

Where You At?

30 questions to elevate your awareness and literacy of the greater place in which you live.

- 1) Point north.
- 2) What time is sunset today?
- 3) Trace the water you drink from rainfall to your tap.
- 4) When you flush, where do the solids go? What happens to the waste water?
- 5) How many feet above sea level are you?
- 6) What spring wildflower is consistently among the first to bloom here?
- 7) How far do you have to travel before you reach a different watershed? Can you draw the boundaries of yours?
- 8) Is the soil under your feet more clay, sand, rock or silt?
- 9) Before your tribe lived here, what did the previous inhabitants eat and how did they sustain themselves?
- 10) Name five native edible plants in your neighborhood and the season(s) they are available.
- 11) From what direction do seasonal storms generally come?
- 12) Where does your garbage go?
- 13) How many people live in your watershed?
- 14) Who uses the paper/plastic you recycle from your neighborhood?
- 15) Point to where the sun sets on the equinox. How about sunrise on the summer solstice?
- 16) Where is the nearest earthquake fault? When did it last move?
- 17) Right here, how deep do you have to drill before you reach water?
- 18) Which (if any) geological features in your watershed are, or were, especially respected by your community, or considered sacred, now or in the past?
- 19) How many days is the growing season here (from frost to frost)?
- 20) Name five birds that live here. Which are migratory and which stay put?
- 21) What was the total rainfall here last year?
- 22) Where does the pollution in your air come from?
- 23) If you live near the ocean, when is high tide today?
- 24) What primary geological processes or events shaped the land here?
- 25) Name three wild species that were not found here 500 years ago. Name one exotic species that has appeared in the last 5 years.
- 26) What minerals are found in the ground here that are (or were) economically valuable?
- 27) Where does your electric power come from and how is it generated?
- 28) After the rain runs off your roof, where does it go?
- 29) Where is the nearest wilderness? When was the last time a fire burned through it?
- 30) How many days till the moon is full?

The Bigger Here Bonus Questions:

- 31) What species once found here are known to have gone extinct?
- 32) What other cities or landscape features on the planet share your latitude?
- 33) What was the dominant land cover plant here 10,000 years ago?
- 34) Name two places on different continents that have similar sunshine/rainfall/wind and temperature patterns to here.

Sense of Place: 10 ways to connect artists to a residency program.

- 1.) Nature based interpretation.** Used to great success in our national parks, interpretive signs, tags, displays and tours readily communicate plant and animal species, historic events, wayfinding and other basic information about the ecology and history of a place. Examples: a display illustrating what a residency looked like 500, 200, 50 and 10 years ago, and how the ecology has changed in that time. *A Studio in the Woods* has an environmental curator on staff!
- 2.) Artistic interpretation.** A variation on the above, but using local artists to create the signs and referring to the creation and appreciation of art. Examples: signs directing potters to local seams of clay with notes on different types' usefulness in glazes. An outdoor installation which comments on and directs attention to the surrounding landscape.
- 3.) Life on the land.** A residency program must have other uses and be a place of activity and work outside of the work of the artists. Examples: *Madroño Ranch* is a working bison ranch that offers hunting, fishing and cooking workshops to the public and sells meat, eggs and produce. *ISLAND* and *Atlantic Center for the Arts* keep beehives and sell the honey to raise funds.
- 4.) Invite artist engagement with the above.** Artists can work on the land outside of their art making. Example: morning chores in the garden, help milking the goats, trail work, volunteering at the local food pantry.
- 5.) Connection to the community.** This requires care in creating seclusion for working artists while still connecting them to the larger culture in which they work. Example: residency tours/open studio, readings or concerts in community spaces, inviting community elders to dinner at the residency, inviting the local creative community to present/collaborate, partnering with local institutions, arts education partnerships. *Bemis Center* created a space for local artists to curate and present on the grounds of the residency program.
- 6.) Create art supplies from the land.** Use locally available natural resources to provide raw materials for art making, either as equipment or supplies. Examples: beeswax (bees), milk paints (goats), art-grade charcoal (willow), wood for carving, clay for pottery, fiber (sheep, alpaca, plant fibers), natural dyes and found materials.
- 7.) Use the land itself for art making.** This can be as simple as installation art using local resources or using the land itself as gallery. Think beyond just a sculpture park. Examples: much of the work being done at *A Studio in the Woods* and *Art Farm*.
- 8.) Hospitality from the land.** Grow food for the artists. Use native flowers as table centerpieces. Use local materials in the construction of buildings. Partner with local farms to source food that is local and in season. Partner with local breweries, wineries, cideries, dairies, butchers, smokehouses, fermenters and other craft industries to supply as many needs as possible for the artists. Example: the *Hill House* comes stocked with local and seasonal produce, fish, cheese, meat and wine, along with empty growlers that can be filled at the local pub. *ISLAND* now has an official local sparkling wine sponsor, providing wine for events and residents!
- 9.) Keep it wild.** Resist the urge to over-manicure the landscape. Allow for wilder plants and fungi to populate the grounds, even if some of them are "weeds." Value the edges where the cultivated meets the wild. Create simple paths leading visitors into less manicured places. And yes, provide mosquito spray or bear mace or even a guide. Example: both the *Hill House* and the *ISLAND* property are connected to large tracts of public forest, including a canoeable river. *A Studio in the Woods* keeps the cultivated footprint to a minimum to allow artists to engage with the bottomland forest ecology.
- 10.) Seek close encounters.** Vistas are great, but real engagement takes place at arms length or closer. Use wild space, along with bat houses, bird feeders, butterfly gardens and meandering paths to help create dynamic, intimate encounters between artists and the wild nature. If your wild nature includes mountain lions, bears or alligators you'll want to think carefully about what to invite in and what to exclude. Example: *A Studio in the Woods* has a simple dock overlooking a small pond, and allows fallen trees to decay in place, creating more habitat for wild creatures.