

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About the 2016 Family Residency Program at I-Park

[2/2/16]

Overview

What is the essence of the I-Park Family Residency program?

I-Park's Family Residency is devoted to offering opportunities for artists with children to fully participate in an artists-in-residence program without the need to sever their critical physical and emotional bonds with their families. By creating a nurturing setting for artists with children, especially young children, I-Park hopes to address the problem of interrupted artists' careers – and keeping these artists' creative forces vital and in shape to the benefit of the greater culture. I-Park provides artists a quiet, retreat-like setting conducive to exploration and experimentation – and this program was designed to provide a practical means by which participating artists could devote quality time to their studio practices (perhaps, in some cases, allowing artists to re-engage with creative practices after a period of neglect) while eliminating the all too human sense of anxiety, longing and even guilt of being away from their families for an extended period of time.

What is your definition of a 'family,' in the context of this program?

The participating artist is the focal point of the program with complementary regard for his or her dependent children. The children, up to three per artist, must be between the ages of xx and xx. The other important person in the 'family' is the child care provider, whose participation allows the artist to have uninterrupted studio time. This adult, over the age of eighteen, can be either the artist's spouse or partner – or some other mature individual who has a deep existing connection to, and understanding of, the child or children of the artist.

How will the children and care providers spend their time while the artists are at work?

One of our studios will be transformed into a Children's Studio and this will be a shared space for the children and the care providers to use as they see fit for creative projects of their invention. I-Park will provide some tools and materials to facilitate this function. Similar resources will be made available for those wishing to work within the natural landscape. I-Park's grounds, including a system of 26 art/nature walking trails, are a rich source of inspiration as well as an opportunity for exploration. A summer camp option will be available for the children during the daytime at no charge (see below). There are some fine places to visit in the area: Gillette Castle, Devil's Hopyard State Park, the Goodspeed Opera, the Mystic Seaport and Aquarium. We're about 30 minutes from the ocean (Long Island Sound) where there are public beaches. There are art galleries and museums in Old Lyme, New Haven, New London, New Britain and Hartford. We maintain a good listing of cultural events and venues in Connecticut so that those interested can avail themselves accordingly. The artist will presumably re-group with their family for meals and at the end of the day – and is, of course, free to do so really at any time it's necessary.

If the spouse/partner/care giver is himself/herself an artist, might this person undertake a creative project of his/her own – or work on a project in collaboration with, or in support of, the primary artist, especially if the child/children are away at camp during the day?

Yes, this is possible. However, there should be a pre-residency discussion with staff to work out the details – and I-Park must assured that this arrangement does not in any way detract from the spouse's or partner's ability to diligently attend to their child care responsibilities.

How many artists and families will be in residence during the session?

Four artists and their families.

What's the time frame of the residency being offered?

August 1 to August 14, 2016.

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.

Do you require letters of reference – and do you provide letters of reference after the residency?

We do not, as a general rule, require letters of reference, though we reserve the right to do so in certain circumstances. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we are unable to write letters of reference for our fellows. However, we're happy to provide phone references, which are really the best kind. Just give us a little heads-up so we can be prepared to take the call.

What is the policy on international applicants, including language skills?

We enthusiastically welcome international applicants. However, we are not well versed in the workings of the visa approval process. While we are happy to prepare a formal letter of invitation and will provide whatever additional support information is requested of us, it will be your responsibility to navigate 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.

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

Yes, subject to certain restrictions. Fellows seeking a follow-up residency will need to submit a new application and fee and be approved by the Family Residency Selection Panel. Those wishing to participate in a third residency, however, must then take a break of 3 seasons before being eligible again. In some instances, fellows can return sooner if recommended and approved for participation under the Invitation Program (see below). By internal guidelines, no more than 15% of the participating artists in any season can be fellows.

Selection Process

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

I-Park selections are based on the strength and trajectory of the artist's existing body of work as well as their career path, the panel's interest in the creative project(s) and inquiries being proposed and, to the extent possible, a sense of the likelihood that the artist will be comfortable and productive within the particular setting that's been created at I-Park. We also embrace the goal of diversity within our residency population.

What are the mechanics of your selection process?

We will use a multi-disciplinary panel comprised of artists and experienced professionals from the following fields: the Visual Arts, Creative Writing, Music Composition/Sound Art, Architecture and Landscape /Garden/Ecological Design. All applications will go through a 2-step evaluation process. The first, Preview round involves the scoring of a limited quantity of submitted content. The highest scoring applicants from the preliminary, Preview, round will receive a much more in-depth assessment in the second, Final, round – which will be scored without consideration to the results in the Preview round. Applicants are directed to be careful in selecting and labeling the limited number of Preview Files that will be evaluated during the Preview round. The optional questionnaire is not viewable by the selection panelists. Beyond that, the details of our selection process (identity of committee members, specific selection methodologies) are not publicly divulged. That said, we pride ourselves on having established a process that is extremely thoughtful, thorough and fair – and one that assures open-minded consideration to all who have submitted a timely and complete application package. New panels are assembled each season to keep I-Park's perspectives fresh, though exceptional jurors from previous seasons are at times invited to serve on subsequent panels.

What are the specific criteria that will be taken into consideration by the Family Residency Selection Panel?

Scoring will primarily be based on a critical assessment of the artist's existing body of work, their perceived career trajectory/potential and the extent to which the artist has developed an engaging Project Proposal. Secondary consideration will be given to the balance of disciplines within the group and the artist's statement with respect to how the residency will impact their creative life.

What happens after the selection panel meets?

I-Park communicates with all applicants as soon as practical after the selection panel has reported their results. Your final acceptance, however, is subject to your agreeing to the terms of the program, as spelled out in the I-Park Residency Agreement, and your participation in a short telephone conversation prior to the session. 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, to confirm that your project is feasible within the constraints of the facilities and to finalize your travel arrangements. We'll also gather some basic information from you so we can make an informed and sensitive studio assignment. Finally, we'll want to establish that basic social, including language, skills are in evidence such that we are comfortable that you and your family can function within the intimate social setting that exists at I-Park.

When do you expect to complete your selection process?

By the end of March, beginning of April.

Costs, Obligations, Expectations

What expenses will I need to cover?

The use of the facility and routine staff support are at no cost to the artists. However, residents will need to pay for transportation to and from the general area and for any art tools or materials required. An example of a cost: 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.

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 and their families 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.

Any other obligations or expectations?

In 2016, we are looking to resume our previous photo/video documentation program. This will involve a short photo and video session with each artist in their studio or somewhere on site. This will result in a 3-5 minute video of the artists and some nice photos for our archives and for our Open Studios event program. At the end of residency, we would like you to provide a thoughtful assessment of the program. As this is an experimental program, we want to know what we did right and what could be done better should we decide to continue the effort. We also need to know what impact the residency made, or will make post-residency, in your creative life. Finally, we do ask all I-Park artists, at the conclusion of their sessions, to share their photos with us and contribute to the creation of a scrapbook that memorializes their experiences at I-Park. Typically this involves each artist creating one or two pages consisting of sketches, text, photos, stories, recipes and such – to leave a mark of their passage through the program for our archives.

Lodging

What kind of living quarters are provided?

The living arrangements within the residence facility, to which three of the four families will be assigned, will be very comfortable and communal – but the space could be snug, depending on how many individuals are lodging there. The house has six bedrooms and three and a half bathrooms. Each family will be provided with two bedrooms and a bathroom: one bedroom for the artist and their spouse/partner (or, if there is no spouse/partner, the person responsible for child care) and one bedroom for the child/children (or some alternative appropriate combination thereof). The fourth family will be assigned to the Pond Studio, which is a much more rustic setting. The Pond Studio is about a 10 minute walk from the main campus, which is where the bathroom and shower facilities are located (though there will be a portable toilet nearby). The Pond Studio is a heated/air-conditioned 200 square foot space with a cloth divider in the middle for visual privacy. While the living conditions in the Pond Studio will not be as refined as for those living in the residence facility (think camping), the setting by the pond is exceptional and the space is very private and quiet. Note that no one will be ‘forced’ to lodge in the Pond Studio. In fact, if there is any question whatsoever about the suitability of the artist and their family for this option, we will not offer them the space. In the event that no one is interested in, or meets the qualifications for, the Pond Studio, the residency will consist of just three artists/families.

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

We will provide towels and bedding items and we have a washer/dryer available for your use.

Support, Food, Amenities

What about meals?

I-Park provides a basic food service at no cost to the artists. Breakfast and lunch ingredients 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 the chef’s dinners, 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 weeknight, the artists will typically prepare their own group meal. Sometimes we mix it up by either 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, outside guests may be invited to such meals. For Saturday and Sunday, there will be ingredients available, often including leftovers, from which group or individual meals can be cobbled together. The pantries and refrigerators are stocked with staples and the kitchen is designed and outfitted for group cooking. A meal pattern quickly develops for each session that reflects the preferences and personalities of the group.

Can/will you cater to individual dietary needs?

While we are accustomed to providing a vegetarian option, we’re not geared up to accommodate individualized dietary restrictions. Artists may bring special ingredients from home, have items shipped in and/or are welcome to accompany staff when they make their weekly run to the grocery store. Each artist is assigned a small space in the refrigerator and some shelf space in the pantry for their special, private products. I-Park pays for the chef-prepared meals and for ‘common’ pantry and refrigerated food items. Artists are responsible for food purchases geared to their individual preferences and/or health requirements.

Are the facilities and grounds wheelchair accessible?

As of December 1, 2015, within the residence facility, the kitchen, two bedrooms and one bathroom are ADA compliant. Within the Common Area, we have an ADA compliant bathroom. Two of the artists' studios are ADA compliant. Beyond that, we are always pleased to make facility and other adjustments for artists with special needs beyond wheelchair accessibility. Please make us aware well in advance of your residency if you will be requiring any special accommodations.

Nature, the Land

What is the weather like at I-Park in August?

It is summer and likely to be warm and humid. Daytime temperatures are generally between 75 and 85 degrees Fahrenheit. All facilities have air conditioning and fans can be made available upon request.

Is it possible to create installations on the land and does I-Park provide support for such?

Yes, subject to project approval. The main considerations are site location, safety, feasibility and intensity of the intervention (all installations are considered temporary). A written proposal and sketch will be required in advance and the artist will be responsible for removing the piece at the end of his/her residency or at the end of the season. In certain 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 site-specific, environmental/ephemeral art are encouraged to engage the I-Park landscape and will find here a rich natural canvas for their creations. I-Park is accustomed to providing limited staff and equipment support for site installations. A modest budget may be available for materials. If you have a particularly ambitious project in mind, it may be useful to discuss it with staff prior to your residency.

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 onsite, including objects from our infamous Junk Trail, that you are welcome to utilize. Please just ask permission first.

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 discuss this topic at length during the group orientation session, we offer insect repellent and we do some preventative spraying along the main pathways. 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. We have frogs, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, possums, rabbits, snakes, turtles, skunks, woodchucks, beavers, muskrats and otters. The variety of birds on site is quite impressive. In transit, wild geese will stop and pay us an extended visit each year to birth, raise and flight-train their young. There are foxes and coyotes – and we understand that fisher cats are making inroads into the area.

Transportation

Can I drive my vehicle to I-Park?

Yes

What public transportation resources are available if driving to I-Park is not an option?

The closest airport is Bradley International, sometimes called Hartford/Springfield, which is about a one-hour drive from East Haddam. Most international artists coming by way of a New York area airport, including Newark, will elect to travel by train from New York City (Metro North or Amtrak) to either Old Saybrook (much preferred) or New Haven, Connecticut. There are detailed directions on our website for getting from the major international airports. However, flying directly to Bradley International, whenever practical, will save you several hours of transit time.

Will you provide local transportation services during the residency?

I-Park will not be providing transportation off-site with the exception of a weekly market run and to bring the children to camp. However, there is reasonably priced dial-a-ride public bus service, [9 Town Transit](#), available Monday through Friday. There are limitations with this service as they require a day's notice for booking. And since it's a shared service, you may not get directly to and from your destination (there may be stops along the way). We also have Uber in our area.

Studios, Equipment

What kind of studio facilities are provided?

Basic, private, well-lit, multi-purpose workspaces in two converted barn structures and in a series of free-standing cabins. The studios are air-conditioned and have ample natural light. 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. You will find studio photos and specifications on the website (General Residency Program tab).

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 will be established. We also can erect temporary canopies so that spaces out on the land or outside the assigned studios can be used as workshop spaces.

Orientation, Rules, Policies

Can I invite a guest?

Beyond your family members and care giver, we can accommodate guests on an occasional, case-by-case basis, but frankly, we discourage it, especially during the work week. Permission needs to be requested before the guest is invited and we cannot accommodate overnight guests. The best time to have a guest visit would be for the Open Studios event at the end of the residency.

What is the policy on smoking?

No smoking is allowed in the house, studios or other structures. Smoking on the grounds is permitted with due consideration for your non-smoking fellow residents and fire safety.

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, as we have learned, 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. An I-Park residency involves a fairly serious commitment on the part of all parties.

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.

Miscellaneous

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

I-Park is not open to the general public. We strive to maintain a somewhat sheltered environment (enclave, cocoon) for our artists-in-residence and to minimize distractions and disruptions. Please make prior arrangements with staff if you'd like to visit the facility. Or come to one of our Open Studios or other public events. In either case, we'll be happy to show you around.

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

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