

An artist residency connects artists with spaces and organisations away from their usual living and working environment. Residency opportunities allow artists to focus on a specific project or aim for a limited period of time. A residency program is constructed to support the creative process by providing facilities, the possibility for time alone to make work or to make connections with the right people for career development.

When undertaken at the right point in an artist's career a residency can be a powerful stepping-stone to extend the scope of their work in new environments, develop creative skills and facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge with other artists.

Residency models

Artist Residencies come in all shape and sizes. The organisation offering the residency will have their reasons for investing time and facilities in an artist, so it is really important to try to understand what they want to achieve. Some organisations wish to partner the artist to produce a large public solo exhibition, others may want to build bridges between two cultures, while some are purely interested in providing a ground for experimentation and collaboration. Artist residencies are sometimes offered on a philanthropic basis, others are government funded while others are subsidised or user paid. Understanding this will give you a good indication of what your obligations are and will help you set reasonable expectations of what you'll get out of the experience.

Different residency models are also practically and socially different. Some leave you alone to work while others connect you to lots of people. An international residency sometimes offers a place for you to live (often the same room you will work in) but other residencies provide a workspace only. The time you may stay at the residency can vary from between a few weeks to several months. Some programs are very carefully crafted and focus on a particular discipline others are very open ended and flexible. Finally the atmosphere will also depend on the other resident artists who may be your neighbours during your stay and how well you all get along.

Applying for a residency

Applying for a residency can be time consuming and the selection process very competitive (especially for the funded programs). Try to research previous

resident artists at the program you are interested in to get a good feel for the type of work the host is likely to select.

Spend time thinking about your reasons for wanting to do the residency. Do you want to learn a skill? Use special facilities or resources not available at home? Realise a fixed project? Have time away from work and home environment? Work within a specific culture? Find inspiration in an unexpected circumstance? Meet local artists? Collaborate with new people? Create new networks?

Once you know what you hope to gain from doing the residency you will be able to match it with the expectations of the program. Try to get a really clear picture of whether you will be expected to produce an exhibition at the end of your residency, or work with the local community, or collaborate with other resident artists.

Many residency programs plan six months or even years in advance and have limited residency periods so take this into account when preparing an application. Have you considered whether the timing works out for your project?

You will probably be asked to supply a project proposal, support material and a CV as part of your application. Make sure your visual documentation is high quality and the project proposal is tailored to the specific residency opportunity offered. It should be clear why this residency is a necessary part of how you will achieve your proposed aims.

Funding

Hosting a residency is expensive as is travelling overseas to undertake one. There are obviously lots of costs involved in residencies, but who pays is not always the same. There are some residencies that provide accommodation, workspace and resources to an artist free of charge AND provide an artist fee or stipend. These are rare and competitive opportunities. Many residencies will provide some workspace at a subsidised rate or may pay for part of the living/travel costs for the artist. Most of the time you will need to apply for funding to cover costs. The host organisation may help you to apply for separate funding or at least will provide you with a letter of invitation or support to strengthen an application you make for additional funding.

Rochelle Haley

Copyright NAVA and the author 2014.
Information in this factsheet is presented as general information only and should not be relied on as legal or financial advice. Legal advice should be sought on specific legal issues.

 (02) 9368 1900

 nava@visualarts.net.au

 visualarts.net.au

 facebook.com/NAVA.VisualArt

 twitter.com/NAVAvisualarts

 instagram.com/nava_visualarts

Top tips

- Do your research about the residency and location
- Match your expectations with those of the program
- Have a firm idea about your project but be adaptable to the actual experience
- Establish connections with people while on your residency that you'll be able to draw on later
- Have fun! It is a really rare privilege.

Rochelle Haley

Copyright NAVA and the author 2014.
Information in this factsheet is presented as general information only and should not be relied on as legal or financial advice. Legal advice should be sought on specific legal issues.



(02) 9368 1900



nava@visualarts.net.au



visualarts.net.au



facebook.com/NAVA.VisualArt



twitter.com/NAVAvisualarts



instagram.com/nava_visualarts