

ARTIST RESIDENCIES IN THE PUBLIC REALM:

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR CREATING
RESIDENCIES AND FOSTERING SUCCESSFUL
COLLABORATIONS

BY THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ART, PITTSBURGH, PA

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INTRODUCTION

There are many ways artists work in the public realm. Some of the most familiar occur when artists are commissioned to create works of art, or participate in the design of public spaces. But artists can also be engaged as change agents who can collaborate with communities to envision their future, address community issues, and strengthen connectivity. Our point of view is that artists are creative and valuable community members who are often experts at creative problem solving and encouraging neighbors to interact, in addition to being specialists who make works of art.

This resource guide is written primarily for entities that would like to develop an artist in the public realm residency, as well as individual artists who initiate their own collaborative projects. It outlines ideas for structuring creative residencies that result in successful community collaboration.

WHAT ARE THE TERMS THAT WE USE?

For the purpose of this document, the term **artist** describes a person who is active in creating, practicing, performing, or teaching any of the arts. These artists include visual artists, writers, musicians, performers, and others.

An **artist residency** program is generally established to offer artists a period of time to work outside of their traditional environment and daily life. Residency programs may or may not be “residential” in nature; sometimes artists will relocate for the period of the residency, while other programs offer artists a place to work but do not require that artists live on-site. Perhaps the most important aspect of a

residency program is the relationship between the artist and the host. In traditional models, the artist residency is a place of isolation where artists retreat to create their work and have an opportunity to focus inwardly on it, with the host providing support, such as meals, housing, and studio space. Other artist residency programs are more communal in nature and emphasize collaboration between an artist and host, or between an artist and other disciplines.

This resource guide outlines ideas for structuring a residency built on this model, methods for selecting artists, and tips on how to produce a residency that leads to a successful collaboration.

The term **public realm** refers to the spaces within a community that are experienced by members of the public, regardless of whether they are publicly or privately owned. The public realm includes streets, outdoor spaces, hillsides, and landscapes. In addition, the public realm may include interior spaces that are

open to the general public and actively used by community members, such as libraries, schools, or community centers. The public realm is also defined as the concept of the public sphere, the social space to which all citizens have access and where public opinion is formed about issues that face communities.

An **artist residency in the public**

realm is an opportunity for a community, organization, government office, or other entity to collaborate with an artist within the public sphere. The process and project can be structured to be accessible to a wide range of participants, and will influence the public realm of the community. In these types of projects, the process of collaboration during the residency typically determines the end result. This resource guide outlines ideas for structuring a residency built on this model, methods for selecting artists, and tips on how to produce a residency that leads to a successful collaboration.

Throughout this document, we use the terms **residency organizer** and **residency host**. In this context, the **residency organizer** is an entity that serves as the facilitator of the program, which may or may not take place within that organization. Residency organizers do not typically act on a one-time basis; they are often arts organizations seeking to establish an ongoing program that connects artists with neighborhoods or communities through residencies in the public realm. The

organizer is usually in charge of identifying funding, facilitating the selection process, and providing technical assistance to both the artist and the residency host throughout the course of the project. The organizer should be skilled in project management and understand the complexities of managing contracts, budgets, and community expectations.

The **residency host** is the group, organization, or community that is inviting the artist into its environment, and providing a physical, social, and cultural space for the residency to take place. The host may be taking part in a residency program on a one-time basis, or may be looking to establish a regular program of inviting artists to be in residence with them.

When a residency will be a one-time program for a host, it may not be necessary for them to be as well versed in project management as the organizer. However, the host must be a

willing participant in all aspects of the project and be included in decision making at every turn.

Every project does not need a residency organizer in addition to a residency host. When they are the same entity, the host is responsible for all of the responsibilities described above.

When we talk about **community** in this guide, we define it as a group of people with a shared experience. This can be based on geography or access to a specific place; a common interest, as for a group in an astronomy club; or a particular life event, as for a group of cancer survivors.

*Artists are creative
and valuable community members
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problem solving*

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INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS: PLANNING FOR AN ARTIST RESIDENCY IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Prior to initiating either a one-time residency or an ongoing program, it is important to understand your motivations for the residency and whether you have sufficient resources to support the residency in the capacity as the host or the organizer. As a first step, we suggest gathering a group of colleagues who will potentially be a part of the initiative to discuss the questions below.

IS AN ARTIST RESIDENCY THE RIGHT TYPE OF PROJECT FOR YOU?

To foster collaboration, artists, hosts, and organizers should dismiss preconceived notions of what the outcome of the residency will be. In a successful residency, all parties work together to develop a project and arrive at an accepted and valued outcome through that collaboration. If an open-ended process feels uncomfortable, or if you lack time to foster collaboration due to a pending deadline, a residency may not be the right approach for your project.

For example, you may already know that you want an artist to work with a particular community group to make a mosaic that focuses on a historical theme in the lobby of a community center. Since the parameters of the project are already defined, the artist's and community's participation in the conceptual development and decision-making process will be very limited. Commissioning or purchasing a work of art is a more appropriate process for this type of project than establishing a residency.

PROJECT STAFFING

Ask yourself with whom the artist will work. The host and organizer must identify a staff person who will be responsible for the project, and who will be acknowledged by the artist and community as a point person throughout its duration. Staff contacts are a very important part of the residency because they can help the artist make connections to the community, learn about the culture of the host and organizer, and identify resources that will be available to the artist during the residency. The organizer or host will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the residency and helping to obtain any permits or permissions needed by the artist during the process. If the host or organizer cannot identify a staff person who has the ability to serve as the point person for the project, and there is an expectation that the artist make community connections and project decisions independently, it might not be the right time for a residency.

THE COMMUNITY

Identifying the community that will be engaged through a residency can be determined in advance by a residency host or organizer, determined by the artist once they are selected, or remain flexible until the residency has begun and all parties have worked to engage one or more communities through the residency. Determining the method that will work best for your particular residency is an important discussion to have with your group.

THE WORK SITE

Ask yourself where the artist will work. There cannot be an artist in residence if he or she has nowhere to go! The artist will need a physical space to use as a home base, either at the host's location or elsewhere in the community. A desk, office, community room, or other place that the artist can reliably access to host meetings, workshops, or other events during the project is necessary. The artist should have access to a telephone, computer, and other resources to help integrate himself or herself into the community, and give community members ways to communicate with him or her. Having a clearly defined work site for the artist, which is known to community members, can help to encourage serendipitous conversations and enable unexpected opportunities to reveal themselves throughout the course of the residency. There may need to be space where work and equipment can be secured and remain undisturbed over the course of the residency.

In a successful residency, all parties work together to develop and arrive at an accepted and valued outcome through that collaboration.

THE CONTRACT

A contract is an opportunity to put the expectations and milestones of the project in writing. Be sure to outline the responsibilities of the artist, the host, and the organizer, how much the artist and host will be paid and at which milestones, methods for reporting residency progress, how the project will be credited, and who owns any intellectual and physical outcomes of the project. Once the work plan is written (see below), it should be attached to the contract. The contract should also outline the acceptable reasons that the artist or host can terminate participation in the project, as well as the processes to do so. It should address possible contingencies, such as an artist moving away or becoming ill, and loss of funding by the host entity. It should also include how an artist or host can terminate the contract if the collaboration is just not working out and a positive outcome or consensus seems unlikely.

While many of these decisions will not be made until an artist is selected, it is useful to have a template or boilerplate agreement that outlines special or unique terms that a host or organizer may require and provides artists with an opportunity to review the structure of the agreement prior to accepting the offer of residency. Having a template will also allow for preliminary review by the host and organizer and their legal counsel.

Do not question whether you need to have a contract in place. You must have a contract, regardless of how comfortable the working relationship is between parties.



SELECTING AN ARTIST

One of the most important factors in building a successful collaboration is matching an artist with the host. Having a clearly defined process for selecting an artist, communicating what is expected of each party participating in that process, and broadcasting the opportunity are crucial steps in achieving this goal.

WHAT PROCESS SHOULD BE USED FOR SELECTING AN ARTIST IN RESIDENCE?

Confidence in the selection process and outcome foster successful collaboration. We suggest using a selection committee model, where artists submit their qualifications to an advertised opportunity in the form of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The format of the RFQ can either be as an open call for artists that is disseminated broadly or an invitation to a predetermined list of artists who are specifically solicited to respond. We do not suggest a Request for Proposals (RFP) because it eliminates the opportunity for the artist to collaborate with the host and the community on the outcome of the project.

The selection committee should include at least one representative from the residency host with whom the artist will be working,

as well as other community stakeholders and arts professionals. Although the entire selection committee will participate in the interview process and discuss the finalists, we strongly recommend that the host have the final choice in selecting the artist. It is critical to the success of a project that the host and the artist have a good working relationship, and that the host feels confident in the final selection.

There may, however, be times when a residency organizer has already identified an artist for a specific residency. In those circumstances, we strongly recommend that the host have the opportunity to interview the artist and determine if they want to work with the preselected artist. The artist will also have the opportunity to decide if they want to work with the host entity. It is important to remember that forced marriages between artists and hosts can be very challenging for everyone involved.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)?

While the RFQ is typically drafted by the residency organizer in collaboration with the host, it is good practice to have the selection committee review the RFQ prior to distributing it to ensure that they fully understand what is being requested of the applicants. The RFQ typically includes:

- **Project Description:** includes identification of the residency organizer and residency host and their relationship to each other
- **Project Context:** information that the host, organizer, and selection committee feel is critical to understanding the project and the process, including, if applicable, overarching goals for the residency and any specific selection criteria that will be used by the committee
- **Project Budget:** includes the artist's fee as well as the amount they will be able to access for use in producing projects during the residency. Exactly how the funds are allocated can be determined later by the artist, host, and organizer
- **Artist Eligibility:** includes any geographic restrictions, prior work experience requirements, requirements for clearances to work with children, etc.
- **Description of the Selection Process:** includes who is facilitating it and a general description of the selection committee

We do not suggest a Request for Proposals because it eliminates the opportunity for the artist to collaborate with the host and the community on the outcome of the project.

- **Application Submission Process:** includes format for submitting materials, addresses, and deadlines for submission
- **Description of Application Materials:** typically includes a letter of interest, work samples and a description of the samples, artist statement, resume, and any other materials that the selection committee would like to review
- **Anticipated Project Timeline:** includes the timetable for advertising the RFQ; date and time for information sessions about the project (if applicable); application deadline; selection process schedule; anticipated schedule for artist interviews; anticipated schedule for notifying artists of final selection; and anticipated schedule for commencing and completing the work

HOW ARE SUBMISSIONS REVIEWED?

Once the RFQ submissions are received from the artists, we suggest that the selection committee meet to review all of the artist qualifications and choose a limited number to interview for the residency. For hosts who

are not accustomed to working with artists, we recommend reaching out to a local arts organization, public art program, or art consultant with community or public art experience to help facilitate the process.

Additionally, there are many tools that outline best practices for choosing an artist listed in the Resources section below.

WHERE AND HOW SHOULD THE OPPORTUNITY BE POSTED?

Local arts organizations can be very helpful in determining where and how to post the RFQ. Seek out places where opportunities for artists are already posted in your community. We also suggest sharing the opportunity with other organizations, such as schools, universities, and community-based arts programs that hire artists to lead workshops and teach classes. Their artists may be ideal candidates for your opportunity.

Many organizations maintain electronic mailing lists that can broadly disseminate the opportunity for little or no cost. Don't forget old-fashioned methods, such as putting up posters in the library, coffee shops, and other public places.

We also recommend hosting an information session for artists who are interested in learning more about the opportunity before they invest the time required to complete the application. If possible, hold this session in a physical location that is within or adjacent to the community in which the residency will be hosted. During the session, the residency host and organizer should be prepared to answer questions about their organizations, the purpose of the residency, expectations for the artist, and the application process.

WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN HIRING AN ARTIST FOR A RESIDENCY IN THE PUBLIC REALM?

Although this may sound obvious, be sure that the artist you are considering actually likes to collaborate and work with the public. The

process of generating ideas during an artist residency in the public realm takes time, so the artist needs to be dedicated to showing up and participating, even when challenges arise. The artist should be more than simply comfortable working with the community and the host; they should be deeply committed to the collaborative opportunity. It will also be helpful to work with an artist who demonstrates that they are capable of working with a group to generate ideas, who does not bring with

them preconceived or formulaic approaches for the residency or expectations of the community.

The selection committee should be inspired, engaged, or captivated by the artist's

past work. During the interview, ask artists about the process behind their previous work, as well as questions about how they engage collaborators and community members, and how they overcame challenges and roadblocks. Ask for references from past collaborators and clients in order to garner more insight into the working process of the artist.

NOTIFYING THE ARTISTS

Once the selection process is over, notify the artist who was chosen, as well as the artists who were not selected. We advise that personal phone calls be made to each of the interviewed applicants so they have the opportunity to ask questions about the process and the decision. Be honest and constructive in your feedback. It will help them understand why they were not the right artist for this particular project.

The artist should be more than simply comfortable working with the community and host; they should be deeply committed to the collaborative opportunity.



CREATING THE RESIDENCY FRAMEWORK

Once the artist and host are identified, it's time to set up the framework that will guide the residency. The project team, workplan, and contract will outline the responsibilities of each entity engaged in the residency. Creating the framework for the project provides a great opportunity to refocus goals, expectations, boundaries, and deadlines.

CREATE THE PROJECT TEAM

A committed project team is key to achieving effective communication before, during, and after the residency. The project team can discuss the residency logistics and the resources that will be available to the artist; to plan how to engage partners and community members in the meetings and events that will take place during the residency; and evaluate progress and any problems or issues that will arise during the course of the residency. The project team should include the artist, at least one representative of the host, including the staff point person, and a representative from the residency organizer. Other key stakeholders or liaisons from the community can be valuable team members as well. However, keep in mind that a small team of key decision makers can be the most effective structure. Additional working groups can be established outside of the project team to assist the artist and communicate about the residency, but keep your project team focused on managing the project.

DEVELOP A WORKPLAN

As the residency begins, the artist and the project team should develop a workplan that outlines what they want to accomplish during the course of the residency. This document should include a timeline for the work, a list of resources that will be needed to implement the ideas, and identification of possible outcomes. The resources may be financial, but they could also include the means to obtain access to information, people, or permission to use certain locations. The workplan should be reviewed monthly by the project team and agreed upon by the host and organizer. It can be written in several stages, as ideas, anticipated outcomes, and implementation methods will evolve during the course of the collaboration, but it should be documented and attached to the artist's contract as an exhibit and be updated as needed.

DISCUSS OWNERSHIP OF RESIDENCY MATERIALS

Some artist residencies in the public realm will result in physical works of art; they could also yield creations such as written materials, musical scores, films, or dance works. Equipment and educational resources may be purchased to implement the residency. There will be documentation, including photos, video, and notebooks. Who owns these works and resources, how they will be credited and described, where they will be housed, how they may be used in the future, and how they will be maintained must be determined by the artist, host, and organizer, as well as the other key participants in the collaboration. Have initial discussions about ownership and document them in the contract. As the residency progresses and new materials are developed, update the agreement about who owns what and how it will be maintained.

FINALIZE THE CONTRACT

Review the agreement that will be used. If you have been working with a boilerplate agreement, you will need to get specific and fill in the dollar values, payment schedule, dates for project milestones, and any other requirements

that are identified and agreed upon by the host, organizer, and the artist. It is critical that the host and the artist fully understand the terms of the agreement they are signing. Many arts organizations facilitate programs that connect artists with lawyers who can provide low-cost or even pro bono review. In the contract, don't shy away from outlining how conflicts will be resolved, and how each entity can resign from the residency if it is not working out.

DEVELOP A MEDIA OUTREACH STRATEGY

Consider how information will be distributed about the residency. Do you want to invite either traditional news media or social media into the process? If so, how will you conduct outreach to local news outlets or bloggers, and who will be the point person for handling media inquiries? Does the host or organizer have standard policies for managing press inquiries? Will there be a social media presence for the project, such as through Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, and who will manage those accounts?

In the contract, don't shy away from outlining how conflicts will be resolved, and how each entity can resign from the residency if its not working out.



IMPLEMENTING THE RESIDENCY

Producing a good residency requires a lot of hard work and dedication from all participants, but can be an enriching experience for everyone involved. Be sure that you step back and appreciate the fruits of your labors and those of your collaborators. Below are some strategies to employ as the workplan is implemented that will increase collaboration and communication throughout the project.

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

During the residency, ensure that you allow time for the artist to understand the host, explore the environment of the residency, and meet the community, and for the community to get to know the artist. Don't rush this process. If things seem to be going slowly, or connections are not being made easily, have members of the project team identify and develop new methods for creating and building relationships. This period of discovery is important for developing a project that is truly collaborative and rooted in the community.

One of the most important components of the collaboration is going to be flexibility.

MAINTAIN FLEXIBILITY

The workplan, project team, and contract provide structure to the residency, but one of the most important components of the collaboration is going to be flexibility. As the

residency moves along, and the artist and the community work together, things will change. The residency may have a process and outcome that is very different from the initial concept. The initial ideas identified in the workplan may fail and a new direction will need to be taken. More community contacts may be needed if the initial group is not able to continue with the project. The host, organizer, and artist need to expect these kinds of challenges and find ways to work through them.

MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION

Establish a regular schedule of project team meetings throughout the course of the residency to check in with all members of the project team, and be sure to give each of them an opportunity to provide feedback during the meetings. Take the opportunity at these times to review and update project milestones,

evaluate progress in relation to the workplan, and identify any additional outreach for which project team members can provide assistance. Taking meeting notes or minutes can help project team members track decisions made along the way. Most importantly, use the project team meetings to establish and maintain an open dialogue between the artist, host, and organizer.

DOCUMENT THE RESIDENCY

Document the process, not just an end product. Even photos of meetings that seem boring can be helpful in telling the story of the collaboration later on. Everyone connected to the residency should be empowered to document their experience with the collaboration. Use any method that can help to tell the story of the project: images, video, journals, sketchbooks, even a blog or newsletter. These can be made public, or can be kept private, or a combination of both. The information collected will become an important tool in conveying the process of the residency, from initiation until completion.



SHARING OUR RESEARCH

This resource guide is the result of a three-year research and pilot project by the Office of Public Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that was funded by The Heinz Endowments. We started by researching existing artist residencies in the public realm that were organized by arts organizations and self-initiated by artists. We asked colleagues who had significant experience with public realm residencies for advice on how to structure a new initiative. Renee Piechocki also worked with Jennifer McGregor on a concurrent project to interview artists about their methods of engaging communities in their work, and the entire Office of Public Art staff attended conferences focused on socially engaged work. Our pilot tested different methods for the administration of a residency. This document captures what we have learned based on our cumulative research and pilot experience.

After our pilot program, we decided to develop an ongoing residency program for artists in the public realm. We recognize that methods for successful artist collaborations are always evolving, so we will be updating this document periodically to capture current best practices and practical advice. If you use this guide, have suggestions, or want to share your own residency experiences, please contact us.

We thank the colleagues who helped us during the research phase of this project for their time and sage advice, as well as their willingness to provide feedback on this document: Kristin Calhoun, Barbara Goldstein, Peggy Kendellen, and Helen Lessick. We especially thank eTeam, Blaine Siegel, Lena Andrews, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, and The Kingsley Association for working with us through the two pilot phases of the project. We also thank Janet Sarbaugh, Rob Stephany, and Eric Stoller of The Heinz Endowments for their guidance and encouragement throughout the pilot project.



RESOURCES

ARTIST RESIDENCIES IN THE PUBLIC REALM

The following are examples of established artist residencies in the public realm that follow a residency host and organizer model, rather than being artist initiated.

INTERSECTIONS, REGIONAL ARTS & CULTURE COUNCIL, PORTLAND, OREGON

<http://www.racc.org/public-art/temporary-public-art#insitu>

intersections is a public art residency program that explores the “art of work” and the “work of art.” The program encourages artists in all disciplines to explore new working methods and develop socially engaging, interactive art experiences in community settings. Projects have occurred within several public agencies, including the Portland Fire Bureau, the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, Multnomah County Health Department, Portland City Archives, and a facility serving Portland’s homeless populations. Artists are usually chosen through an open call process.

ART AND COMMUNITY LANDSCAPES, NATIONAL PROGRAM

http://www.nefa.org/artist_projects/art_community_landscapes

This grant program was a partnership between the New England Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Parks Service. The purpose of the program was to support site-based public art projects as catalysts for increased environmental awareness and stewardship. Project sites and partner organizations, which were preselected by the National Parks Service, were paired with an artist or artist team for residencies of one year or longer. The artists were selected via a two-step panel process that included an RFQ followed by a short list of artists who were paid to develop proposals. The finalist and the project site were given a \$50,000 implementation grant.

SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WITH VAUGHN BELL,
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/artplan_implementation.htm

Artist Vaughn Bell was embedded as an artist staff member at the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) through the City of Seattle's Office of Cultural Affairs, in a position jointly funded by the two agencies. Bell served as a liaison between the Office and the SDOT and acted as an advisor to SDOT on design and aesthetic issues.

ARTIST-INITIATED RESIDENCIES IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Artist-initiated residencies in the public realm are projects wherein an artist or group of artists, rather than a host or organizing entity, identifies and creates the residency themselves.

PROJECT ROW HOUSES, HOUSTON, TEXAS

<http://projectrowhouses.org/>

Project Row Houses was initiated in 1993 by a group of artists, including Rick Lowe, who collaborated with numerous organizations and individual volunteers to re-envision what a row of abandoned row houses in Houston's Third Ward could be. The buildings became housing for young, single mothers and spaces for community-focused art projects. The project has expanded from one and a half blocks to six blocks. The Row House Community Development Corporation was founded in 2003.

TAMMS YEAR TEN, LAURIE JO REYNOLDS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

<http://www.yearten.org/>

What started as a project by artist Laurie Jo Reynolds to exchange poetry with prisoners in Tamms prison evolved into many projects and events that educated people about the conditions of the prison and the destructive impact of solitary confinement. These actions led to direct communication with the State Legislature of Illinois and eventually to the closing of the prison and redirection of prisoners to more humane facilities in 2013.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/05/19/arts/art-architecture-the-department-of-sanitation-s-artist-in-residence.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<http://galleristny.com/2013/01/trash-talk-the-department-of-sanitations-artist-in-residence-is-a-real-survivor/>

Mierle Laderman Ukeles became the artist in residence at this municipal agency in 1977 and has continued in that role since. The residency is unfunded by the

department, but the artist has an office and access to other department resources to create works of art about sanitation issues, sometimes in collaboration with department staff.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ART (OPA), located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has links to many helpful public art management tools on our website, including contracts, information about artist calls, and the Pittsburgh Artist Registry. OPA also works with individuals and organizations to provide technical assistance on a range of projects. For more information, visit www.publicartpittsburgh.org.

ANIMATING DEMOCRACY, a program of Americans for the Arts, raises awareness of art that contributes to social change. Their website has numerous resources for art and civic engagement, including tools to measure the impact of a civic engagement project. For more, visit www.animatingdemocracy.org.

FORECAST PUBLIC ART is a nonprofit arts organization that connects the energies and talents of artists with the needs and opportunities of communities, and guides these partners in creating public art that expresses the community's sense of place and pride. They also publish Public Art Review, which has often included articles about social practice projects and artist residencies. Learn more here: www.forecastpublicart.org.

GATHERINGS

CREATIVE TIME'S annual summit includes presentations by artists and organizations who are deeply engaged in community-based projects. All of the summit presentations are available online at www.creativetime.org/summit.

OPEN ENGAGEMENT is an international conference that explores various perspectives on art and social practice, and expands the dialogue around socially engaged art making. Their website includes an archive of past events, and can be found at www.openengagement.info.

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