

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About the Artists-in-Residence Program at I-Park

[12/13/11]

Overview

What is the essence of I-Park: does it have a particular mission, direction, focus?

I-Park is both an open air and a closed studio laboratory for individual artistic pursuits in the fields of the visual arts, music composition/sound sculpture/design, moving image, landscape/garden design and creative writing. The artists-in-residence program offers a quiet, retreat-like environment conducive to exploration and experimentation – without the expectation of particular outcomes. Artists are free to conceive and execute new ideas or work on existing projects. I-Park also initiates and sponsors specially-themed inter-disciplinary projects for the purpose of moving these ideas out of the laboratory and bringing them to life in the field and on the land. These projects are realized through Special Programs, some of which include a residency aspect, and typically involve symposia and presentations at I-Park's annual Open House. For example, in September, I-Park will join with its Chilean partner, Ciudad Abierta, to host a symposium on Art and Architecture. This program will also mark the opening of I-Park to residencies for architects.

Is I-Park actually a park?

In its present form, it is a fairly wild and natural, and quite beautiful, tract of land that has a park-like feel to it – more so the case in recent years.

Residency Program Basics

How many artists are in residence during your sessions?

There are usually six artists participating in each residency session.

What are the time frames of the residencies being offered?

We structure our program around four-week residencies. However, we typically program some two-week sessions as well. I-Park's primary goal is to promote serious inquiries and projects while fostering a participatory environment and sense of community. This is best achieved when the session participants arrive together, stay together as a group and then leave at the same time.

What are the dates for the 2012 residency season?

The 2012 residency program officially runs from May through mid-November and there are two off-season sessions. Refer to the 2012 calendar posted on the website for specific session dates. The calendar also shows application deadlines and the dates for Open Studios and Open House.

What is an 'off season' residency session?

We will be fully staffed and in full swing, though we may not be offering our full food program. Also, there may be some relaxation of the structure and rules in order to accommodate special situations that would not otherwise be permitted during the official I-Park season (e.g., collaborative ventures, performing arts/ensemble residencies, sessions where the artists are focused on a particular theme or project, etc.). And while we make every effort to minimize the impact on the artists in residence, there may be some construction or maintenance work scheduled for these times; minor distractions may be unavoidable.

What is the Expressiones program?

Expressiones is simply an outreach program to visual artists from Latin America. It is organized and curated by the Expressiones Cultural Center in New London, Connecticut. However, it does not entail a special session; selected artists participate alongside other artists as part of the general residency program. Details, including some particular restrictions, are available on the website.

Application Process, Eligibility

What kind of application process is involved?

I-Park uses the SlideRoom third party online submission system. All forms and work samples are submitted online. Each major discipline has its own application form. Within the SlideRoom software, each discipline is considered a separate ‘program’ – though, in fact, it is not.

Do you require letters of reference?

While we reserve the right to do so, as a general rule, the answer is no. Letters of reference are, however, sometimes requested of artists who apply for one of the limited number of grants that we offer.

Is there an age requirement?

We do not allow artists under the age of twenty-one to participate. There is no upper age limit.

What is the policy on international applicants?

We enthusiastically welcome international applicants. However, we are not well versed in the workings of the visa application process. While we are happy to prepare a formal letter of invitation and will provide whatever additional support information is requested, it will be your responsibility to carry the burden of the visa acquisition process through the appropriate channels. If you are planning to come from abroad for a residency, you should start working on such arrangements early. Artists must be reasonably fluent in English.

Can two or more individuals apply to work on a collaborative project?

Generally the answer is no. However, there is some flexibility in terms of accommodating such arrangements in the off-season sessions. Also, because of the favorable experience I-Park had with an experimental residency session that was created in 2011 for this specific purpose (collaborative projects), it is likely that I-Park will be in a better position to accommodate such arrangements beginning in 2013.

What is the policy on spouses or partners?

The I-Park program is focused on the individual and his or her personal creative pursuits. Spouses and partners are not permitted. However, check back next year. This policy could change as we move more directly into the field of supporting the collaborative process in the arts.

Are I-Park fellows (former residents) allowed to participate in subsequent residencies?

Within our guidelines, yes. Fellows seeking a return residency will need to submit a new application and fee and be approved by their discipline-specific jury. Those wishing to participate in a third residency, however, must then take a break of 3 seasons before being eligible again. At times, former residents can return sooner if recommended and approved for participation under the Invitation Program (see below). By rule, no more than 15% of the participating artists in any season can be fellows. Also, whenever possible, we attempt to schedule fellows into our off-season sessions.

If I was on the waiting list from last year or was accepted for a residency last year but was unable to attend, do I need to re-apply?

Due to the increasing number of applications for I-Park residencies, we can no longer carry-forward artists from the previous year's waiting list or automatically accommodate artists who declined a prior invitation. So, you will need to re-apply. However, we can waive the application fee in such cases. Due to our use of a third-party application processing system, you will need to contact the I-Park office before submitting your application so that we can initiate the fee waiver.

Can students apply?

Yes, students may apply, but the I-Park residency program is mainly targeted to emerging and mid-career artists.

In the application, you ask for date of birth? Is that really necessary or relevant?

Date of birth information is gathered for statistical purposes, to help us learn what types of artists we're appealing to, and perhaps, those we're not attracting, for whatever reason. Know that, if accepted, we'll also ask you for your height (weird, you think?). You can leave these items blank if you feel strongly about it, but please don't complain if you can't reach your cupboard space in the kitchen or if your legs extend out a foot beyond the end of your bed.

Selection Process

What is the general philosophy behind I-Park's selection process?

I-Park selections are based on the strength of the artist's existing body of work, the perceived relevance and compatibility of the creative project(s) and inquiries being proposed and an evaluation of the likelihood of the artist achieving success and satisfaction in the environment that's been created at I-Park. We welcome candidates from differing age groups and with varying backgrounds and systems of belief.

What are the mechanics of your selection process?

We utilize discipline-specific panels comprised of artists and experienced professionals from the arts community to adjudicate the major creative disciplines we support: the Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Music Composition/Sound Sculpture/Design, Moving Image and Landscape/Garden Design. Our selection committee members, criteria and methodology are not publicly divulged. However, we pride ourselves on having established a process that is fair, thorough and thoughtful and that assures open-minded consideration to all who have submitted a timely and properly completed application. New panels are assembled each season to keep I-Park's perspective fresh, though some jurors are invited to serve on subsequent panels.

How important is the resume/CV?

While jurors certainly review educational achievements and other professional credentials and recognition, I-Park is not at all dismissive of self-taught artists or those working outside the academic, commercial or cultural mainstream.

Any other important factors?

A reasonably coherent project proposal or, alternatively, an interesting concept for an investigation or experiment is usually well received. Also, a submission package that evidences commitment and depth of development and direction within one's practice will tend to be viewed more favorably than a broad survey or sampling of capabilities. Panelists also tend to appreciate brevity and focus in applicants' responses to the questions on the application form.

In terms of my chances of acceptance into the program, is there a level playing field?

You should be aware that we allocate up to 15% of the available residency space to invited artists (Invitation Program), artists whose work is admired by members of the Creative Committee or exceptional artists who are brought to the attention of committee members. We're very open to recommendations and appreciate referrals. And, as indicated above, up to 15% of the space may be awarded to returning artists, but only if they pass muster with their current season selection panels. That leaves at least 70% of the space open for those responding to our open call. These guidelines are intended to keep the selection/admission process open and fair.

Does the I-Park program have a bias in favor of site-responsive or context-specific art?

I-Park supports and celebrates site-responsive art through the residency program that feeds the Environmental Art Biennale (next one in 2013). Also, I-Park's Special Programs often focus, in a broad sense, on context-specific approaches/processes. This specialty has evolved over the years in response to artists' interest in engaging the rich natural (as well as interpersonal, creative, historical, built) environment that they encountered at I-Park. However, in terms of the general residency program, artists creating gallery/institutional, non-commercial and other forms of art compete and participate on equal footing in terms of I-Park's selection criteria/system.

What happens after the selection panels meet?

I-Park communicates with all applicants as soon as practical after the various selection panels have reported their results. If you are recommended by your respective panel for a residency, you will receive a letter inviting you into the program. Your final acceptance, however, is subject to your agreeing to the terms of the residency, as spelled out in the residency agreement, and your participation in a short telephone conversation at some point prior to the residency. Invited artists need to cooperate in the timely scheduling of this conversation. This informal chat takes about 20-minutes and is primarily intended to give you the opportunity to address any of your questions and concerns, confirm that your project is feasible within the constraints of the facility and finalize your travel arrangements. We'll gather some basic information so we can make an informed and intelligent studio assignment. And we'll want to establish that basic social, including language, skills are in evidence such that we are comfortable that you can communicate and function within the intimate social setting that exists at I-Park.

Is the selection process different for artists requesting a return residency?

I-Park fellows requesting a return residency are scored alongside new applicants and so their work product needs to remain competitive. Those recommended by their respective selection panels are then subject to a secondary review by staff. This review will take into account I-Park's experience during the previous residency. Those fellows with the highest scores, and taking into account the staff review and subject to the 15% limit indicated above, will be invited to return.

When do you expect to complete your selection process?

For the general residency program, we hope to complete the selection process and communicate our decision to all applicants by mid-March, though delays beyond this time frame are possible. We will periodically post generic application status notices on the website.

Costs, Obligations

What expenses will I need to cover?

The use of the facility and routine staff support is at no charge. However, residents will need to pay for transportation to and from the general area and any art materials required.

Will there be any specific accountability for my work product?

As indicated above, you are free to work on what you choose. And, it is not unusual for artists to change their initial project proposal once they get into the groove of their residency.

Do the resident artists have any obligations other than the expenses mentioned above?

We ask that artists evidence their stay – leave their mark, so to speak – by creating one or two pages of original work on paper for the I-Park session scrapbook. This could consist of sketches, photos, a narrative, musical notations – something that comes directly from the I-Park experience. These entries are typically light and spontaneous in nature. I-Park has been the beneficiary of many works of art over the years and we'd be flattered if you are moved to contribute in this way. However, this is not in any way an obligation. We do request that artists be generous with their insights and suggestions for making the program and facility better. To that end, we ask that they put serious thought into their responses to the end-of-session questionnaire that is to be filled out and submitted prior to departure. We'd also appreciate copies of photos, especially people photos, taken while in residence, if at all possible.

Is there a written agreement associated with the residency?

Yes, there is short agreement that defines the obligations of the parties and limits the legal exposure of the I-Park Foundation, Inc. and related parties. As part of this agreement, residents agree to abide by the program's rules and procedures as set forth in the I-Park Handbook. The completed, signed agreement must be received prior to arrival at the facility.

Do you charge for use of the kiln?

If your project requires heavy use of the kiln and you are producing for a commercial application, we will charge for the estimated cost of the electricity consumed. In most cases, however, there is no charge.

Grants, Funding

What's the story with the international travel grants?

In 2012, I-Park will be awarding four grants of \$750.00 each to international artists (non-U.S. citizens with primary residences outside the 48 contiguous states) who would not otherwise be able to participate in the I-Park residency program because of the prohibitive cost of air travel. Artists who would like to be considered for a grant need to indicate as such in the section provided on the application form. After the selection process is completed, those artists who requested, and are eligible for, a grant may be contacted and asked to submit a formal request for the funding as well as 2-3 professional references. The I-Park Grant Committee will then review these materials in light of the artists' jury scores as well as other relevant information in the applicants' application packages. The discipline-specific juries are not, however, made aware of who's requested a grant during the primary selection process.

Lodging

What kind of living quarters are provided?

You will have a private bedroom and a shared bathroom (no more than 2 individuals sharing a bathroom) in an historic two-story house. The house has been completely renovated and is air-conditioned. Kitchen facilities are shared by all the residents.

Will I need to bring towels and sheets and what about laundry facilities?

We will provide you with towels and bedding items. We have a washer/dryer on site and you are welcome to use our laundry detergent and related supply items.

Transportation

Can I drive my vehicle to I-Park?

No problem. We have ample parking. Trucks, vans and trailers park out back. The nearest gas station is about 15 minutes from I-Park.

What public transportation resources are available if driving is not an option?

The closest airport is Bradley International, sometimes called Hartford/Springfield, which is about a one-hour drive from East Haddam. The T. F. Green airport in Warwick, Rhode Island is another option. Most international artists coming by way of a New York (or Newark) airport will typically travel by train to either Old Saybrook (preferred) or New Haven. There are bus stations in Middletown, Hartford and Old Saybrook, each of which is about 30 minutes from I-Park. There are detailed directions on our website for getting from the major international airports in New York to East Haddam. However, flying directly to Bradley International, when practical, will save you several hours of transit time.

How do I get to I-Park from the airport, train or bus station and how do I get around when there?

I-Park will be pleased to pick you up an airport or train or bus station that services the local area (Connecticut). Pickups and drop-offs are subject to 10-day advance scheduling and are based on making these runs at the beginning and end of the scheduled residency session and during normal work hours (8:00 am – 5:00 pm). Sometimes we ‘pool’ our pickups so there could be some waiting involved. Note that we are not staffed to do out of state pickups. Especially in the case of international arrivals, coordination can be tricky. Artists are issued a written set of instructions that they must follow carefully to assure that the arrangements work smoothly. As for getting around the local area once you’ve arrived, we go grocery shopping once a week and are happy to take you along. Special arrangements can be made for unusual purchasing needs with advance notice. We can help you source local transportation options (rental cars, taxis, limousines, private drivers) if you have more intense or personalized transportation needs during the course of your residency. Except in the case of an emergency, should you have occasion to leave I-Park before the official end of your residency session, you would be responsible for your own transportation needs.

Studios, Equipment

What kind of studio facilities are provided?

Basic, private, well-lit, multi-purpose workspaces in a converted barn structure and in a series of free-standing cabins. The studios are heated and air-conditioned and have ample natural light. We use a monthly checklist to assure that all studios have the basic amenities at the beginning of each session (copy available). I-Park will attempt to accommodate specialized equipment needs, within reason, especially if this equipment is likely to have future utility. However, such requests should be made well in advance of the residency. Some customization of the workspaces may also be possible with advance discussion. We have a separate document outlining the specific music, kiln and general art equipment available on site. We also have some studio photos and specs posted on the I-Park website (Residency Programs section).

Are the barns and cabins in the woods?

No, except for the Pond Studio, they are actually in fairly close proximity to the residence facility. The Pond Studio is about a ten-minute walk from the house.

What about 'workshop' space?

I-Park has a workshop with tools and equipment that is available to all artists, primarily for working with wood and metals. If more than one artist per session is in need of this space, a sharing or scheduling arrangement can be devised. We also can erect temporary canopies so that spaces on the land or outside the assigned studios can be used as workshop space.

Can I request a specific studio or room in the house?

Studios and bedrooms in the house are assigned by staff based on its best judgment, taking into consideration many factors. We try to match the specific personal working practices and functional needs of the artists with the particular characteristics of the various available spaces. We also need to be flexible in the face of changing circumstances (we often do not make final studio assignments until a day or two prior to the start of the session). So, while you can request a specific studio or bedroom and we will consider it, we cannot make any firm commitments in advance of the residency and staff decisions on studio and living space assignments are final.

Does I-Park have studio spaces outfitted with equipment for computer-generated/new media art?

In some cases, we have been in a position to assist with specialized equipment and/or software. But these days, artists typically bring along their own gear. Nonetheless, I-Park has successfully hosted many artists working in this field.

What about facilities for photography and video art?

We regularly host artists working in these areas. Although we don't have a dark room or special equipment or software, we can provide a space where (most) external light is blocked out. If this is needed, a little advance notice would be appreciated.

What kind of storage space is available for my 'stuff'?

The studios are of reasonable size and your specific requirements will be discussed in advance during the pre-residency phone interview. The living quarters have a fair amount of closet and other space for clothing but we generally suggest that you pack light.

Support, Food, Amenities

What kind of staff support is available?

The following full time positions are focused on artists' and program support: Executive Director, Residency Program Director and Groundskeeper. In addition to the part-time chef and maintenance staff, there are several others affiliated with the project who are working on a part-time, consulting or volunteer basis in various support roles. The Residency Program Director typically sets aside 'office hours' during the weekday, scheduled time to attend to artists' requests and inquiries. There are no staff members on site during the evenings and on weekends and major holidays, though remote support is available.

Is your facility handicap accessible?

No, not in the true legal sense. However, we will be pleased to make reasonable facility and other accommodations for artists with handicaps when necessary and when asked to do so. We have successfully hosted artists with physical handicaps in the past and ask that you please speak up if you have a special need or request in this regard.

What about meals?

I-Park provides a basic food service at no cost to the artists. Breakfast and lunch selections are stocked in the refrigerators and pantries from which meals can be prepared by the artists at times of their choosing. On four nights of the week, the chef will prepare a group meal for the artists. While there is a set time for dinner and most artists look forward to this gathering, attendance is voluntary. We do ask that you let us know well in advance if you're not going to want dinner or if you'd like a doggy bag put aside. On the fifth week night, the artists will typically prepare their own group meal or we mix it up either by ordering in take-out, doing a barbeque, having a volunteer prepare the meal or organizing a potluck meal or something similar (participatory). In some instances, guests are invited to such meals. For Saturday and Sunday dinner, there will be ingredients available for the artists, often including leftovers, to either put together either group or individual meals. The pantries and refrigerators are stocked with staples and the kitchen is designed and outfitted with the appliances and such for group cooking. A meal pattern quickly develops for each session that reflects the preferences of the particular group.

Cleanup, composting?

Artists are responsible for cleanup after their meals and for maintaining a reasonably neat and organized kitchen between visits by the cleaning staff. We are conscientious about composting and recycling.

Can/will you cater to individual dietary needs?

While we are accustomed to providing a vegetarian option, we're not geared up for accommodating other, more particular dietary restrictions. Artists are encouraged to bring special ingredients from home and/or are welcome to go on routine shopping runs with staff where they can purchase their special needs. Each artist is assigned a small space in the refrigerator and some shelf space in the pantry for their 'private stash.' I-Park pays for the prepared meals and for 'common food.' Artists are responsible for food purchases geared to their individual preferences and/or health requirements.

What kinds of communications are available at I-Park?

We have several phones on site with two available land lines for artists' use. We have two computer workstations for common/shared use, both of which have high-speed internet connections as well as the basic Microsoft suite of programs. One of these computers is set up for Skype communications. If you have a laptop that has wireless capability, you should be able to readily utilize our wireless network, at least within and around the house and in most of the studios. With a recently installed tower in our neighborhood, cell phone reception is now quite normal, though we cannot claim that all services are available. We have walkie-talkies and spare cell phones that can be borrowed by artists walking or working out on the land. And, we have a loud bell that we use to call people to dinner.

What kind of computer hardware, software and support will be available?

We have the above-mentioned shared computers on site; both are PC's. We have a large format color printer as well as a standard format inkjet printer. Note that the computers are available to residents for casual use only as they are shared among all members of the group. If you require heavy access to a computer for your work project(s) or specialized equipment or software, you should inquire of staff well in advance of your residency to determine whether or not we will be able to accommodate you. It is assumed that computer users are reasonably well versed in the common, current applications and that residents will not be looking to staff for technical support or training. Residents must abide by the computer rules posted at the workstations.

Nature, the Land

How does one get familiar with the site?

A group site walk on the land is scheduled for early in the residency. While this is voluntary, most artists choose to participate. It is a good opportunity to get familiar with the basic trail system, site features as well as the general character of the natural environment. We can also provide you with a site and trail map that can be used for self-exploration of the land.

Is it possible to create and/or site installations on the land?

Yes, subject to the approval of the Executive Director. The main considerations are site location, safety, feasibility/capability and intensity of the intervention (at this time, all installations are considered temporary). In most cases, a written proposal and sketch will be required in advance and the artist will be responsible for removing the installation at the end of his or her residency or at the end of the season. In certain exceptional cases, installations may remain up for a longer time frame and I-Park will either maintain or dispose of them at the appropriate time. Certainly, those working in the field of environmental art are encouraged to engage the I-Park landscape and will find here a rich natural canvas for their creations.

Does I-Park provide support for such installations?

I-Park is accustomed to providing limited staff and equipment support for site installations. A modest budget may be available for materials. If you are interested in doing a major installation, you should consider applying to participate in the Environmental Art Biennale (next one in 2013).

Is it alright to use materials found at I-Park in my work product?

Yes, there is quite a variety of natural and man-made materials and objects, including junk, on the site that you are welcome to utilize. Just please ask permission first as there are a few things that need to be preserved.

What is the weather like at I-Park? What kind of clothing should I pack?

New England is known for the unpredictability of its weather. The mean temperatures for this area as well as the average lows and highs are as follows (as measured in degrees Fahrenheit):

Apr.	46 (34 – 58)	July	71 (58 – 82)	Oct.	50 (36 – 64)
May	57 (44 – 68)	Aug.	68 (56 – 81)	Nov.	41 (30 – 51)
June	65 (52 – 77)	Sept.	61 (48 – 74)		

Are there any insect problems that I should be aware of?

Ours is an area, like much of the Northeast, where ticks are prevalent. You are advised to educate yourself on the precautions you can and should take to minimize the risk of contracting Lyme and related diseases. We also tend to get a wave of Asian ladybugs in the spring and early fall (harmless but annoying). Other than that, the insects are pretty civilized and unobtrusive, though, to city dwellers, their evening cacophonies can take some getting used to.

Are there wild animals in the area that I might want to know about?

You will regularly come upon deer and wild turkeys. Of course, we have the typical frogs, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, possums, (lots of) rabbits, snakes, turtles, skunks, woodchucks, beavers, muskrats and otters. The variety of birds inhabiting the property is quite impressive. In transit, wild geese annually stop over for several months to birth and raise their young. There are foxes in the area but doubt you would ever come into contact with one. We have reason to believe that fisher cats are making inroads into our area. In season, limited hunting is permitted on certain remote sections of the property. Residents will be advised in advance when this is going to occur.

Orientation, Rules, Policies

What kind of orientation do you provide?

If you peruse the I-Park website and this FAQ, you should become pretty familiar with the basics of the program and facility. The pre-residency phone call allows the opportunity for you to ask more detailed questions and you are, of course, welcome to contact the office at any time. We schedule a sit-down orientation gathering involving all the artists and staff, usually on the first full day of the residency. The I-Park Handbook in your room and the Orientation Notebooks in the library offer even more detail about where things are and how they work. We go to great lengths to minimize the possibility of unpleasant surprises.

Can I invite a guest?

We can accommodate guests on an occasional, case-by-case basis, but frankly, we discourage it, especially during the work week. We usually have a full house and a guest has the potential to upset the social balance of the place, particularly if the nature of the guest relationship is purely social. Permission needs to be requested before the guest is invited and such approval will be issued in writing and posted on our bulletin board so that all residents are aware in advance. In any event, guests are never allowed to stay overnight. The best time to have a guest visit would be for the Open Studios event at the end of the residency. Artists are responsible for the proper behavior of their guests. Out of regard for the privacy and security of our artists in residence, unauthorized individuals appearing on the grounds without prior permission will be escorted off the site.

If I happen to live close by, is it a problem if I return home occasionally?

We view the grant of time and space at I-Park as a precious gift. Those who live close-by may, quite naturally, be tempted to go home on occasion, or even on some kind of routine schedule, to attend to...whatever. This makes for a less than fully engaged residency experience and it has an impact on the group dynamic. We frown on this and, except in extraordinary circumstances, we're not inclined to offer residencies to those unable to fully utilize the program as intended.

What is the policy on smoking?

No smoking is allowed in the house, studios or common areas. Smoking on the grounds is permitted with due consideration for your non-smoking fellow residents as well as fire safety.

Are there any specific acts or attitudes that would generate a termination of the residency?

I-Park does not condone alcohol or drug abuse, the sale or trafficking in illegal substances, habitual non-participation, the possession of lethal weapons, prolonged absences without prior notification or the breaking of any federal, state or municipal laws or regulations. In particular, we have a zero tolerance policy with respect to causing risk of injury to others, environmental contamination, sexual harassment and stealing.

Can I bring my pet?

Sorry, no pets are allowed.

Social Aspect, Diversions, Surrounding Area

Are there any social or public events planned?

Artists are encouraged to participate in Open Studios, a public event usually scheduled for the final Sunday afternoon of the residency session, and Artists' Exchange, an intimate sharing amongst the artists of their existing bodies of work and aspirations for their residency – generally a quiet evening affair scheduled for early in the session. The following are typically woven into the session calendar as well: arrival buffet, welcome dinner, pot luck supper, barbeque, bonfire out by the pond and bon voyage brunch. We are also open to consideration of project-sponsored field trips if there is group interest. The key is to strike a sensible balance between the work schedules and ambitions of resident artists and their desire for social interaction and exposure to cultural happenings. We typically discuss this issue at our orientation meeting and attempt to come up with a modest calendar of events that conforms to the interests and priorities of the group. Attendance at all social functions is entirely voluntary.

Are there any recreational facilities on site? Is there a place to work out or go hiking or biking?

We have extensive walking trails on the property and we're adjacent to a well-maintained state park with miles of marked trails. We have some free weights and yoga mats available. There are no recreational facilities as such on site, though we have a pond that you're welcome to fish in, a few swings and there are several bikes that you're welcome to use around the facility.

Are there any other diversions available?

We have created a Common Area in the main barn that is intended as a gathering place for coffee, conversation, relaxation. Here, you'll find a television with digital cable, digital radio, a VCR and DVD player and a stereo system. We have a stock of movies (decent) and CD's (pitiful, plan to bring your own) available to play. We have a modest library of art and nature books and a variety of arts-related periodicals. Of course, we have some board games, cards and such.

Where in Connecticut are you located?

We're in the eastern part of the state, about 30 minutes from the train station in Old Saybrook, which in turn is about two and a half hours from either New York or Boston. While East Haddam is on the Connecticut River, I-Park is about a 10 minute drive away.

How remote is I-Park from commercial amenities, the real world?

We're a 15-20 minute drive to most types of retail shopping, and even further from decent art supply stores. Therefore, shopping trips need to be planned more carefully than would be the case in a typical suburb or city. We are, however, fairly close to a well-stocked hardware store/lumberyard. Our Orientation Notebooks are constantly being updated with information to help you locate the types of items and services you may require. You should, however, try to bring with you any odd-ball art supplies or specialty tools you might need, if at all possible.

What's available in the local area for entertainment?

We're in the sticks, so to speak, so keep your expectations low. For major excitement, and depending on your mood, options include frog races, a trip to the local ice cream store or bowling alley, the Goodspeed Opera House, one of the local organic food markets, the historical society or a trek to one of the nearby casinos. We're about 30 minutes from the ocean (Long Island Sound) where there are public beaches. We maintain a good listing of cultural events and venues in Connecticut so that those interested can avail themselves, either individually or as a group.

Miscellaneous

Can I ship materials via UPS or other means in advance of my arrival?

Sure, but it's a good idea to let us know your intentions in advance so we can be on the lookout for your packages and put them in a safe spot for you. Be sure to send your package(s) to our street address in East Haddam and not to the post office box. And, you are responsible for the shipment of any articles back home at the end of your residency (packaging, making your own arrangements with the shipper, including payment arrangements, etc.). Please don't leave items behind for us to send back for you.

Do you have any advice for an artist who has never participated in a residency program before?

In our invitations and announcements, we refer to 'self-directed' residencies at I-Park. You need to be prepared to set your own goals and organize your daily routine accordingly to achieve these goals. I-Park imposes very little organizational structure – you're basically on your own in terms of making effective use of your time. Not everyone has the discipline or motivation to deal with this freedom successfully. The other aspect of life at I-Park that has been problematic for a few of our residents has been the issue of solitude and quiet. We stress to all concerned the importance of respecting the privacy of our resident artists. This tends to foster an emphasis on work over social interaction, at least during the workday. Furthermore, the general area itself is extremely quiet and, on moonless nights, very, very...dark. Although solitude and the ability to control one's own time are highly valued by most of those who come to I-Park, this is not for everyone. Some individuals need a more broadly and predictably supportive social structure, external sources of direction and even, in some cases, a bit of commotion. You should not expect I-Park to provide these for you.

Are you open to the public? Can I come up and check the place out?

We are not open to the public. Even our annual Open House and other social events are on an invitation-only basis. I-Park strives to maintain a somewhat sheltered environment (enclave, cocoon) for its residents and to minimize distractions and disruptions. Please make prior arrangements with staff if you'd like to visit the facility. We'll be happy to show you around.

Can I expect a letter of reference after my residency at I-Park?

The general answer is no. We are not presently staffed to handle this. However, subject to your approval, we can make ourselves available to provide a telephone reference. If someone really needs a reference, that's the best kind anyway.

What if I am scheduled for a residency and have to cancel?

You should not accept an I-Park residency if your attendance is at all in question. Check that your personal, financial, professional and visa-related affairs are reasonably in order before you commit. If an unexpected emergency or other circumstance arises that makes attendance impossible, please let us know immediately so that we may attempt to schedule someone from our waiting list in your place. Be aware that any notification of cancellation less than 60 days prior to your scheduled arrival date will create a severe hardship for the program.

Is there a story behind the I-Park name?

Yes.