

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

2021 Site-Responsive Art Program: Residency & Biennale

[November 21, 2020]

How many artists will be involved in the Biennale?

We expect to fund between 6 and 7 projects from this Open Call for Proposals. In celebration of our 20th Anniversary, we will also be exhibiting between two and five Anniversary Commission works. The Anniversary Commission artists will install their works between March and August and will not be onsite during the Open Call residency, though some may wish to return for the Biennale.

When will applicants be advised of their status?

We anticipate that notifications will go out in early to mid February.

What is your definition of site-responsive art? What kinds of works are you looking for?

Site-responsive art (SRA) is created in and for a specific space. We construe the term broadly to encompass multiple aspects of the particular setting that exists at I-Park: nature, the built and cultural environments – but also the various dimensions of time. At its most impactful, SRA is conceived and developed, and then experienced by viewers, in-situ. A crucial element of the SRA residency is the contemplative site selection process – some consider it a dialogue with the site. At I-Park, this type of art is not limited to any particular medium or creative discipline, and the program is accommodating to cross-disciplinary investigations. To get a sense of what's possible, you are invited to check out our [Retrospective Survey of Site-Responsive Art](#) slideshow and our [Sense of Place](#) video page. You are also welcome to look back at the works created for our [2019](#), [2017](#), [2015](#) and [2013](#) biennales.

What scale and intensity of physical intervention are you willing to consider?

All projects must be ephemeral in character. That is, we must have the ability to erase them from existence at the appropriate time, or allow natural forces to do so. We do not want the installations to fundamentally alter the terrain or ecosystem. And, when the decision is made to de-install (we will handle), we need to be able to do so without great expense or effort. I-Park is not a traditional sculpture park. The general practice is for us to wipe the slate clean each spring to allow the land to recover – and to make it fresh again for new eyes and new ideas.

Durability Expectation *[new for 2021]*

While I-Park celebrates ephemeral art for its own sake, for 2021, except for extraordinary circumstances beyond the artists' reasonable control, the works are intended to remain standing in good condition (and, if applicable, operational) until autumn 2022 to allow for extended public engagement.

Is there an approval process before I can start working on the site?

Yes. We will be looking at location/accessibility, the amount of land/space that will be disturbed, the scale of the proposed work, any environmental or safety issues that might arise during installation or afterwards, conformance with applicable local ordinances and ease of disassembly, disposal and reclamation. That said, our primary goal, within program guidelines, is to help remove physical and technical obstacles and to otherwise facilitate the realization of your project at its highest level. Once we achieve project and site approval, a Site-Installation Agreement will be signed by you and I-Park – and then you're good to go.

Will I be able to change my project after it's been approved?

Yes, however, you will need to re-submit your plan to the Project Manager for approval prior to starting, or re-starting, work on your installation.

What sites will be available for the program?

Prior to the residency, I-Park will define the project site and mark out a looping trail along which the works will be installed. There will be some allowance for temporary connector trails. The basic trail will offer a variety of site features, structures and settings and will be designed to be reasonably accessible for visitors. Note that the Gravel Pit Preserve is not available for installations.

Is there an approval process for site selection?

While artists may request particular sites in advance, none will be committed prior to the orientation trail walk at the start of the residency. While I-Park strives to satisfy each artist's site request, the final authority for this decision is with the Project Manager.

What is the basic structure of the application and selection process?

All submissions will undergo a first round evaluation by a three person independent Curatorial Panel. This review will focus on the applicant's Preview Project File, which showcases a prior project realized by the applicant, and their Brief Project Recap, which sets out rough parameters for a 2021 project. The first round will yield a list of finalists who will then be re-evaluated in greater depth by the panel. They will evaluate additional work samples and the totality of the artist's submission. From the pool of finalists, the exhibition will be crafted by the Curatorial Panel.

What if I have only one prior work sample of a realized installation?

In this case, you need to submit this as your Preview Project Proposal. There is more latitude with your Extended Project file, however. You may submit a proposal for an unrealized (un-built) or a hypothetical project, developed in considerable detail as if the work had been executed. You will need to explain this project in question 9 of the 2021 SRA Project Proposal Form.

What are the key elements of a successful submission?

You need to satisfy the panel, through your previous work samples and the strength of your project proposal, of your ability to identify an intimate connection to some meaningful aspect of the project site. You must also convince them that you have the experience and ability to realize your work within the allotted time frame while achieving the durability and other requirements of the program. And, by all means provide the most important information requested of you in the application form. But don't feel the need to fill up all the space that the system provides. Keep your submission tight and clearly focused. The panelists will appreciate your respect for their time – and your work samples will speak for themselves.

Are there any eligibility requirements for the program?

Artists/designers who participated in 2019 and 2017 Site-Responsive Art programs are not eligible for the 2021 program. Also, all artists/designers must be over the age of 21 and have functional English language skills.

What will communications be like pre-residency and is it possible to visit the site in advance?

Pre-residency updates will be sent to the invitees and there will be at least one one-on-one phone conversation prior to the start of the program. In some instances, the Curatorial Panel may have questions that would best be discussed by phone or video call. I-Park staff will, of course, be available during normal business hours to field inquiries. As for visiting the site, you are welcome to do so – but please make advance arrangements with the staff as we are not open to the general public.

Will there be an opportunity for more information prior to applying? *[new for 2021]*

We have set aside the following time for an information session via Zoom (or similar) call on Monday, January 11, 2021 at 11:00 am EST. If you would like to join this call, please sign up at info@i-park.org. If this call turns out to be especially productive, we may add one or two additional calls to accommodate other time zones.

Am I able to apply as part of a collaborative team?

You may submit a group application but be aware that the artist's stipend will need to be shared. The team leader will fill out the application form with their personal information as we need to have a single point of contact – an individual with whom we can coordinate logistical and financial arrangements. We can accommodate 2-person, and in some cases 3-person, teams. However, due to limited lodging facilities, collaborating team members may need to accept "alternative" lodging arrangements, onsite or off.

What are the financial arrangements for the participants?

I-Park is offering a \$3,500 artist's stipend and reimbursement of economy grade travel costs for each project. Travel costs will be reimbursed upon the submission of a paid receipt, though in the case of airline tickets, it's best to get approval before booking your flights. I-Park will issue you a payment of \$1,000 against your stipend during the first week of the residency, subject to your completion of the tax form(s) required by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The balance of the stipend will be paid prior to departure assuming all project, documentation and outstanding financial (if any) obligations have been met.

Are artists required to participate in the residency or can they simply come in advance of the Biennale to install their pieces?

The residency is a core component of this program and artists are required to be present during this timeframe (August 30 – September 20, 2021). The residency is scheduled for 3-weeks in order for the artists to have time to study their surroundings and create works of integrity that are truly site-responsive. In our experience, this intimate shared experience encourages experimentation and cross-disciplinary exchanges – and fosters deep interpersonal connections that extend for decades beyond the residency.

Are artists required to be present for the opening of the Biennale and will they have any specific obligations on that day?

I-Park may organize a modest fundraising event or a low-key symposium in conjunction with the opening – and the participation of the artists could be highly desirable for all parties.

Besides developing a new piece for the Biennale, what other responsibilities will I have?

- Artists will complete and sign I-Park's standard Residency Program Agreement.
- Artists will cooperate with the program's photo, video and audio documentation initiatives and agree to share their own documentation with I-Park.
- We'll ask you to complete a short questionnaire at the end of the residency.
- We request that you credit the I-Park Foundation in future presentations of the work product you created for the Biennale.
- Finally, the staff would appreciate your respect and cooperation, your adherence to our policies and as much advance planning and communication as needed so that our support can be as organized, efficient and pleasantly delivered as possible. We will look to you for gentle treatment of the facilities and considerate regard for the I-Park grounds.

Special conditions for time-based works *[new for 2021]*

Before receiving the balance of their stipend, artists/designers who have created time-based works (e.g., video, performance, sound art) must turn in archival documentation of their project so that the public can experience these pieces during subsequent viewings, if not in-situ, in an onsite gallery setting. Furthermore, a meaningful aesthetic presence, evoking the original work, must remain standing in good condition (and if applicable, operational), until autumn 2022.

What happens to the works after the Biennale?

In deference to the integrity of the artist's vision, I-Park commits that it will not modify or re-locate any installation without the artist's express written permission. Unless specific written terms in the artist's Site Installations Agreement state otherwise, de-installation timing and method will be at I-Park's sole discretion. You will be invited to contribute, or return, any re-usable materials to I-Park so they can be utilized by the organization or future artists for new artworks.

Are there any limitations on the types of materials that can be used? How extensively can we disturb the grounds (e.g., tree-cutting, excavations)?

In making decisions like this, we balance environmental sensitivity, safety and the artist's aesthetic and practical needs. Please ask for permission before taking or disturbing things from the surroundings. Unless what you're proposing is exceptionally aggressive, you'll receive a prompt, fair-minded response so you can keep moving.

How much physical, technical and mechanical assistance can I expect?

We're prepared to offer limited assistance at times when you need an extra pair of hands, help moving materials and equipment around, local transportation and technical advice. However, we do not provide long-term ongoing support to construct your installation. Artists should also be prepared to do their own research. Assistance requests should be made at least 24 hours prior to your need. We will do our best to accommodate you. With advance notice, we can also attempt to locate local volunteers to assist you with your project.

What kinds of materials, tools, equipment and utilities will be available?

There is an abundance of natural materials available for your use including bamboo, saplings and loads of standing dead trees (victims of a recent gypsy moth infestation). There is also a selection of "junk": concrete masonry units, odd lots of lumber and an array of construction/building materials that can generally be shared with the artists at no cost. As for tools, we have the basic ladders, wheelbarrows, chain saws, hand trucks and dollies as well as power, hand, woodworking, gardening and maintenance tools. Any artists using power tools must be familiar with their safe operation. We will have a pickup and/or a small dump truck as well as an all-terrain vehicle reserved for the session, though the vehicles will need to be operated by I-Park personnel. Some sites presently have electrical power – some could have power extended to them. We also have some small generators. None of the sites will have permanent access to 220-volt demand. I-Park has become known for its resourcefulness and generosity in terms of making specialized equipment available for artists' needs. Please check with the office in advance if you have any unusual equipment, tools or material requests.

Subject to the availability of future funding, we will develop a budget for materials and a system for equitably making this resource available to the artists. We will know better how this budget is coming along in the spring of 2021.

What's the situation with respect to lodging at I-Park?

You will be assigned private sleeping quarters either in the main residence facility (a renovated historic two-story house) or in one of the private artists' studios. Each resident will also be assigned a shared bathroom. We provide lodging, meals, bedding, towels, laundry facilities and internet access at the main campus and most of the studios. The kitchen, common area and library facilities are shared by all the residents. Room assignments will be made at the discretion of the Program Director. We will always attempt to accommodate special needs. Please let us if this is an area where you may need assistance.

Will there be workshop and/or studio spaces available?

We have a well-appointed workshop that is a shared resource. Although artists are not typically assigned private studio spaces for this program, we will set-up and make available some studios as additional shared workshop and/or rehearsal spaces. If the need arises, we are prepared to set up one or more canopies to create temporary work spaces out on the land.

What is the situation with respect to meals?

A sit-down dinner is prepared by our chef Monday through Friday. A vegetarian option will be offered and we will make reasonable efforts to accommodate individual dietary requests. However, we cannot guarantee that all such requests can be fulfilled. You will have the opportunity to make special requests in the pre-residency questionnaire and during your pre-residency phone call. We will stock the refrigerators and pantries with basic food supplies, including the week's leftovers, so there will be an ample reserve for help-yourself breakfasts and lunches. These supplies will generally consist of ingredients for sandwiches, salads, soups or other light fare. The artists are responsible for all post-meal kitchen cleanup.

I-Park provides the above meal plan (i.e., food in the shared areas of the refrigerators and pantries) at no cost. Those who would prefer something different than, or in addition to, these offerings will need to purchase their own provisions at their own expense. I-Park will provide transportation once or twice per week to the grocery store for this personal shopping. Please be respectful of all communal spaces.

Am I permitted to invite guests during the residency?

Overnight guests are not permitted. Certainly, guests are most welcome at the Biennale. With advance notice and permission, occasional daytime visits may be accommodated during the residency, though this will not include meals.

What kind of structure and audience do you anticipate for the Biennale?

Promotion of the Biennale will be targeted primarily to the cultural and academic communities in our local community and within the northeast region of the U.S. We plan to have at least 10 subsequent openings during 2021 and throughout 2022.

If you have any time-sensitive questions, please contact us by e-mail at info@i-park.org or by phone at 860-873-2468 from 9:30 until 5:30. Also, consider joining our [mailing list](#). Additional information and updates on the SRA program will be communicated through that channel, as well as on our [homepage](#).

We're looking forward to your proposals!