Social Practice Artist Residencies
10 Tips for Community Partners

While artist residencies have traditionally provided opportunities for artists to work in solitude, many residency programs today are designed specifically around artists engaging the local community. How can artist residencies be a platform for engaging communities in meaningful and responsible ways? What do artists need to succeed in community-engaged work, and how best can community partners serve those needs?

This tipsheet is excerpted from a larger body of resources, initiated in 2014. For more resources, please visit www.artistcommunities.org/socialpractice

1. **Align this work with your mission.** Have a clear and authentic intention of why you want to bring artists and the community together and what impact you hope to have.

2. **Be artist-centered.** Consider the artist as an integral part of community-engagement and as a partner with you and the community, rather than as a tool for serving a need.

3. **Be community-centered.** Relevance and needs of the community should drive the work, and the community and artists should be involved in shaping projects together.

4. **Manage expectations** around artists and the community. Clarify your desired outcomes and develop roles and plans together with artists and community partners.

5. **Selection of artists and partners** are fundamental to success. Develop a process that will identify artists well suited to community-engagement and to your particular community. Identify other partners open to working with artists and being process-oriented, not just results-driven.

6. **Prepare in advance, but let projects evolve on-the-ground.** Support planning and learning about the community before a residency, but allow for plans to crystallize once an artist is present.

7. **Be realistic about time.** Shorter time-frames may be best suited for pre-planned projects and/or engaging known partners. Longer time-frames can support more open-ended work and/or exploring new partners and audiences within the community.

8. **Commit resources.** Facilitating meaningful, in-depth engagement deserves time, money, and staffing. Invest in artists, other individuals, and organizational partners doing this work.

9. **Serve as intermediary.** Frame the community context for the artist, help community partners know how best to work with artists, and facilitate relationships between each. This is an ongoing process, not just a step taken at the beginning.

10. **Foster mutual respect** between artists, the community, and organizational partners. Build shared ownership, responsibility, and acknowledgement.

"To create a site-specific work for a community, research of that community is essential. An external perspective is only useful to a community if the person offering the perspective has a sense of how the community lives and what the community aspires towards."

Nicole Latucca, artist-in-residence
Social Practice on Fogo Island

"What does it mean to work in a socially responsible manner? I’m conscious that the community or audience projects are intended for isn’t the homogenous group it is usually made out to be. I try to bear in mind that one size doesn’t fit all, and that diverse content and approaches are vital for thinking about groups who can fall to the wayside when using dominant methodologies."

Ioana Gordon-Smith, artist