent point of feeling I know intimately. We are in a pandemic moment that has revolutionized the way each of us meets and corresponds with our constituencies. The question on the table is, what does space look like, when the residency is digital, and what strategy would you suggest to develop a digital community?

CL: We're really bad in the digital community, because residency is the place for people to meet in person. So we tried a little with a virtual residency this year, but it didn't work. It takes so much time online to talk with strangers, when people meet together, they don't know each other. Via the internet or the screen, we have to warm up the surroundings or the field. It's not easy to connect people; it's not like a party, it's not like we really walk into the space and just have a drink or talk with somebody and feel the people. The virtual residency has to have something to see or something in the center. For instance, I know one residency this year used the book *The Plague* to see, to start with, to talk about what's happening with the pandemic, this kind of international disease spreading out to different cities, and what people fear about what government is about. So maybe we will start with some common topic together, and from there, the artists can participate and afterward create something digitally like images or films or sound, but that's the only thing they can do. That's all. Something is still lacking in these virtual residencies; I don't think we are successful with them yet.

SM: I completely agree with Catherine, and this is something that we are rethinking because it's something that is around us. And maybe it's a process that will change, but it's very difficult for us. I repeat we are saying that we are the place to encounter one another, to be together. It's very different to be here in this place, and when Kari invited me, I told her, “Oh, I'm so tired of Zoom meetings,” but I knew that I need this

discussion because we are going to learn from each other. But for me, for Lugar a Dudas, it was something we are thinking about and rethinking. How can we, how is it going to be, if we need to pass into the digital field? But for us, to feel the person side by side, to have a coffee, to see her face, to touch people, to feel her breath. I don't know, it's something very different, a different experience of each in a digital square, here and around us. It's a process we must go through, but it's very challenging.

NW: Well, we're doing a great job, if I may say so myself. We have time for just one last question, and I'm very curious to hear the answer. The question is as follows: If you had total freedom to change your residency program's architecture and/or location, would you? And the postscript is that your physical environment has had a huge impact on your activities and programs. Would anyone change their site?

SR: Not anymore. When Mustarinda was founded, it wasn't founded only because of the site. But now the area and the forest and the neighbors and the local community, it tangles to Mustarinda so if it was moved somewhere else it wouldn't be the same, or it wouldn't be Mustarinda. It would be some other artistic residency focusing on ecological issues. Even our name is based on an old name, in old maps, of that area. So it wouldn't be called Mustarinda either then probably.

SM: It would be a place of doubt.

Structures of Support for the Whole Artist

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A Panel at the Rethinking Residencies Symposium

December 10, 2021

Moderator: DYLAN GAUTHIER

Panelists: EVE BIDDLE, JAMIE BLOSSER, JEFFREY KASPER, and HOWARDENA PINDELL

Dylan Gauthier: Hello, everyone. I'm an artist and curator based in New York, and the Director of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space Program and the SHIFT residency for arts workers. SHIFT was started by arts workers who couldn't take off from their jobs to participate in residency programs elsewhere, so they made one here. In a moment, we will be hearing from Eve Biddle from the Wassaic Project, Jamie Blosser from the Santa Fe Art Institute, and Jeff Kasper, who is an adviser to More Art, in New York City, and an Assistant Professor of Art at UMass Amherst. Finally, here very much in spirit, is Howardena Pindell, who has prepared a letter that Jeff will read in her absence.

This panel is "Structures of Support for the Whole Artist." How can residencies support intersectional artists' identities, needs, and expectations beyond their professional practices? We could also have called this panel "Rethinking Hospitality, Access, and Care." Foundational to my thinking around this

panel, was a letter that Howardena Pindell presented at the International Studio & Curatorial Program's 25th anniversary conference in 2019. But this panel also reflects a growing awareness that as artists come to residency programs, they do not arrive in some neutral or universal body of an artist.

When we talk about creating an opening in our residency programs for an artist, what kind of artist do we imagine inhabiting that opening? Who can come and who cannot? While the residency perhaps cannot be all things for all people, there are residencies that cater now to caregivers or families, residencies that support BIPOC artists, disabled artists, trans artists, LGBTQI-identifying artists, artists from the Global South, or neuro-atypical artists. There are also residencies that envision support for an artist beyond the time period they can be in residence. We've heard this week about solidarity residencies, anti-colonial residencies, and eco-feminist anti-patriarchal residencies. Within these important efforts to build a diverse cohort and increase equity and inclusion within the art world through our work, what is at stake and what is at risk? I want to pick up a little bit here on my colleague Stephanye Watts' question last night as well as follows: "How can we lead the field with change and not simply be reactionary?" Finally, as the artist Steffani Jemison commented at the 2019 ISCP event, residencies are not neutral for artists. Residency programs are gatekeepers, and in the professional path an artist takes they not only allow time, and reflection, and resources to enrich their practice, but are listed alongside awards and fellowships frequently on the artist's CV. Adding that many residencies receive public funding, a central question of the panel tonight is: What strategies do our residencies employ to bring diverse artists into the fold, and what is the moral imperative in our work, if there is one, for us to do so? First up, we'll have Eve Biddle, followed by Jamie Blosser, followed by Jeff Kasper, who will read Howardena Pindell's letter.

Eve Biddle: I think it's a complicated question. It's interesting to see so many artists in leadership positions in residencies, especially given what Dylan just spoke about, quoting Steffani Jemison—who was one of our first residents actually in 2010—that residency programs are not neutral and that they are gatekeepers, and I think that that's an important thing to keep in

mind, that sometimes is not forwarded, and doesn't sound great, right? With that in mind, I'm going to speak a little bit about the Wassaic Project. We are an integrated set of programs—there are exhibitions, a residency program, educational, and public programs that are co-created with our community stakeholders and with the artists that we work with, and they're all integrated with each other. They're not siloed. Our teaching artists have been artists in residence here in Wassaic; around 80 percent of our exhibition artists are residency alumni, the rest come from open calls or by invitation. Our public programs are often integrated with artists we've worked with before, either through the residency or the exhibition program, and we're always looking for more ways to integrate them. A great example of that was when last spring we were approached by Douglas Turner to potentially host the first Black femme residency here in Wassaic and we said yes, we were so excited, and then also we hosted a performance and Douglas as a visiting critic. We provided photography support to all the artists and to Ayana Evans and Tsedaye Makonnen, who were in residence. There was a community connection between artists of different disciplines—in that case, it was an architect-sculptor with two performers and academic thinkers—bringing together our artists, creatives, thinkers, critics, makers, and the objects, performers, music, film, and the dance, also together with the local community that lives here in Wassaic, and in Dutchess County and the broader region. There was a smattering of international visitors, but more than half of our visitors come from our local county.

That's really the heart of the work that we're doing, this community-building across unexpected groups. So what are those groups? And where do they come from? And who are the people that come to our programs and participate in our programs as visitors, artists, residents, exhibition artists, teachers, and students? And how are we limited by our own perspectives, inherently limited by the people we know already, who are interested in our program because they feel comfortable with how we've presented ourselves? Whom are we missing because we have presented ourselves in a way that feels unsafe, uninteresting, or irrelevant to, you know, artists, creatives, and audience members who we're not even able to ask what they think because they're not here? We are only able to ask what they think if we recognize our limitations, recognize our

gaps, and seek to find those communities, find those voices, understanding, support, facilities, access, context, community, and peer groups that are not familiar. It's not good enough for us to sit down and brainstorm because I'm not going to think of the same things that you are. So that's something that we think about a lot, that it's not enough to ask the people we already work with, right? We are in a rural location with a lot of land and open space, with wood shops, silkscreen studios, metal shops, and agricultural spaces that are potentially inspiring to artists' practices, including a feed elevator, a former grain animal-food processing plant, and a livestock auction barn where some of our summer studios are. And within those programs, we're constantly trying to think about our resources and how we can further support artists. We offer every resident an onsite interview and a studio and portrait documentation session.

Residencies are incredibly valuable to artistic practices, and I think that we're in a moment in the residency field where how they can be valued and how they can be valuable has exploded. Is it valuable to go to a residency for a week? Is it valuable to go to a residency alone or with your family, and with many distractions? Is it valuable to go for six months? Is it valuable to go with ten other artists whom you've never met and whom you might come away with relationships with? I would argue that those are all valuable. It's up to the artists to recognize what is most valuable to them in the residency field. And conversely, in the residency field we all need to be responsible for making sure that the field provides a huge spectrum of opportunity. You know, there's no one right solution for any artist. Dylan said we can't serve every art aspect of every artist. Okay, but in a sort of ideal dream world, the field can, right? And then, there can be a dialogue between the existing programs and the artists seeking support, and there can be resource sharing. You know, before we started organizing family residencies and became one of the largest family residencies in the country, we would send artists to other family programs. For artists who came to us and applied to the family program and said, "I need child care," we knew of other programs that did that and sent them in that direction. I think that we're in this kind of magical moment in the field where programs, leaders, and administrators are willing to take risks in the structures that we're offering. It is an exciting moment and requires an enormous

amount of responsibility. If we're going to start quoting, we'll quote Spider-Man: "With great power comes great responsibility."

Jamie Blosser: I think this conversation is so important. We just finished our labor residency which was two years instead of one year because of the pandemic, and so the whole artist or, really, the whole person is very much on my mind because the work of our residents critiques the power and privilege of these imposing artificial systems that discourage us from being or bringing our full selves to our work, or to our labor. This topic is also one of the greatest challenges in running an artist residency because everyone coming in has a different background, and socio-economic status, and comes from a different place of privilege, different abilities or disabilities, whether visible or invisible. Many have generational trauma and trauma from their own lives. At the Santa Fe Art Institute, we host between 50 to 70 artists, creative practitioners, and culture workers each year, and we very broadly define these categories. We value diversity in every way, including discipline and geography, and we recognize that we can't be everything to everyone, but we can try to enact our values to be as supportive as possible to those who need support the most.

We have annually themed residencies, which provide a great framework for diverse individuals to foster mutual understanding and connection and help support and enrich their practices. We initiated the thematic residencies in response to an increasing number of artists seeking to deepen their practice and critical engagement with important social issues. We have guiding questions we pose each year with a theme that helps contextualize it. The theme is intended as a catalyst for critical inquiry and cultural exchange. So, for instance, the recent labor theme cohort largely focused on the value of labor—invisible labor, essential labor, emotional labor, as well as labor's relationship to human rights and larger financial, legal, and political systems. The 2022 revolution theme acknowledges these systems and their inherent inequities, and of course, was also developed amidst the backdrop of numerous global social movements, political protests, a global public health catastrophe, the erosion of democracy here in the United States and worldwide, and so with this theme, our 2022 residents will be questioning the validity and

[T]here are residencies that cater now to caregivers or families, residencies that support BIPOC artists, disabled artists, trans artists, LGBTQI-identifying artists, artists from the Global South, or neuro-atypical artists. [. . .] Within these important efforts to build a diverse cohort and increase equity and inclusion within the art world through our work, what is at stake and what is at risk?

— DYLAN GAUTHIER

Focusing so much on supporting the artistic process sometimes does make it difficult to show the work in a conventional way. We're always asking or teaching our audience and our supporters to see the artist, not just to see the art, to know the full story behind the art, which also invites people who otherwise may not be comfortable showing up in the space or feel like they belong there.

— JAMIE BLOSSER

resiliency of our most trusted institutions, and addressing the role that each of us plays in transforming these institutions. We will host 50 revolution-thematic artists, 70 percent of whom identify as BIPOC artists, 70 percent as women, and 20 percent LGBTQ.

At SFAI we prioritize the artistic process, critical inquiry, and cultural exchange. Between the time of application and their being at the Art Institute we know that artists' projects and lives may have changed, especially in the last year, and we really don't require that they remain specific to their original proposal. We don't ask our residents to produce anything specific or leave anything behind for us, and if we ask them to participate in our public programming beyond open studios, we pay them a stipend. Many take the time to experiment, do more ephemeral work, performance workshops, learn new media and research. They are not necessarily focusing so much on a product but on the process itself. This requires us to be flexible and creative in our public programming. It's our responsibility to connect the art and the artists with the public, so we do a lot of public events that bring in the community directly with the residents in interactive and experiential ways. Focusing so much on supporting the artistic process sometimes does make it difficult to show the work in a conventional way. We're always asking or teaching our audience and our supporters to see the artist, not just to see the art, to know the full story behind the art, which also invites people who otherwise may not be comfortable showing up in the space or feel like they belong there. Our building was designed specifically for our residency program by the late Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta, and so our program is also very informed by the buildings. It's not a place for people who need to retreat from the world because the moment they step out of their room, they're in a communal environment. An important aspect of the residency is the cohort that's developed during the four to twelve weeks they're here at the Art Institute. We start each residency by encouraging cohort-building, community-building, and a conversation around our shared values. We acknowledge that this place that we call Santa Fe is still recognized as O'gah'poh geh, which means "white shell water place", and that this place is also part of a much larger sovereign landscape for Indigenous Peoples. We also acknowledge our privilege and create community agreements for our time together. We as a staff have recognized

that a part of our responsibility to respect this work requires building in the necessary time to address issues as they arise.

Beyond our thematic residency, I will talk more specifically about some of the programs that focus on the different needs of our artists. Each July, we host a family residency. We support up to six parent artists and their families to be in residency together by providing an extra room and a small stipend. We can do that partly because of support from the Sustainable Arts Foundation, which is great. The creative access fellowship was an incredible three-year partnership with the Artist Communities Alliance and funded by the Nielsen Foundation, to provide residencies for artists with spinal cord injuries and also for their caretakers to join them. We learned a tremendous amount from our creative access fellows, and we are very eager to find the opportunities to support more artists with disabilities. Our Story Maps fellowship, which is funded in part by the Ford Foundation, is a specific, much longer, nine- or ten-month fellowship for local BIPOC artists to work in partnership with city government and non-arts grassroots organizations on issues most critical to our local community. I really appreciated what Eve said about trying to build community across unexpected groups, which is something that we are trying to do with the Story Maps Fellowship. The Tilt Podcast was started during the pandemic and focused on trying to look at complex issues in new ways. Each episode is an audio collage with many different viewpoints representing the diverse communities and artists from New Mexico.

For those of us trying to create support systems in various ways, we must recognize that we cannot meet all needs. I think we all know that no group is monolithic, and within communities of color there are vastly different levels of privilege, and each body and mind is unique in its abilities and disabilities. Every single parent has a different parenting style, which could not be more evident than with five other families in a communal environment. We also don't have unlimited funding. We can strive, and we do strive, to consistently provide funds for childcare, food, and stipends for increased access and participation. Especially in our public programming, we started to incorporate Spanish and ASL live translations, and we recently received funding to transcribe our Tilt Podcast, but I do think it's critical that all of us are as clear as we can be about our limitations—whether in our facility or in our staff

capacity. We are arts administrators. We aren't social workers, we're not mental health experts or trauma experts, and this is something that, in particular with COVID, we've had to be very explicit about. We are not going to put our staff in harm's way. There are situations where we can feel very out of our depth, so we've started to develop relationships with local providers to call upon as needed. We do this work because it's so incredibly rewarding. There are so many worlds worth of art, ideas, stories, concepts, and visions that have not yet seen the light of day, and learning how to better support the whole artist means that we are collectively helping to build containers where they can be safely held.

Jeffrey Kasper: I'm honored today to read a letter written by Howardena Pindell:

Artists' Residencies / Handicapped / Accessibility

I have attended the following residencies over the past 60 or so years. My first experience was at Cumington in Massachusetts. In the early days, some of the residencies were where wealthy children who were not artists were placed. For them, it was more like a camp. I lived and worked in a barn with another artist. The strongest part of the program was their focus on music. I was unaware of issues for handicapped residents. I was young (1963) and was insensitive to complications which added something extra. But I wasn't aware of anyone handicapped, not knowing that someday I would have to deal with disability. In 1979, I was a passenger in a car accident. For a while, I needed a cane. It was only temporary. Later, I fell down two flights of concrete subway stairs. That made the cane an ever-present instrument. It damaged my left leg but oddly, did not break it. It was dented.

The residencies I attended during that time were:

MacDowell: twice
Art Omi: once
Blue Mountain Center: once

My Cité Internationale des Arts residency in Paris was before I had any injuries. I could deal with the Paris subway system. The only problem was that the Cité des Arts building had an enormous albino roach problem. I attended MacDowell twice. The first time, I used a cane. I struggled over rocks, tree roots and earth. I could make

the trip back and forth to my studio, and they brought me my lunch. My bedroom was on the second floor of a farm near the main building where dinner and breakfast were served. During the second MacDowell residency, I was by then using a walker but could carefully walk up a long flight of stairs to my bedroom which was next to the bathroom. I was able to do one flight of stairs but now am unable to. They gave me a studio near the main building, which I could walk to. Now at 78, going on 79, I cannot do it. I fear ground floor spaces because I do not open the window unless there is a gate. I cannot go back to MacDowell because I cannot do the walk to the studio or sleep in an unsecured first-floor bedroom. Art Omi tried to accommodate disabled artists, but it was a little nerve-racking as you never knew who would transport you to and from the studio, to the dining and living areas. Lunch was served near the studios. Dinner was served outside of the main building. They tried to help but it was nerve-racking waiting, etc. I wish that they had an accessible transport vehicle that could drive us back and forth. Art Omi is a once-a-lifetime experience. They tried their best. Blue Mountain—one also needs to watch and protect non-white and queer residents. Blue Mountain is in the Adirondacks—some of the citizens there could be hostile. They sent someone to pick me up for dinner. I would walk in front of the car and could jump in the car if I got tired. The first time we took the route which was in front of whites' homes—the office at Blue Mountain received a call telling them not to walk in front of their homes again. When we took the longer route, they would not complain. When I went to town for a parade, I was the only non-white. A group of young white men were on the corner. They stared at me like the recent eyes of hate we have seen at pro-Trump rallies. I am glad I was not alone. Try to sensitize yourself and your staff to both racist issues and issues of diversity. At one time, I could use the walker, but right now, I cannot do any residency. I really wanted the Rome Prize but could not manage the ruins and the stairs. One dear friend, Athena LaTocha, leaves for Rome tonight. I want to advocate for all who have to deal with accessibility and diversity issues related to race and women's issues related to sexual assault. There needs to be someone to go to on campus to explain what has happened. As a member of the dominant race, you may be unaware of the stresses on non-whites. And if you are a man, you may be unaware of the stresses on women. Many are unaware of the stress on the disabled.

Howardena Pindell

DG: Thank you to all our speakers. How might we want to define “whole artists” in this conversation, and how much or what type of support are we able to provide in our programs? Let's think through the scope and span of support for the whole artist. And I think maybe I'll go back to Eve to begin to answer this. How do you want to define “whole artists” in relation to the Wassaic Project, and when does the responsibility for residents begin and end?

EB: That's a hard question, but a fair one. I don't know that it's my job to define it in a certain way, but it is my job to be fluid, flexible, and responsive to the needs of the community that we're serving and do that in the best way that we can in some sort of matrix combination of our resources, our staff capacity, and our networks, and to be constantly expanding all of those. One of my co-founders, Jeff Barnett-Winsby, always says if we look totally different in ten years and we're still serving our community, that's success, right? This idea of “Where are we going?” Well, I can tell you *what* we want to be doing and some of the positive outcomes, but *how* we do it is constantly evolving and should be constantly evolving. And in terms of being responsive, one of the things that we do with our artists in our intake is really open the floor to an open conversation, with the caveat that we're not always able to give every artist everything that they ask for. We don't know what people need until we are asked. And that's not to turn all the responsibility around to the artist in any way. Being clear about what our limitations are and what our resources are is important. For example, visiting critics come in twice a month. If someone has anxiety about talking to people, we're not going to ask them to talk to anyone. But we won't know that until we have that conversation. On the flip side, if they need feedback every day, we have a staff of nine. We can do that, but we're not going to be in your studio three times a week unless you're asking for it. I think part of the responsibility of serving a resident artist is creating space for those conversations. I hope that didn't sound like a cop-out or like a dodge, but I think that that's where that work is; it's making space for those discussions.

DG: Not at all; thank you for that response. I also want to put that question to Jamie because you mentioned a whole artist

at the end of your presentation. Can you talk about your thematic residencies, whether these are self-selecting, how long this practice of supporting the artists lasts, and when it starts and ends?

JB: It's definitely self-selecting to some degree. The themes are very social and political, seeking to engage artists who are already working within those realms with the thematic content or inquiry that would match that year's theme. So, it's not even going to be the same artist applying over and over each year. In that sense, it is self-selecting, but I agree with Eve. We are open to both emerging and established artists; local, regional, national, international, it really comes back to the cohort. We don't do social engineering necessarily, but we are looking for folks who fit within a communal environment who can work within that type of dynamic. It's beautiful when the cohort builds and gels into their own dynamic of pure support. As a staff, we need to have time set aside, as much as we can, a little bit of space for things that arise, and conversations that need to happen. Because we are trying to make sure to be somewhat of the glue with that monthly cohort. But until they are here, it's hard to know what they are bringing, what they're needing. It could be very different from what they proposed, it could be a year later from when they submitted the application, and life happens. I think of the whole artist also and whether we can start eroding these boundaries that we all have—they happen because institutions are institutions. Whether or not there is a feeling of safety, comfort, or a sense of belonging, if we can start making that happen, then I feel like we're actually starting to have those conversations at a deeper level. The pandemic has shifted so much of how we present as "arts professionals." I see myself and my peers being so open and vulnerable in these spaces now. It has been instilled in us that we need to be industrious, efficient, contributing our labor to society. In the United States, that sense of industry is patriotic, even. But what we're seeing now is the distinction between what we can contribute with a paycheck and what we can contribute as a whole person. It's made us very unhealthy individually and as a society. The more we can bring ourselves into the work that we do, our whole selves, I think the more relevant and authentic we can be in addressing the needs of our artists.

DG: Thank you. I could not agree more with you. The things that have been revealed over the past year and a half and the acceptance and allowance of bringing ourselves in a new way has echoed in our work. Turning to Jeff, could you talk a little bit about your own practice as an artist as a background for responding to Howardena's letter?

JK: I love being an artist in this conversation, especially given my work. I'm a social practice artist working in design, public pedagogy, and public art, and I focus specifically on this question of social support—how human connections are forged, maintained, and reinforced, especially in times of stress. And that happens within workshops, social spaces, through objects, and other means. I do that kind of work as an arts worker due to the needs I have witnessed in the last decade. Especially since residencies and other arts organizations are growing more collaborative with communities, I am considering different kinds of needs, and how to practice social support. Reflecting on Howardena's letter, I'm reminded of my experiences over the last ten years, as an artist working, being in residence. And though she's speaking about 50, 60 years ago, there are a lot of parallels with what's happening today. Residencies can't address all needs, just like we can't anticipate the spectrum of full accessibility, what that would be, or how we would embody it. I think that residencies and arts organizations need to make sure they have enough resources to provide the necessary kind of care. In recent years I've done a lot of work relative to the disability arts community and advocating for more disability representation in fields of art and design. In speaking with a lot of my peers, we are often put in situations that we're very happy and excited to be a part of, but there are very rarely full conversations about what it would actually be like to participate and whether or not there is the kind of support institutionally to do that. I wanted to start from there.

DG: Thank you so much. One of the things that I drew on from Howardena's presentation in 2019, and which echoed here as well, is the intersectionality of care that she represents, the fact that she comes to residencies as someone who is elderly, disabled, an artist of color, and other things specific to her. And this

question of who feels safe where? Where and how can residencies create safety? Maybe we can operate as a kind of island within the broader community wherever we are? SHIFT takes place in Midtown Manhattan, and there are specific concerns with, you know, safety there that might be different from concerns in the Adirondacks, as she mentions in her letter. She opened a perspective that we should respond to as well as we can here. Let's talk about what we can do to provide care, to meet an artist where they need to be met, in terms of providing safety. Do you have thoughts on that Jeff?

JK: The first thing is to be transparent about limitations and context. For artists who are traveling from different parts of the country or world to participate, there's nothing like having more context in advance about what life will be like, for good and for bad. That's one of the beginning steps of the necessary process of building trust, because artists from intersectional backgrounds frankly don't necessarily trust institutions a lot of the time. I'm speaking personally.

DG: Thank you. Eve, coming from the rural context you've described, can you add to that?

EB: Sure. I can share something that we do. We curate our cohorts to ensure that if a Black artist is coming, they will not be alone in the cohort and will not have visiting critics who are all other. This is specifically for Black artists, Black self-identifying artists. Only during the past four or five years we've started collecting demographic information, which has been hugely enlightening for the gaps in our program but also in how artists represent themselves in their work and statements. It has also given some transparency to artists working in concepts that they maybe shouldn't be working in, giving us a chance to gatekeep those artists, frankly. As a white person, I looked at our demographics five years ago and said, "This is really a diverse group," and then started having all the mid-session and end-of-session conversations with our artists, and they said, "Yes, it is, and I feel isolated." It was like, okay, let's change. And let's talk about it, because it's uncomfortable, but really important. And I think especially important in our community where the county population is majority white.

It's not totally, but that is certainly what's most visible. And that really has to be a context, a great word Jeff used that people are opting into with intentionality. It might not be right for everybody.

We do a lot of work with our community around tolerance, that's sort of the focus of our education program, and I know anecdotally that even outside of our education program, tolerance has gone up, basically, from the past 14 years of our work. But this isn't a social experiment that people just get dropped into because I'm interested in their work. The transparency question is interesting. And it's not just transparency of, like, there's a set of stairs here, and a ramp there, and a handle in the bathroom. It's like, "These are our community's demographics, these are our residency demographics, these are all of our visiting critics, this is our staff, this is our history of exhibitions." And it doesn't always look amazing and great. It feels bad to say, "We were reviewing fellows, and we weren't reviewing their work; we were looking to see whether we could accommodate their needs." And there were two in the maybe 30 or 40 artists that Will and I were looking through who said, "I want to be surrounded by Black people." I can't accommodate that because there aren't a majority of Black people in Wassaic, New York. It doesn't matter how many resources I throw behind my program; that will not change tomorrow or next year. Is that a bad thing? Is it a good thing? It sort of just is, right? We can affect how we interact with our community, how we're influencing our community, how we're welcoming our community, and what we're saying about our community, and contextualizing that. But it's a real limitation.

DG: Thank you Eve, I think you had a lot of points and clarity there. Jamie, do you want to respond to that question as well?

JB: I feel like we could talk for three hours about this. Transparency is like peeling an onion, it's never-ending. We're a 36-year-old organization, and we are very different now than we were at our founding, which I love. I don't want to be the same, I want to continue doing more and more different things to support the artists where they are now, the whole artist in every capacity as much as we can, but that issue of transparency, it's never-ending. It's also fun because it requires a self-inquiry that my staff and

board really enjoy. It's this ongoing critique. And I think that as much as we try to support artists of color, support artists with disabilities, there are going to be things that we're constantly bumping up against with our own capacity. We're a staff of five. We're not big, even though we have a big name. We must always be as clear as possible about those limitations. But also, the gatekeeping question is fascinating because when we're talking about safety, we're talking about people showing up and not being the only person of color or not feeling alone, or performing their identity, an identity that they're supposed to be performing for someone or some institution. But it's also about art. We work with a lot of political and social artists, and we're really questioning and critiquing the ways in which particular political art is premised on provocation. We have a diverse cohort, and increasingly diverse audiences, thankfully. We're working on ways to have a more interactive and experiential approach, and we need to ask, "Who is this art for?" Because something provocative for one person will be absolutely traumatizing to another person, we need to recognize that. And we have these conversations with our artists-in-residence and have had issues around that. It's this funny gatekeeping in ways that contemporary art doesn't always allow for enough of a conversation around because we're all supposed to be, like, exploring, you know, beyond the boundaries and outside of the box, when really, we also need to be caretaking and having important conversations about who it's for. And if we all want diverse audiences, this is an incredibly critical piece of the puzzle. For us in Santa Fe and New Mexico, the gatekeeping goes both ways because there's way too much exoticizing and mythologizing around our local and regional cultures and contexts, and we certainly don't want to invite people in from other places that plan to do any of that. It's a funny and ongoing conversation, and very important.

DG: I wanted to come back to this question of who is missing and how to find out who is missing. Are there best practices you could share regarding casting a wider net? How can we not just react? How can we think about the real change we need to make in expanding the field, knowing that in our roles as gatekeepers, we expand that field in the broadest possible

As a member of the dominant race, you may be unaware of the stresses on non-whites. And if you are a man, you may be unaware of the stresses on women. Many are unaware of the stress on the disabled.

—HOWARDENA PINDELL

We're limited by ourselves, by who we are. So what are the things we need to care about that are not directly affecting us? [...] We need to ensure we are working with people in the communities we are not. And each of us needs to realize that I don't know what's best for really anyone except for myself.

—EVE BIDDLE

Open the space for transformation and allow other perspectives to enter a conversation about an institution's functions and what it offers. I'm looking at critique as an institution.

—JEFFREY KASPER

way? It's a tough question because what's missing is what we're not seeing or finding. How do we go about doing that work?

EB: You must know what you've got to see to know what's missing. Collecting data was a big step for us, asking, "Everyone, what are you seeing that I'm not seeing?" You're always going to get a good answer. When we started 14 years ago, we were just totally naïve, thinking, "If you build it, everyone's going to come." You have to really, really lean hard into your empathy and try to place yourself outside of yourself constantly. We started our family program when we had the resources, when we had the houses, and also when we had kids. We're limited by ourselves, by who we are. So what are the things we need to care about that are not directly affecting us? Howardena said this in her letter, how in the first residency that she went to, she wasn't thinking about and didn't know disabled people. And once she experienced it, it was like, "Oh, this is incredibly present." We need to ensure we are working with people in the communities we are not. And each of us needs to realize that I don't know what's best for really anyone except for myself.

DG: Jeff, how do you address this question through your work in critique and pedagogy?

JK: I've been researching practices for peer support, reorienting critique around support, rather than using other models of critique that can be not so great. One needs to lead from behind, as Eve was touching upon. Open the space for transformation and allow other perspectives to enter a conversation about an institution's functions and what it offers. I'm looking at critique as an institution. We can think about institutions as brick-and-mortar things too, as we are in this conversation. I think it is important for folks to hold open opportunities to shift or change a conversation, and to acknowledge that we have limitations. I love this idea or definition of empathy as not necessarily experiencing what some other person has experienced but holding space to center someone else's experience.

DG: I am going to open it up for audience questions now. This question is posed by Alison Kuo: For residency

staff, what parts of yourself—your own identity and culture—do you bring to residents? I share my love of Chinatown arts, culture and food with my residents. I feel like this is an important part of hospitality.

JB: Food is the glue, for sure! I cook a monthly meal for the residents. It's a simple act that's pretty basic to everyone and universal. And we're in Santa Fe, so hiking and outdoor activities are something that all of our staff share. When we sit together in orientation, we're very much about who we are as a whole person. Our staff introductions are just as long as our resident introductions, so the residents can start to get a glimpse into who we are. And break down some of those institutional barriers a little bit.

DG: Thank you. Eve, did you want to respond too?

EB: Sure. While it's not a requirement to work at the Wassaic Project, almost all of our nine staffers are artists. I think that creative perspective is very present. It's like, we're all trying to keep it together. You know? We're here for each other. My favorite stories are the love stories and the friends stories. Making connections between people is super valuable to me.

DG: That magic that forms between the cohort makes you feel like, "Okay, we're doing something right." So going to another audience question, this is someone who says "I'm building a new residency program which happens to be in the Adirondacks. We often think about how to support non-white artists in an environment where the local community is almost exclusively white. As a baby program, what practical ideological points are, in your experience, the most important in supporting people of diverse identities, with interesting backgrounds, and perspectives in communities that are less diverse." Okay, some advice for a baby residency: what can they do?

JK: I'll just jump in with a quick thing that was touched on a little bit in other contributions. From the perspective of the residency, you should be in dialogue with the community about what you're doing as an institution to set the stage for potentially

longer-term dialogue, and to support the artists themselves. It could be troubling if artists are put into a context where folks who are local to the residency don't have any idea that this is going to happen. And I mean this in the best way—I definitely don't want to be the surprise person in a new place as an artist.

EB: Surprises are bad; isolation is bad. Lastly, if you are not yourself a person of color, do some deep learning and conversation about what safety feels like? It is impossible to guarantee someone's safety. I can't do that. I wish I could, right? And I'm saying that not as someone having been hurt in this context, but I don't know what it feels like to feel safe as a Black person because I am not Black, right? So personally, as a staff member, I have to learn that. And I'll never know, but I can read, I can watch, I can listen, I can ask, and I can share, and I can be transparent. When we had a facilitated conversation a couple of years ago within the context of safe space, we had an artist from another country who did not know this term. She was like, "What are you guys talking about? Are you saying that I make you feel unsafe? Like, what is happening in this conversation here?" It was facilitated by a social worker, by someone who is a professional in this space, in New York State, who is a person of color. So that was a context where we didn't do the research for what felt like a safe space to a person from another culture, where just that term "a safe space" did not make sense and in fact created additional conflict. Do your homework.

JB: There are aspects of a residency program where you want to try to make it as comfortable, welcoming, and productive as possible, but then you have limitations as soon as someone walks outside your building, no matter where you are. It's frightening to know when that responsibility stops and starts as an arts administrator deeply wanting the best for everyone in our programs. We grapple with it all the time, and have a lot of humility around it. How good of a job are we doing trying to have a safer container within the walls? It is just a constant step-by-step thing. We're constantly learning and acknowledging our missteps. Then sometimes when it does work and it does feel like a real sense of security and

safety for folks, that can be a real cocoon kind of situation for when they come back from being out in the world. And that's really lovely, but you can't always guarantee that.

DG: Thank you. Several people are asking a related question, asking for tips and suggestions. One thing that Howardena was really excited about in contributing to this conversation was really a plea to do this work better, to think through this work better. From Howardena's model, let's not make assumptions about what people can and can't do, and what their needs are until they're communicated to you. What I'm hearing from everyone here on the panel, to summarize, is the importance of transparency, the importance of clear communication, the importance of asking questions that are the openings that allow people to then fill in and make requests of you for what they need to feel safe. This concerns the question of hospitality. Is hospitality only for the people who show up? How do you get the people there to begin with? We have one question asking if there are any other situations that radically challenged you as managers of a residency program or changed a situation in the residency due to this specific challenge?

EB: Jamie, at some point, said to support those who need support the most. I wanted to talk about that in terms of financial need for a mom and the models that are out there in the world. There are a lot of work fellowships in colleges, in residency programs. We started with one for the first couple of years. And then we thought, "This is insane! Why would we be asking work of people who need financial assistance? We should be doing the opposite! This is completely backwards and crazy." And we were in a situation where we valued the community interaction of those work-fellow hours. So, we scrapped the work-fellow program completely. I did a completely self-identified needs-based support situation with no request for formal paperwork. Then we asked everyone to volunteer for community work.

There are really ingrained ideas about what we do. You do a monthlong program. You start on the first of the month. You do a work fellowship program. You, you know, provide x, y, and z. Who can take a month off from work? I can't do that. Why am I running

a program like that? So, we chop it up: I need financial support, oh, I'm going to go and also work hours. You need to let yourself break out of things you don't even realize you're assuming.

DG: Jamie, did you have a thought on that as well?

JB: A lot of the challenges that we've had relate to the art itself. The work that people are doing, and who gets to tell what story and represent whose culture. Asking everyone to sit with some basic questions about who they think this is for. And who do they want to experience this work? Because a lot of times, we can think that it's all going to be about these four white walls. Thank god it's not, because there's so much interesting work: multimedia, new media, you know, performance, installation work, that is so exciting and ephemeral, right? It's exciting when people come in from different disciplines and start creeping over to another resident's discipline and having fun collaborating and experimenting. It's a critical question that all of us need to broaden the conversation around.

DG: Jeff do you have any parting thoughts or comments?

JK: Overall, there's vulnerability on all ends of interaction between artists and artists' community, institution, and residency. So, acknowledging that and uplifting that reality is perhaps a good place to start.

Bringing Worlds Together

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Conversation

October 27, 2022

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES and DYLAN GAUTHIER

Dylan Gauthier: First off, I just wanted to say what a pleasure it is to speak with you today, Mierle! Your life and work have inspired me and so many, and I appreciate you making this time to follow up on your keynote at the Rethinking Residencies symposium last year. In this conversation, I'm interested in digging more into the rituals and daily rhythms of your time at the New York City Department of Sanitation, and how your project there over the past 40-odd years was or wasn't based on the traditional understanding of what a residency is. As we are somewhat defining the field of our work within Rethinking Residencies organizations, I think we should delve into what it means to be a "resident artist" within an institution versus an artist becoming a "resident" in a residency program. So, to start, can you describe the genesis of this seminal institutional residency you created, and do you think we can talk about the residency without also talking about your work simultaneously?

Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Well, that will be hard! There were various periods of the residency, which lasted for about 43 years or something like that, that were completely focused on making these projects happen. So, the focus was the project after a project got a certain kind of acceptance or got some money, and

then the residency would be focused on that, which happened many times over several years. But! To start at the beginning.

How the hell did this happen? How did I get there? What happened right after I got there? First, there really wasn't anything, there was no model that I was following, except that I felt that I had, well, I had been making maintenance art. And I wrote a manifesto in 1969 that was kind of revolutionary. That was part one. Part two of the manifesto was a proposal for an exhibition in which I always dreamt I would get the whole Whitney Museum, the old one, and have the exhibition take over the whole museum. The description of the use of the museum that I wrote in 1969, if they had done it, then it would have shifted the art world way, way earlier than what happened. I think it had to be done at that scale. As I said, I wrote, and I sent the proposal to them, and a curator, who I won't mention, sent back a one-half piece of paper that said, try your ideas on or in a gallery before approaching a museum. Like, know your place! Or, you know, you don't have the right to talk to us.

So it didn't happen. Then Lucy R. Lippard invited me to be in a show, and it traveled around the country and even went to London, and it gave me the opportunity to do maintenance art to keep moving forward on this shift in my whole being and work from that point on. There was a very good review of this piece in the *Village Voice*, and I got a call from a woman—the early people who were very good to me were all women, I have to say—Frances Richards called me up, and she said, “I am Commissioner Vaccarello's assistant. How would you like to make art with 10,000 people?” Until then, I made art with me alone. I was the representative maintenance worker in the early pieces, just me or me with one person or two other people like that. And it had swelled up to 300 people by 1976, which I felt was the most people that anybody could ever make art with. So, then Frances called me up, and I said, “I'll be right over.” That was the beginning of everything.

DG: And was the thought for you to be “in residence” at that point? Did she say, “Do you want to be the artist-in-residence at the Department of Sanitation?”

MLU: No, no. David Bourdon, the art critic, wrote this favorable review of my piece with the 300 maintenance workers, who said perhaps Sanitation could support you. This was the

middle of the fiscal crisis, and 60,000 people had been lopped off the city's work rolls during that time. It was a dreadful time, and he suggested that Sanitation apply for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and replace some of its cut budget. So it was a joke, you know, like tongue in cheek. And I thought, oh, like that! That was the thing in my head. You see, I had been doing these performances as an artist, not in a way dissimilar to other artists for that time period. So I met the Commissioner, [Anthony Vaccarello], and thought this is it. I was ready for it.

DG: How did Frances Richards or Commissioner Vaccarello learn about your work, Mierle? Was it the article?

MLU: I was in a show. It was at the downtown branch of the Whitney Museum, so maybe she saw it or read the *Village Voice* review.

DG: Which work was in the show at the downtown Whitney Museum?

MLU: It was *I Make Maintenance Art One Hour Every Day* [(1976)], which the Whitney bought a few years later [in 2016]. So, they didn't give me the whole museum, which they should have! But I came there, and Mr. Vaccarello assigned another woman, Gloria Johnson, who was another assistant working on special projects where they thought they could get some grant money—for example, they tried to grow gardens in landfills, which was very unhealthy, as there were no environmental systems in place. And Vaccarello told her to drive me around and introduce me to the sanitation workers. He said to me, these are terrific people. People don't pay attention to them. Talk to them. They're terrific people. And I was on this path of paying attention to maintenance work, myself and others like that. And I did start meeting people and was blown away—they knew so much and the city so well. It just blew my mind. So for me, it was like going to maintenance heaven. It couldn't have been more delicious. Now, most people, I don't think, would have had that same response, but I did. Perhaps it didn't have the glamour of being an artist in the art world. But what was that? And I thought it had glamour to it because it was everywhere. They were everywhere. That's what got me. I was making this very public work, always out on the street, you know, outside. Inside. And I thought that was just the best.

DG: What do you think Vaccarello was thinking in inviting you in?

MLU: Well, he didn't last long after that. He was a very political Democratic politician. He was very nice, but he wasn't like a heavy-duty leader, and I'm saying that because the next Commissioner was Norman Steisel, who turned the department upside down and inside out, and cared very much about sanitation work. When Gloria Johnson said, "I'm going to drive you around all over town," she could have shown me one garage. I could have done the whole thing thinking that's the place. Instead, we got in the city car, and she took me to all five boroughs, to garages, to incinerators, to landfills, to this and that; she took me to where they trained, and to meet Leroy Adolph, who I think was a friend. Adolph was a New York City Department of Sanitation worker, and he said to me, "Sit down. I'm going to teach you about sanitation." And he was very, very serious about his work. But what I was seeing was the whole system, like the whole wholeness. And I wrote this manifesto about the life instinct and the death instinct. I was primed for an entire ballgame. And I thought that was so glamorous that they would mess around with me. I can't tell you how elated I was.

DG: From the beginning, you were given this access and this education to the inside track, and what else did they offer you, as part of this idea of your working with them in residency—did they give you a studio?

MLU: Well, that's funny, I would carry this massive bag with me every day. And Gloria, who was this very practical type of person, told me that every day you come here you're carrying like your whole apartment. I was like, well, I didn't know where we were going, so I wanted to have a lot of contingency planning in my bag. And she said, "Why don't you put it down there?" So it's an empty desk. So put it down there. The next day I brought a smaller bag. I sat down there, and then it became my desk. And then she said, "Well there's a bigger office right there. Why don't you sit down there?" And that became my office.

DG: So, was it relatively early when you started to have a workspace within the department?

MLU: Yes, I did early on. There was this huge room with my big ideas about life and death, changing everything, and thinking that we must start over again. I had this big room that faced City Hall. And I thought, man, we'll do this like that. By the way, they ended up moving me across the hall when they got staffed up more. And I had sort of a storage room. That's where I ended up with 1/20th the size of my big office. But by then, I didn't make anything. I had the office in my head. I had an office. By the way, the number one rule that's mandatory for any residency, is that the artist must have a place that is theirs.

DG: Mierle, why do you call these spaces that they gave you offices and not studio spaces? Is there a differentiation for you?

MLU: I know. It's a little complicated. I think I called it an office because other people had offices. These were offices in headquarters within office buildings. So maybe I called it an office to give myself a kind of legitimacy. Also, I didn't make things there. I was raising money and planning what I needed. When I needed a studio, then I would work in a transfer station, and I got the whole transfer station, like 65,000 square feet, or their truck-painting shop, that is, these vast spaces, because the work was always pretty big. I look at the current PAIR program, the Public Artists in Residence, and you know that the Department of Cultural Affairs says that I inspired this new program. They get paid, and they get one- to two-year residencies. I proposed that in 1983 and it went a bit up the ladder up to the Commissioner, Bess Myerson, who was one of the first Cultural Affairs commissioners. See, I was trying to get paid myself. Like Sanitation would say, if I mentioned it, they would say, "Look, Ukeles, you know, things are tough. If we pay you, we'll have to cut a street sweeper." I didn't want that. So, I had to say, you know, I get the picture. I had to say no. If this artist-in-residency program could come out of the executive budget and not get taken out of the agency's budget, they wouldn't feel like they're losing something. I think the PAIR artists are getting paid \$40,000 a year, which is great.

DG: To back up a few years before 1983, you came up with this idea to have artists work within city agencies. When do you start calling what you're doing with DSNY a residency? And at that point, what's your understanding of a residency?

MLU: I was so full of ideas and plans, and I did a huge amount of research, by the way, just huge because I didn't know anything about the department, the system, operations. I loved all of it. But, it was focused on proposing a set of proposals. At first, I covered the waterfront, covered everything they do—people, operations, the landfills like that—because I wanted the whole deal. Now, when was it? 1977. The Commissioner, who was so incredibly supportive of my work, said we got permission from the Board of Ethics of New York City to try to raise money for my part of Creative Time's Art Parade, the grand finale, the *Ballet Mécanique for Six Mechanical Sweepers* and *Ceremonial Sweep*. As the city couldn't ask for money on my behalf, they wanted to have a fundraiser, so we were in his office, and he was putting his edits on a whole bunch of letters to industry people to raise funds, and he looked at me, and he said, "What are we going to call you? We can't just have your name. What are we going to call you?" I said, "How about Artist in Residence?" "Good." That was in 1983. I had been operating without this title, although that's how I was operating.

DG: I was curious too because there were a number of sort of art in everyday life movements and collectives at work in the 1960s and one of the ones that jumped out at me you know, I was wondering if you were familiar at the time with something called the Artist Placement Group that was started by Barbara Steveni and her husband John Latham?

MLU: Were they in England?

DG: Yeah, they were in the United Kingdom and had this idea that artists could be placed within industries and municipal offices. This was contemporaneous to your becoming Sanitation's artist-in-residence, but I was just curious if these things were ever in the back of your mind.

MLU: What year was that?

DG: This was in the mid-sixties, 1966 maybe, but it was active into the late 1980s.

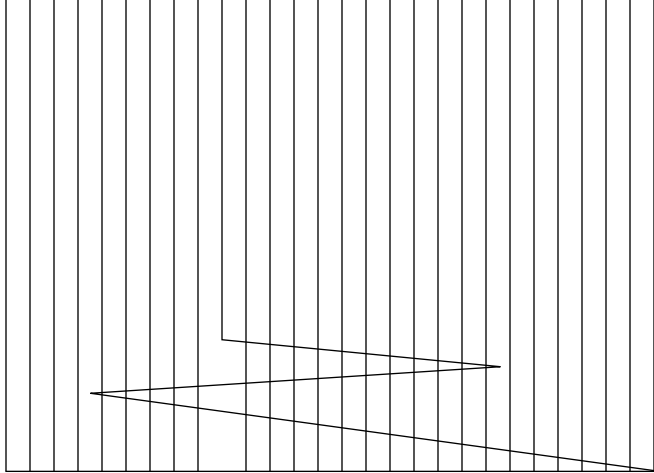
MLU: I was not aware of it then. But I always felt that there was much more government support for individual artists in England than we get here.

DG: And did you have a direct experience of that in the United Kingdom?

MLU: Yes. When I was in the show at the ICA in London. Lucy R. Lippard curated a show called *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists* in 1980, and it was half American artists and half British artists. They were very, very different from here. It was me, Suzanne Lacy, Martha Rosler. I think Bonnie Sherk. And then a whole bunch of British artists who were there. They talked about my practice through a very theoretical, structured way of speaking. It was very different. And I saw how they positioned themselves in relation to the government. To enable themselves to get their work bought by the government and to get studios from the government. They were in a structure. The Americans were not in any structure at all. We had no such structures. And that was in 1980.

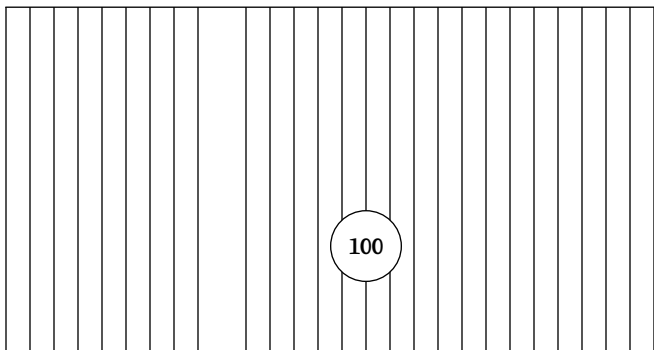
DG: This feels relevant, and it's interesting because Marie Yates was an Artist Placement Group-affiliated artist who was in that same show with you, curated by Lippard, and I imagine some of the British artists would have known that context. But going back to your experience, as the first artist I know of who became a resident artist within a city, municipal organization or municipal department in the United States, you were the inspiration for many of the city and municipal artist residencies that have cropped up more recently. But coming back around to the PAIR program today, how much did you have to do directly with the structure of the PAIR program? Were you involved in thinking through what the structure would be for PAIR?

MLU: Well, I'll tell you, in one way. One way I did not get involved in setting it up initially when I proposed it in 1983 was when Cultural Affairs asked me if I wanted to administer the PAIR program that I was proposing, and I said no. I said, "I don't do that. I *make*. I'm an *artist*." But I was thrilled that this was happening, and in 2016, with my show at the Queens Museum, the first public program was with artists from the Public Artists in



I was often the only person in this really scary building if I had deadlines. Even though I like this notion of being a real person with other real people, that was one divergence. The second divergence was every two weeks when people would get a paycheck. [. . .] I was not in that system. That's where the art part came from. A different world where I needed and wanted, and I did what I had to do. You do what you must to make your work.

— MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES



Residence program. And while I wasn't involved in the creation of the program, there's one exception: Tania Bruguera, who I think was appointed as the first artist, called me up and said, "I have to talk to you." We had a big meeting, and she said, "I think they want me to sign something that says if they tell me not to talk about this, I won't talk about it." Now, imagine telling her that, right?

I mean, it was really funny. I said, "Do not sign anything," there are two rules: They do not tell you what to do. And the work belongs to you. So, those two rules, that's all. That's my involvement. They can't tell you what to do. Otherwise, it's not your art. And you own the work. Earlier, I had heard city officials say, oh, we could get artists to solve problems. They spoke about proposing a project to the artist, saying, "We have this problem, and we want you to work on it." Now, if the artists heard this and decided of their own free will that they would like to work on that, I don't have a problem with that, but artists don't work for the agency. It was essential that it be made very clear, or else they're a creative consultant or something, but that's something else. It's not an artist. You have got to be tough about that. I think many agencies would say, no, thank you, we're not doing that. With Sanitation, nobody ever told me what to do because there was no structure. Never. They often would say no. I would propose something. They would say yes or maybe or let's see or blah, blah. But they often would say no. I asked for a lot. And I got a lot also. I didn't get as much as I asked for, but they wouldn't say, Ukeles, we want you to do blah blah blah blah.

DG: To answer this question about your daily experience of working with Sanitation in the early days, what was your rhythm? Was it like, every day you go to Chambers Street. Like, you take the train down from Riverdale . . .

MLU: I took a bus, then I took the train and then took another train. It was a long hour and a half each way.

DG: And then you go up to your office, and you get a coffee and, what was that rhythm like over the 43-plus years? What did you do every day while you were there? What were your interactions with the workers? What, aside from making your work, which is the most key point, what was the residency like?

MLU: You're asking a complicated question because I was making things up as I went along. Except that I tried to be there for the whole workday, to pattern my work time with their work time. It was a bridge of communication, just being there. So what I did every day after I got my cup of coffee. I tried to raise money. I spent a lot of time applying for grants. A lot. And that wasn't easy. I wish I had help. I didn't. I didn't make money so I couldn't hire help. For example, what I did at 51 Chambers, anybody could wander in 51 Chambers. And I would often notice that where I would diverge from the pattern of the eight-hour workday was that I often worked until twelve, one, or two in the morning. I was often the only person in this really scary building if I had deadlines. Even though I like this notion of being a real person with other real people, that was one divergence. The second divergence was every two weeks when people would get a paycheck. They just took off and got money in the bank. And every two weeks, it made me feel bad. I didn't have a check. I didn't get a check. I noticed, but I never said anything. I kept trying to convey this notion that art is real, that artists' actual artwork is like real work. And those two cases where people in Sanitation, in the bureaucracy, if they stayed after work, except for the commissioners who often would stay in or work much longer, the other people would get overtime. They went home, or they got paid overtime. I was not in that system. That's where the art part came from. A different world where I needed and wanted, and I did what I had to do. You do what you must to make your work.

Now, in terms of interaction, the people I met were limited because I was in a headquarters office building. Like at 51 Chambers at the beginning, the people I met would be urban planners or people developing incinerators or the origins of recycling. Although the executives at Sanitation hated recycling at the beginning. I mean, now they are gung ho and all that. Still, there was a war between the people that wanted engineering solutions like burn it up, burn it all up, no matter if the fumes were going into residential neighborhoods, eventually killing us. This whole incinerator plan took over New York for several years. I wasn't involved in the work that was happening.

DG: Do you have advice for residencies or institutions looking for longer-form or longer-term engagement? I'm not necessarily imagining 43 years long, but longer than a summer or a month. How long should an institution plan to

commit to supporting an artist for it to be fruitful? To develop a longer-term engagement or dedication to their work?

MLU: Five years. It can be ten or five years, but five years is good. That's solid. That's a wonderful question because trying to do something significant in a bureaucracy is very hard, and you must develop people who will support you. In a bureaucracy, people learn very well how to say no and slow things down, and people who say, let's take risks, are rare. Five years gives you a kind of solidity, so yes, I want to stick with five years. You know, it depends on the artist, and it depends on the work also.

Another thing is I feel that I wasted a considerable amount of time on fundraising, on a lot of administrative stuff that if I could have had an administrative person helping me and a fundraising person helping me and a curator helping me also to ask the questions that a curator might ask—that could sharpen and compress the process, making things happen faster. I'm not so happy that I spent all those years. A lot of it could have been way quicker with more help.

DG: One striking thing is your ability to withstand for as long as you had through so many different administrations, and nobody at any point said, "We have to get rid of this Ukeles person."

MLU: True, and luckily some other people said, "Oh, listen, she doesn't cost us anything!"

DG: Well, it might have made your work easier if they'd been paying you, but in terms of resources, what do you think is the crucial thing beyond having a studio or an office or a desk to put your bag down on, can you describe an ideal ecosystem of support that an artist needs from a residency?

MLU: It's a fine line between supporting an artist and bossing you around, telling you what to do. They didn't do any of that.

DG: But this idea that you could provide an administrative assistant for an artist or a grant writer for an artist or a curator who would work alongside an artist who's in residency as a kind of tool, that would be helpful to an artist working today.

MLU: All those things. But I think the notion of a residency also maybe it's a kind of feature; I don't know how to frame it. Suppose a residency could connect you with someone to teach you. You know, this isn't just a few blocks. This is a place. It has a cultural history. I mean, it could get skewed by whoever the teacher might be, but that helps us, helps the artists get educated. Then don't tell them what to do. Gotta give the artist their space. That's absolute.

DG: Have you ever been on a more traditional residency?

MLU: No, no, I was a visiting artist at Skowhegan one year, but I wasn't an artist-in-residence. But I went there and thought, oh, this is so nice. Look, you know, they are well taken care of there. So in many places, they put your food out, you know? I was at Montalvo Arts Center in California, and maybe it was called a residency, but really it was a project. I know artists that have gone for the summer on a residency, and it always sounded so nice. It just sounded wonderful. I wish I could have done that. I never did that, ever.

DG: Could you have done what you have done without being the resident artist at DSNY? Would there have been other ways of doing it?

MLU: Great question. I was able to get very high-level information. Usually, that was a benefit of being inside. And when they would approve of stuff, I wonder if I would have known how much to ask for. I got this Percent for Art grant that's supposed to be permanent. Then up until COVID, I had \$1.2 million from Sanitation. Then Cultural Affairs threw in another \$1.2 million for this one project. And then, I brought in an excellent engineer. He did [David Hammons'] *Day's End*. He's just a terrific engineer. He said, I need another million dollars. And then COVID came, and the whole thing froze. And it's still stuck. That's where being one artist, not a landscape architecture firm, not a group, not outside, is not as fruitful a position. Permanent things are usually built by outside consultants who are brought in. So in that sense, I think that can get into difficulty, which I'm in right now. Residencies, to me, sound like places where people make temporary work.

DG: This is a really good point you make. I never really thought about it. The temporariness of residencies is because they usually are shorter term. But what could be a model for a residency that supports longer-term work, then?

MLU: It's really interesting to think of what that would be. Everybody I deal with is like a company, a corporation, a consultant with their own people. And it's me. It's tough. It's a pain in the ass—very big pain in the ass work. What's interesting is the fiscal state of the environment; I think it impacts residencies a lot. Yeah, maybe I'm like, if things are tough, it's tough for you to get funding help. But sometimes, like the fiscal crisis, I always felt helped because a lot of people and chiefs at Sanitation were so hysterical that there was no money for them to fix the trucks. I mean, things were desperate. They thought, what can she do, you know, if we bring in an artist, let her do whatever she wants to do. It was like a chaotic environment that was helpful for me. It was.

DG: What else could municipalities or residencies do to support artists better?

MLU: There's so much to do! Also, there are random vacant spaces in big agencies, so Sto Len has parked himself in the center repair shop, Sanitation's main repair shop. It's as big as the Empire State Building. My mirrored garbage truck is there. I have my art and my ceremonial arches in another section. I have a container there, even. These are largely places that a lot of Sanitation forgot about. So he's creating spaces, finding stuff, and bringing stuff back that people forgot about. So he's bringing like his own whole world into this fabulous, you know, multiple worlds. Yeah, that's what residencies can enable. I think. This bringing worlds together.

DG: That's a good subtitle for this piece or this whole symposium. I wish you had said that earlier!

MLU: It's important to give artists a feeling like there are places out there for them to grow. It's so important, especially now, when things are so expensive, and it's difficult for artists to make this work. I'm so glad you're working on it.

Residencies Epistemologies

VIVIANA CHECCHIA

Interesting sparks and durable connections can start from a residency. Indeed, this text was generated from a residency panel discussion. As Senior Lecturer at HDK-Valand, University of Gothenburg, I undertook a one-month curatorial residency in August 2021 at Kai Art Center in Tallinn, Estonia.

The working concept in the application focused on the role of artistic research—a mapping of research-based cultural centers around the world. My point of departure was very specific: in my view, limited attention has been directed to the incredible work developed by art research centers, artistic research programs, and those university residencies that have brought together art practitioners and academics as well as the general public.

My aim with this research was to reanimate and reassert some of the dynamics and outcomes of research-based artistic practices, and the contexts that can support the same. And, arguably, these dynamics and outcomes have been somewhat taken for granted by the cultural sector.

At the end of the residency, Kai Residency Curator Kari Conte, my co-resident curator Flóra Gadó, and I participated in a public panel discussion to reflect on our experiences. Flóra and I presented our curatorial interests, shared thoughts on our time in

Tallinn, and participated in a conversation moderated by Kari. She was happy to hear that our visits went well and glad that local artists and curators had welcomed both of us.

With her long experience as Director of Programs and Exhibitions at the International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York, Kari was keen to ask me more about what the distinction between art research centers (as I call them) and art residencies might be. I could tell that Kari could not see a clear difference—and honestly, I could see her point.

Kari's question was a good one, and it has stayed with me. While preparing for my new job as Residency Curator at Delfina Foundation, London (which I began the winter after that wonderful residency in Estonia), I kept thinking about what art research centers and residencies have in common. These two platforms or modes in the arts have very different natures, funding infrastructures, venue locations, and policies—but they share similarities in time frames and methodologies, and both contribute to the art ecosystem, supporting the same endeavor: artistic research.

Here, I would like to focus on that commonality and accentuate the relevance of research both modes can recreate in the art sector and beyond. Learning from art research centers, perhaps especially those aligned with universities, I wish to concentrate on the potential of art residencies not only to support the production of artistic research but also to lead in generative practices that can facilitate knowledge sharing and distribution.

It is important to acknowledge that the residency format has been the subject of conferences, symposia, and programs as well as academic papers and publications. An important reference point is the 2015 International Meeting of Residences in Milan, arranged by AIR – artinresidence and curated by Angela Serino. Angela also served as moderator and edited the subsequent publication, *Residences as Learning Environments*.¹

The debate developed throughout the conference, and published proceedings focused largely on self-education and knowledge production. The participants asked if residencies could be

1 Angela Serino, *Residences as Learning Environments* (Milan: Fare, 2015), accessed May 4, 2023, https://issuu.com/air-artinresidence/docs/international_meeting_of_residences

learning environments equally valuable for both collective and personal self-development, and if they could play a complementary role in the educational paths offered in the academic market or as learning programs delivered by art institutions.

Participants were diverse, covering vast geopolitical areas and residency typologies. Sara El Adl, Curator of the Townhouse Gallery in Cairo, Egypt, was one of the contributors, and her text, “The Learning Curve of Hosting Experience,” explored how the residency institution itself can be considered a “learning subject,” shaped mainly by the processes instigated by the resident artists.

Angela Serino’s text, “Sustaining Open Processes and Unframed Knowledge with Long-term Effects,” conveyed some specific questions and possible hypotheses:

- In what sense do residencies produce knowledge?
- If residencies really are learning environments, who learns from whom?
- What and how do we learn?
- Who are the actors in this exchange? Is it just the resident artist, or are other figures or protagonists involved in such processes?

Key to both those publications, of course, is a grasp of what artistic research is or can be. In her anthology *See It Again, Say It Again: The Artist as Researcher* (2011),² Janneke Wesseling, Professor Emeritus in the Practice and Theory of Research in the Visual Arts, Faculty of Humanities, Leiden University, explains that the idea of art-as-research is embedded in art itself, an idea that was particularly forceful from the conceptual art of the 1960s onward. Conceptual artists made clear that art could not be understood in isolation from history and politics: art is by default *cognitive*, and art is in itself a “way to learn.” This was the moment in which critique and self-reflexivity became a deliberate strategy in art.

During the 1970s, reflection and research became closely bound with many examples of artistic practice—so connected, in fact, that the demarcation between the research and the work of art

2 Janneke Wesseling, ed. *See It Again, Say It Again: The Artist as Researcher* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2011), accessed May 4, 2023, <https://sabinasoyer.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/janneke-wesseling-see-it-again-say-it-again-the-artist-as-researcher.pdf>

In an art world operating at a very high speed, the residency offers a possible moment of calm and intellectual meditation. This temporality differs greatly from the conventions of time pressure and delivery attendant in normative academic research enterprises. Within the art residency mode, opportunity and funding are most commonly distributed with no stipulations on research objectives or deliverables beyond the obligation to research. This environment recreates some interesting conditions of freedom that are rarely offered to practitioners in the arts as they develop their professional practice.

was nearly impossible to discern. It is from this historical legacy that we can claim and champion a different position and significance for the work of art—not as the end product of the artist’s unique thinking, but as a phase within a research process that reveals knowledge in practice, one that modestly takes its place in a continuum.

Wesseling’s rich publication contains an essay by Hilde Van Gelder, Professor of Contemporary Art History at KU Leuven, Belgium, called “Art Research.” Van Gelder advocates for art research as “a promising new discipline with a substantial potential impact on other disciplines.” The impact arises from the epistemological freedom of art and the potentiality of art research to expand other disciplines and parameters. Van Gelder believes that art research will allow for “a more distanced meta-reflection on topics that are the subject of fundamental research in other domains.” Through time, artistic research can create “an indirect reflexive effect radically different from any reflection seen within a specific discipline.”

This cognitive process necessitates that different devices become active and meaningful. The art residency offers the condition for that research phase and for that continuum to appear. In an art world operating at a very high speed, the residency offers a possible moment of calm and intellectual meditation. This temporality differs greatly from the conventions of time pressure and delivery attendant in normative academic research enterprises. Within the art residency mode, opportunity and funding are most commonly distributed with no stipulations on research objectives or deliverables beyond the obligation to research. This environment recreates some interesting conditions of freedom that are rarely offered to practitioners in the arts as they develop their professional practice.

And this dimension of time (perhaps more particular to the art residency than the art research center) seems central to free play in generative knowledge exploration and production. Artist Robert Smithson said it well in *Artforum* magazine in his essay “A Sedimentation of Mind: Earth Projects” (1968),³ when he claimed

3 Robert Smithson, “A Sedimentation of Mind: Earth Proposals,” *Artforum International* 7, no. 1 (September 1968), 44–50. Accessed June 19, 2023, <https://www.artforum.com/print/196807/a-sedimentation-of-the-mind-earth-proposals-36602>

that “For too long the artist has been estranged from his own time.” Smithson argued for respect for the artist’s time: a natural part of the artist’s work and research and an antidote to acceleration and superficial artistic engagements.

On this point of durationality and distinctiveness, the publication *Re-tooling Residencies* (2011) is a useful reference point to emphasize my focus further. Published by CCA Ujazdowski Castle and A-I-R Laboratory Warsaw, it included “Artists in Flux” by Johan Pousette, former director of IASPIS (International Programme for Visual and Applied Arts). Pousette neatly pinpointed the core concern here when he observed that:

In a society running at an increasingly frenetic pace, expectations of measurable results, income generation, and instrumentalisation of the arts is creating a polarisation between populist art and rigorous artistic research. Residency centres are among the few places today that can provide free zones for the kind of experimental practice that is so badly needed.⁴

There is also a point to be made about what might be labeled the ethic of the artistic residency. As Christine Greiner, Professor of Politics and Arts of the Body, set out,⁵ in a present where we are trying to find counterpoints to the Anthropocene, decrease human centrality, and aim for a “multinatural” society, we might do well to see the artistic residency create a shift away from the cellular thinking of the art system, with its fascination with the personality of the practitioners—their CVs, their social capital—and the concomitant interest of many residency participants. To focus deliberately on the artists’ research might contribute to this shift, just as instances of sharing that research might contribute to the continuum of artistic research and its impacts writ large.

4 Johan Pousette, “Artists in Flux,” in *Re-tooling Residencies*, ed. Anna Ptak (Warsaw: Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, 2011), 58. Accessed on May 4, 2023, https://reshape.network/uploads/document/file/47/ReToolingResidencies_INT.pdf

5 Christine Greiner, “Cultural Cannibalism and the Subversion of Monoculture in Brazil,” in *The Aesthetics of Ambiguity*, eds. Pascal Gielen and Nav Haq (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2020), 135–47.

Residencies could generate programs based on the specificities and commonalities of their residents' research interests and methods. This sort of program could provide a temporary support structure for developing the practices hosted by residencies. The residency becomes part of a trajectory by offering a space to observe and share ideas, tools, and methods, to analyze them and sometimes to test them. Even if ideas and approaches are embryonic, it is important to move to the ethic of open knowledge sharing, hoping for what anthropologist Anna Tsing would call the natural contaminations that can emerge and thus illuminate the limits of certain assumptions and disciplines.

Lastly, to see residencies as time-rich events focused on open and diverse research and knowledge sharing, positioned in a continuum of iterations of ideas and possibilities, is a form of important solidarity. From the Russian founder of anarcho-communism, Pyotr Kropotkin, comes the idea of "mutual aid," not Darwinian selection. Before becoming a social anarchist, Kropotkin was a geographer who spent years in Siberia studying the local flora and fauna and the geological formations in that particular part of the globe. From this study, he saw a principle of mutual aid in the structures of nature, in contrast to the more common Darwinian understanding of evolution corresponding with the survival of the strongest entities.

Residencies can function on the basis of mutual aid, importing the idea from the biological world to the realm of the artistic and curatorial residency. Differences and commonalities, usual and unusual connections arising from this interaction between the residents' research can generate a dynamic of mutual aid in developing their iterations, assisted by the structure of a public program.

The chain of mutual aid is not restricted to the boundary of the residency: talks, lectures, workshops, screenings, visitors to the residencies, and visits in collaboration with other organizations, created with experts from different fields and sectors, will all become shared elements with extended participation in this evolutive dynamic. Everybody will be invited to be part of the same biological mechanism, one based more on solidarity and mutual support than competition.

Temporary Studios

TANIA CANDIANI

1. Distance

Conversation at a distance.

Arriving at a residency involves the excitement of first times. A residency always carries the freshness and excitement of walking into a city for the first time.

To get to a place for the first time I like to know the place beforehand. Peering into the distance and looking for something that resonates from afar.

Some story, or an image, or a landscape, that begins to speak to me from a distance.

A communication from desire and guessing.

To arrive at a place that we have never walked before but that already holds, from a distance, the promise of something.

2. The temporary studio

A lamp makes us feel at home if it is in the place where we feel it should be and has the bulb with the temperature

and intensity that welcomes us when we enter and turn on its light. That light defines the contours and perimeter of that place, that temporary space that becomes home/shelter/laboratory. Rearrange as a rule of the game.

To make one's own configuration of the place where one arrives. A form of appropriation but also a way to immediately connect with the work environment.

The first time I participated in a residency, it took me several weeks to understand the space that would be my temporary studio for a few months.

I was a kind of visitor, strange, cornered by the arrangement of the furniture, by the lighting, by the position of the tables, and then my body understood it: the accommodation/re-accommodation, reconfiguration of the studio made me inhabit it immediately, and that's how the magic began.

The wonder of transiting and thinking from a space that contains us (diaphanous, recently transited and discovered), as a possibility for discovery.

The space itself is an invitation.
A seduction, a new rhythm to dance to.

3. The residencies as temporary laboratories of serendipitous encounters. The chance encounter.

Amplifying, in the acoustic sense, the possibility of the chance encounter. Of play and chance. To take advantage of wandering, conversing and snooping, and to understand everything as something newly discovered. The porous surface of the whole body in a perceptive, absorbing state.

Extrapolated, heightened senses,
awakened to see/hear with all the senses.

Letting ourselves be moved and amazed.

4. To start doing

A lot of walking is delightful but we must find the discipline. Organize the calendar. Find the times of each day, the organization of the days based on the light/

weather/ways of each place. New is the place, new are the possibilities. Each place has thousands of stories but there is always one or a few that blossom in us.

Each place also has its materials, its craftsmen, and its environments, which means the beautiful possibility of peeking into/working with other materialities.

Making as a search. To take advantage of that circumstance of the immaculate space that is the temporary studio, which is also conducive to rethinking the practice.

Each residency has brought learning and has given new edges to my artistic practice and to me as a person.

- We are what we inhabit.
- We configure and are configured.
- Places adorn us.
- To refurnish the temporal reality, in the mind and in space.
- Create new calendars and times, let the body understand and accommodate to the new reality.
- To walk, to go out to look for what the place has to find. Promote serendipity, joy, and enjoyment.
- The opportunity to rewrite ourselves. To reconfigure ourselves.
- To work, to produce from the youth of a place, from the freshness of the newly discovered street.
- Let us displace and place ourselves.
- To cook for others. To bring a part of yourself to the table and share.
- The intrinsic generosity of our circumstance. To respond to it with an attentive and sensitive ear.
- The constant possibility of mutual learning.
- Freshness. Improvisation. Unfazed. Joy.

Translated from Spanish to English by Tania Candiani.

Rethinking Residencies Symposium [2021] Schedule

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2021
3:00–4:30 pm (ET)

Welcome remarks
Eriola Pira

**Introduction to
Rethinking Residencies**
Kari Conte

Keynote Conversation

This conversation between artists Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Tania Candiani will reflect on both artists' respective residency experiences. Since 1977, Ukeles has been the official, unsalaried artist-in-residence at New York City's Department of Sanitation. Candiani has participated in numerous residency programs throughout North America, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Europe.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Artist
Tania Candiani, Artist
Moderator: Christina Daniels,
Head of Residencies and
Classes, Pioneer Works

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2021
2:00–3:00 pm and 3:30–5:00 pm (ET)

**The History of
Artist Residencies**, 2:00 pm
The term artist-in-residence appeared in the early 20th century as a temporary position within academies. Artist-led communities such as Black Mountain College prefigured many norms of today's residencies. However, Irmeli Kokko writes that

artist residencies as stand-alone institutions emerged only in the 1990s, and since then, have quickly grown to become one of the most critical and widespread support institutions for contemporary artists. While the term is ubiquitous today, there is little awareness of the historical currents or divergent practices that brought us to today's status quo. Kokko has written one of the most exhaustive histories on the subject in a dissertation that shaped what is perhaps the most comprehensive publication on residencies to date, 2019's Contemporary Artist Residencies: Reclaiming Time and Space, published by Valiz. Kokko will address how residencies came about and the complex programs they currently offer so that by understanding where we came from, we can better understand where to go in the future.

Irmeli Kokko, Curator

The Environment and Residencies, video proposition

Eileen Jeng Lynch, Curator
of Visual Arts, Wave Hill
Gabriel de Guzman, Director of
Arts & Chief Curator, Wave Hill

Representation, Accountability, and Solidarity in Institutions and the Artists they Serve

, 3:30 pm

As residency programs grapple with complex geopolitical and affective realities, how do the values of their residents and the institutions' locations inform their practices? Residency programs are impacted by the personal, social, and global circumstances of the artists they serve. Determining which of these issues deserve or demand an organizational response, and how to transform topics that could be divisive into conditions for support

is the responsibility of an effective organization. How do the roles of host and guest play into these dynamics most productively? This panel will also address questions such as: What lessons can organizations draw from social and political movements to better support artists? How do institutions create the most conducive environments for artists to explore complex ideas and practices?

M. Carmen Lane, Founder and
Director, ATNSC/Center for
Healing & Creative Leadership
Laila Hida, Founder, LE 18
Francesca Masoero, Assistant
Director and Curator, LE 18
Emily Jacir, Artist and Co-founder
and Founding Director of Dar Yusuf
Nasri Jacir for Art and Research
Emily Pethick, Director,
Rijksakademie
Moderator: Stephanye Watts,
Program Manager, Recess

Curatorial Residencies, video proposition

Susan Hapgood, Executive
Director, International Studio
& Curatorial Program

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021
2:00–3:30 pm and 5:00–6:30 pm (ET)

**New Models for Communing:
Residency Programming
and Strategies**, 2:00 pm
Residencies are increasingly looking outward and developing new programmatic and structural models centered on community engagement, local embeddedness, ecology, and civic partnerships. How has the pandemic reoriented residencies toward their local communities? Can online residencies still be situated

within their host communities? How have new digital realities impacted ideas of community? Presentations by residency directors will be followed by a conversation.

Robin Everett and Sanna
Ritvanen, 2021–22 Chairs,
Mustarinda Association
Catherine Lee, General
Director, Taipei Artist Village
Sally Mizrachi, Executive
Director and General
Coordinator, Lugar a Dudas
Moderator: Nicholas Weist,
Director, Shandaken Projects

Residency Decolonization, video proposition

Lizania Cruz, Artist

Structures of Support for the Whole Artist

, 5:00 pm

How can residencies support intersectional artists' identities, needs, and expectations, beyond their professional practices? From parent artists to artists of color to disabled artists and more, how can residencies be more accessible to the "whole artist"? This panel will be a conversation among artists and residencies.

Eve Biddle, Executive
Co-Director, Wassaic Project
Jamie Blosser, Executive
Director, Santa Fe Art Institute
Howardena Pindell, Artist
and Distinguished Professor,
State University of New
York, Stony Brook
Moderator: Dylan Gauthier,
Director, Elizabeth Foundation for
the Arts Project Space Program

The Future of Residencies, video proposition

Christina Daniels, Head of
Residencies and Classes,
Pioneer Works



Abrons Arts Center

Abrons Arts Center's AIR-space Residency annually supports New York City-

based artists through commissions, studio space, and professional development opportunities. Abrons Arts Center is a home for contemporary interdisciplinary arts in Manhattan's Lower East Side neighborhood. A core program of the Henry Street Settlement, Abrons believes that access to the arts is essential to a free and healthy society. Through performance presentations, exhibitions, education programs, and residencies, Abrons mobilizes communities with the transformative power of art.

abronsartscenter.org



EYEBEAM

Eyebeam was established in 1998 by John S. Johnson as a resource for artists to engage creatively with technology in an experimental setting. Originally located in a warehouse in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, Eyebeam supported makers and thinkers who spearheaded game-changing projects like reBlog, the first-ever online "sharing" protocol, and Fundrace, the first geocoding of public campaign finance data. Many more "firsts" were had at our studios over the years, including the C-based creative coding platform, OpenFrameworks, and the first comprehensive rap lyrics database, the Rap Research Lab by Tahir Hemphill. Eyebeam has committed to amplifying the voices of artists, inventors, designers, and engineers who show us the horizon of what is possible, creating space for them to imagine the future. Society's ever-shifting relationship to technology can be charted through the work of those that have come through our doors over the past two decades. Eyebeam continues to be a power station for invention, providing a space for experimentation that propels and uplifts the cultural conversation. Eyebeam has opened its breadth of support to equitably compensate over 125 artists each year through its diverse programming. Now more than ever, Eyebeam radically centers artists in the cultural conversation, giving them the support to both interrogate and re-imagine what technology can be and who it is for.

eyebeam.org



Fire Island Artist Residency (FIAR) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2011 that brings lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, intersex, and queer identifying emerging visual artists to Fire Island—a place long steeped in LGBTQ

history—to create, commune, rest, reflect, and contribute to the location's rich artistic history. Each summer FIAR provides free live/work space to visual artists who work, socialize, and immerse themselves in the Fire Island community for four weeks, during which they are visited by renowned artists and scholars who interact with residents through intimate studio visits, dinners, and discussions, providing support and feedback. The greater Fire Island community, as well as visitors from New York City and Long Island, are invited to attend free public lectures by these esteemed guests. This has been made possible through a partnership with the Arts Project of Cherry Grove, who invites FIAR to hold our programming in the historic Cherry Grove Community House, a landmarked LGBTQ historic site. In this way, FIAR hopes to bring both new creative perspectives and prestigious art professionals together in this extraordinary location to foster the creation—and preservation—of queer art-making in contemporary art, creative writing, and scholarship.

fireislandartistresidency.org





Flux Factory's mission is to support emerging artists through Artist-in-Residencies, exhibitions, education, and collaborative opportunities. Flux is an artist-led space that builds sustainable communities and retains creative vitality in NYC. Since 1994, Flux has

hosted over 300 artists-in-residence, both local and international, as well as staging over 700 exhibitions across all disciplines. Flux's home in Long Island City is a creative hive that incubates experimentation with collaborative processes. Flux hosts over 75 annual multidisciplinary events; all are free to the public while all participating artists are compensated. Each year Flux selects 40 artists-in-residence to develop their creative practices by offering affordable studios, shared workspaces (such as a printshop, woodshop, and technical office), a solo exhibition, as well as professional development opportunities. Flux commissions 100 multidisciplinary artworks annually through open calls with four annual group exhibitions.

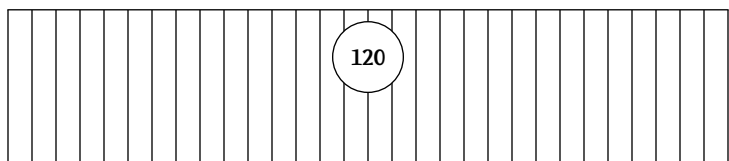
fluxfactory.org



The Laundromat Project (LP) advances artists and neighbors as change agents in their own communities. We envision a world in which artists and neighbors in communities of color work together to unleash the power of creativity to transform lives. We make sustained investments in growing a community of multiracial, multigenerational, and

multidisciplinary artists and neighbors committed to societal change by supporting their art-making, community-building, and leadership development. Over the past 18 years, the LP has supported over 200 artists through its flagship Create Change Residency and Fellowship programs. The Create Change programs have evolved into a leading artist-development model that nourishes creative leaders with opportunities to engage both theory and practice in order to support the development of community-responsive projects that make use of artists' and cultural workers' unique social space and location.

laundromatproject.org



iscp international studio & curatorial program

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. ISCP is a laboratory for the world's most promising artists and curators, a place for innovation and experimentation. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP is New York's most comprehensive international visual arts residency program and fourth largest in the world, founded in 1994. ISCP organizes exhibitions, events, and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 1,800 artists and curators from more than 90 countries have undertaken residencies at ISCP, including Kevin Beasley, Tania Candiani, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Elmgreen and Dragset, Claire Fontaine, Theaster Gates, Martine Gutierrez, Camille Henrot, Tommy Kha, and Jacolby Satterwhite.

iscp-nyc.org



LOWER MANHATTAN CULTURAL COUNCIL

Founded as Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, LMCC serves, connects, and makes space for artists and community. Since 1973, LMCC has been a champion for independent artists in New York City and cultural life force of Lower Manhattan. We envision New

York City as a place in which artists and community in dialogue are creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable society. LMCC's artist residency programs respond directly to the immediate needs of the artistic community and promote the development of artistic work. These residencies are available to artists working in all disciplines via open-call application or nomination processes. The studio spaces are located in temporarily donated spaces throughout Lower Manhattan and in our Arts Center at Governors Island. These programs are free to participating artists.

lmcc.net



QUEENS MUSEUM

The Queens Museum is dedicated to presenting high quality arts and educational programming for the people of New York, and particularly the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse ethnic, cultural, and international community. The Museum's work honors the history of our site and the diversity of our communities through a wide ranging and integrated program of exhibitions, educational initiatives, and public events. In this current moment of uncertainty, we recognize that museums should serve as places of care, not just for their collections, but for their communities, staff, and artists. The Queens Museum strives to be a cultural institution that is open, responsive, inclusive, and empathetic. Since 2013, the Queens Museum has hosted artists-in-residence to utilize the Museum's studio spaces for one- to two-year periods. In 2021, we began developing new artist residency models that have been integrated into Museum-wide initiatives, including the Year of Uncertainty (YoU), the In Situ Artist Fellowship program, and the addition of studio spaces for recipients of the ongoing QM-Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists.

queensmuseum.org



Session provides artists a 1,200-square-foot workspace in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, and six to eight weeks to develop a new inquiry-based project meant to push the boundaries of their practice. They will receive an artist fee, project expenses, technical support, and mentorship collectively valued at \$20,000. Throughout the session, we will facilitate public interactions with the Recess community, which includes system-impacted young artists in the Assembly program, as well as connections among intentional communities as identified by each artist. Our hope is that these engagements provide an opportunity for mutually beneficial exchanges that not only refine the artists' thinking but challenge dominant social narratives and activate new forms of art-making.

recessart.org

Pioneer Works

Even prior to creating a formalized program, residencies have been a cornerstone of our mission. Before adopting the name Pioneer Works, our founding team proposed the "Museum of the Working Artist." While the name didn't stick—the ethos did. We are deeply committed to providing emerging artists, musicians, and technologists with a space to work, tools to create, and a platform to exchange ideas. Each September, we select residents through an open call. Aided by a jury of experts and alumni residents, Pioneer Works welcomes residents who work outside existing models and "norms" of their field and will benefit from our unique facilities and culture. As such, Pioneer Works shifts and evolves to reflect the interests and work of each new cohort of residents, from public education offerings to Second Sundays, a monthly forum of artistic experimentation through activations, open studios, and performance. All residents who complete the program join our ever-growing alumni network and are tapped for future opportunities like teaching, partnerships, and other public programs. Residencies at Pioneer Works are supported in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

pioneerworks.org

Shandaken: Projects

Shandaken Projects supports cultural advancement through public programs and artist services. These opportunities are focused on process, experimentation, and dialogue, and are aimed particularly at important but under-served individuals. Through free residency programs, public art projects, and commissions and exhibitions, Shandaken Projects creates possibilities for cultural practitioners to forge new pathways in their work and in the world.

shandakenprojects.org



Since its inception in 2010, SHIFT residency has been providing peer support, mentoring, and studio space for artists who work in arts organizations to boost their personal creative practices. The SHIFT residency honors these artists' commitment to the arts community with a supportive environment to advance their creative practices by providing a shared

studio space, professional development opportunities, and a culminating exhibition at EFA Project space. SHIFT hosts artists working in a range of media, from sound and installation to painting, performance, and social practice. In addition to its role as a support network, SHIFT promotes advocacy for arts workers and seeks to increase equity and representation within the field.

projectspace-efanyc.org



Located in New York's Upper Hudson Valley, Wave Farm is a nonprofit arts organization driven by experimentation with broadcast media and the airwaves. A pioneer of the Transmission Arts genre, Wave Farm provides access to transmission technologies and supports artists and organizations that engage with media and the electromagnetic spectrum as an art form. Major programs include WGXC 90.7-FM: Radio for Open Ears, a 29-acre Public Art Park, NYSCA Regrant Partnerships, and Fiscal Sponsorship, as well as Wave Farm's International Residency Program, which provides artists working within the Transmission Arts genre opportunities to research and create new works.

wavefarm.org

TRI A N GLE

Triangle is a visual arts residency in New York founded in 1982, providing a life-changing working environment for committed artists through studio-based opportunities to experiment and create new work, shared community with other artists that lasts a lifetime, introduction of curators and other experts to the work at crucial times, cultivation of new and diverse audiences with public programs such as open studios, and meaningful exposure to and interaction with the surrounding Brooklyn community and the wider world.

triangleartsnyc.org



Wave Hill

Located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx and overlooking the Hudson River and Palisades, Wave Hill is a 28-acre public garden and cultural center with the mission to explore human connections to the natural world through programs in horticulture, education and the arts. Contemporary art and programs are presented in Glyndor Gallery, Wave Hill House, and across the Wave Hill grounds. The organization's art-incubator programs—the Sunroom Project Space and Winter Workspace Residency—support emerging and mid-career artists with unique opportunities to conduct research and develop works at the intersection of nature, culture, and the site. With year-round performing arts programming, Wave Hill presents diverse and innovative artists with live music and dance performances as inspiring as Wave Hill's extraordinary setting.

wavehill.org

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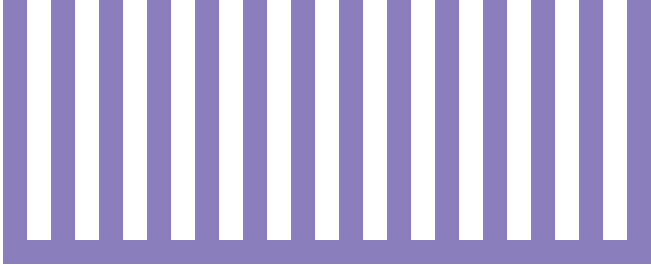
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Founded in 2014, Rethinking Residencies is the first network of New York–based artist and curator residency programs. The group generates knowledge and resources, anchored together in cooperation and collaboration. This publication is a companion to the first Rethinking Residencies Symposium, which invited artists, curators, scholars, and residency organizations to address residency programs as critical sites of production within the visual arts. The book considers existing scholarship and cultivates new thinking about the history, institutional structures, and conditions of art residencies.



Rethinking Residencies

