

FINAL PROPOSAL FOR ART FUTURES RESIDENCY, ATHENS
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a score for reflection from

A field guide to iLANDing : research scores for urban ecologies

Collaborative observation of a site

Select a system or element of your environment to observe.
What are the forces at work at this site?

How can you participate in this system or play with it to make it more visible?

How can we use our sensing bodies to learn about these systems and how they function in the larger context of this environment?

Record your research in the medium of your choosing, such as:

A performable action to reveal the system or elements of the system;

A literal or imaginative map that details the system or evidence of the system;

Intersections (a secure) that guide a stranger through an experience of your chosen system.

Meet as a group to share, perform, discuss, or otherwise animate your findings with your group.

SUMMARY

The proposal for a residency in Athens unfolds across three tangents: *Terrain* (Where and for whom?), *Foundations & Architecture* (How?) and *Time* (What?). The Art Futures Residency model prioritises social engagement, meaningful interactions with the city of Athens and its communities while consciously reflecting on the wider ecosystem of the city comprising of the particular, peculiar and contradictory socio-political, urban and environmental characteristics.

Terrain

- The relation between *Critical Friends* as a group of friends, colleagues and cultural practitioners with the site of Athens should strive to be underscored by gestures of solidarity and collective work with the residents.
- This residency is built from the shared concerns and observations expressed by *Critical Friends*, including and not limited to: the continuously precarious position of artists; the increasingly polarised political landscape in Europe; the exclusivity of the art world and its educational institutions and the inequality between social classes, races and genders.
- Dialogue with people on-site who have situated knowledge and are actively engaged with supporting the arts landscape of Athens should be prioritised.

The Foundations & Architecture

- Mentorship program to be developed and carried out by one or more Critical Friends member to cater to and support the resident's practice and needs during their stay.
- Focus on applicants that demonstrate an active interest in engaging with the local arts scene, culture and/or socio-political landscape.
- Strive for minimising the carbon footprint of the residency's operations. Further support can be found on [Julie's Bicycle](#), [Ki-Culture](#) and [CIMAM, On the Move](#).
- Work towards becoming part of a community instead of operating as an isolated entity.
- Meanwhile, foster an international network that allows for plurivocal cultural exchange facilitated through this residency. For example, [Onassis-Air](#) is a residency in Athens with some international collaborators.
- The residency's architecture relies on interconnectedness, synthesis, emergence, feedback loops and causality.

Time — What

- The time duration will determine the objectives and output of the residency's activities.
- Application requirements to state overall project needs can save time if the residency coordinator is able to plan ahead.
- In the case of this two-month residency, consider how to develop a residency structure that continues to unfold and happen beyond its limited timeframe.
- What Art Futures could focus on supporting residents create, could be *tools* that are developed in collaboration with a local initiative, space or organisation based on locally identified needs and urgencies.

SITUATING THE RESIDENCY: THE TERRAIN

Build this residency with reciprocity in mind. Your relationship - as *Art Futures' Critical Friends* - as a group of friends, colleagues and like-minded individuals, with the site of Athens should be a gesture of solidarity. Consider how this ecosystem will transform you before you think about what you want to bring into it, and reflect on what already lives within this cultural landscape. Think also of the conversations you want to cultivate and amplify. Converse and respond to what is already there and develop alongside it. Donna Haraway explains in her seminal essay, *Situated Knowledges* (1988), "Accounts of a 'real' world do not, then depend on a logic of 'discovery' but on a power-charged social relation of 'conversation'. The world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favour of a master decoder."

Surely many of your concerns and priorities as a group of cultural experts resonate with many working and living in Athens. Building a situated residency, means becoming part of a community, not operating as an isolated entity. This residency, much like a new organism emerging into an existing ecosystem, should entangle itself with the city's fabric, yet locate its specific role and place in the community, what is called in ecology studies - an ecological niche. Art residencies act as both hosts and mediators for the resident generating interactions with other 'organisms' within and beyond the arts. The series of interactions with the city will shape the 'organism' that will be this residency. Critical reflection on the site, your objectives and approach will not only identify the ecological niche you can carve out for the Art Futures Residency, it will also allow you to build this residency mindfully and ensure its sustainability beyond the two-year pilot program.

Questions for reflection

What do you know about Athens? Have you been to Athens?

Which memories stayed with you?

Consider your role within this complex ecosystem and the alliances you want to create. Would you like to be facilitators, mediators, sponsors, mentors, educators?

How are you reading the site and who is describing it to you?

Who are you learning from about art, life and struggles in Athens?

FRAMING THE RESIDENCY: THE FOUNDATIONS

The only constant is change.
Octavia Butler, Parable of the Sower (1993)

On the 14th of January 2021, Critical Friends gathered to reflect on their shared concerns and observations about the continuously precarious position of artists; the increasingly polarised political landscape in Europe; the exclusivity of the art world and its educational institutions and the inequality between social classes, races and genders. Despite the grey skies ahead, the report demonstrates a deeply-seated belief and trust in the ability of the arts not only to bring about social transformation, but of their unmatched skill in proposing other ways of being, thinking and living.

Indeed, artists are skilled at challenging hegemonic narratives and at proposing alternative realities - often unthinkable to most of us. They are gifted at creating environments that help us relate to one another. They make space that allows us to negotiate and accept our differences. They can be savvy organisers and enablers of radical change. Creative minds are also remarkable problem-solvers. We are living through multiple crisis, yet, the sheer energy and enthusiasm for a narrative change repeatedly demonstrated by critical thinkers, climate justice movements and artists to name a few, point to the fact that there is ample reason to remain hopeful and engaged. Our future depends on an immediate and global effort to reconcile our relations to our planet. Scholars, educators, scientists, among others have admitted that the extent to which we mobilise in pursuit of a fairer future for all life on this planet, lies in the ability of creatives to inspire and make visible the invisible.

Critical Friends have shared concerns and a common goals. I have developed the residency proposal bearing in mind the three themes proposed in this report: towards a new canon; towards a new language and towards empowerment. Author Octavia Butler reiterated Greek philosopher Heraclitus when she wrote “the only constant is change”. Her words and work have rung truer than ever since the pandemic started. By embracing fluidity and flexibility, organisms are more readily prepared to respond to continuous change. Agreeing on new canons could be counterproductive to collective efforts of embracing and preserving a multiverse of voices, cosmologies and perspectives that make our world so wonderfully diverse. We are inhabiting a world that is continuously changing, a word full of stories and truths. The canon inherently resists change and what we urgently need now is change.

Even though technological and scientific advances continue to awe us with increasingly detailed accounts of how ecosystems operate, Western societies do not show signs of changing behaviour to put an end to the sixth mass extinction or the worrying pace of ecological collapse happening before our very eyes. Keto & Foster (2020) rightly point out, “We may have more knowledge of the ecology of nature than ever, but what does this knowledge mean to us? It is as if we were watching this mechanical machine called nature from a distance.” The gap between knowledge and behavioural change has baffled educators for decades now and scientists acknowledge the limitations of their field. Instead, artists’ vocabulary and tools are able to generate relational and immersive experiences, somatic practices and sensorial environments that are more likely to attune us to the wealth of life, human and non-human we are connected and dependent on.

Questions for reflection

How would you like to support this community?

Who are you giving space to create?

Should residencies be sites of care and inspiration for the artists?

Should residencies be sites of refuge?

What responsibilities do residencies have towards the artists, as content-makers?

What can you offer Athens individually and collectively?

Which communities do you want to be part of?

THE RESIDENCY’S ARCHITECTURE

The three-year pilot program unravels along three intersecting axis. Each application call will focus on a specific theme revolving around a core subject matter to be decided collectively, between Critical Friends and the curators invited.

Some ideas on what the thematic applications could focus on include: deep mapping, place-making practices, urban ecology studies, geopoetics, somatic and sensory practices, global citizenship pedagogies, community-building and notions of nourishment.

While each iteration will shape the focus of the application call, it is important that these three ‘chapters’ remain porous throughout the three years allowing for former, present and future residents to meet, or even collaborate and for a cross-pollination of networks and practices to continue taking place even after the residency is over. For example, by placing each resident in communication with the previous one - from sharing tips, to experiences these encounters could prove interesting for participants (especially foreigners) and important for fostering a sense of community within the residency’s ecosystem.

Interconnectedness

Foster partnerships and collaborations between art institutions and Greek and/or Athens-based artists, and vice versa. Prioritise co-creation and collaboration with local stories, ideas, initiatives and efforts.

Synthesis

Focus on trans-disciplinary collaboration and challenge the notion of the solitary author. Choose participants who are eager to create collectively with peers in Athens.

Emergence

Develop relations with local arts initiatives, grassroots movements, other arts residencies and exhibition spaces to host and develop public programming and activities. Begin by building small, easy to execute collaborations.

Feedback loops

Request feedback from participants and collaborators to better understand how to develop and improve the residency's practices.

Causality

Consciously revisit the positive and negative impacts the residency has had on its community, neighbourhood and residents at the conclusion of each iteration.

To maintain an enduring, open and meaningful translocal conversation through this residency, attempt to foster close interrelations between cities, countries and cultures, while continuously questioning your position and agency in this. Consider for example, the extent that cultural practitioners in these two very different contexts experience the same challenges. Furthermore, reflect on and compare the support infrastructures available, or not, for the artists in these two contexts. These translocal collaborations can manifest in the exchange of financial or creative services, resources, or networks.

Critical Friends are united by common concerns and your individual interests are informed by a variety of skills, expertise, knowledge and experience. In order to develop a supportive structure within the residency, in the ethos you have laid out in your report of January 2021, I recommend that you learn from the complexities, particularities, urgencies and practices of the city and its artistic landscape and reflect on how you can contribute to this residency as a collective body and as individuals. One way could be through developing a mentorship program responding to and catering to each resident's practice and needs.

Questions for reflection

How will you choose whom to support?

Which biases inform these decisions?

How can you support transdisciplinary arts practices?

How can you foster new ways of engaging through art practices?

Are there any limitations to the practices that can be synthesised and merged?

TIME DETERMINES THE OBJECTIVE

There is an urgent need to rethink the residency model. There is an urgency to rethink its extractives properties and the pressure it exerts on the creators to produce an outcome within a specific timeframe. The debate surrounding residencies focuses on the aspect of time and the way in which this limitation informs how both institutions and residents operate within it. Ongoing conversations call for slow residencies that last from three to eleven-month long periods which allow meaningful engagement with the site.

Therefore, in the case of this two-month residency, we should question how to develop a residency structure that continues to unfold and happen beyond its limited timeframe. One way of going about it is to think of the participants' engagement as planting seeds that can continue to grow even after they are gone and the city that has hosted them can benefit from its flourishing.

This approach then brings us to the question of what planting seeds could mean. I propose that the outcomes of these residencies are *tools* that are developed by the invited artists, scientists, researchers or writers in collaboration with a local initiative, space or organisation based on locally identified needs and urgencies.

These tools could be in the form of storytelling practices; architectures of exchange-economies (meaning a common fund where skills and services are exchanged); constructing outdoor cinema or community garden spaces; place-making in the urban fabric; initiating a food bank; developing a materials bank where artists can drop materials they no longer use in exchange for other types of materials and so on. Artists developing situations, rituals, or even tools that can become part of daily life, or can be integrated in the fabric of the city, can be likened to a process of coevolution.

Responding realistically to this time constraint while engaging meaningfully can be challenging for a resident, especially if they are new to the city. Therefore, assistance from the invited curator and/or residency facilitator should be made available even before the resident's arrival. This could mean for example, assisting in organising site-visits, facilitating conversations, locating production studios. This is where the applicant's proposal will be helpful in preparing the residency to better understand and anticipate how they can help so little time is wasted.

On the other hand, residents should not be obliged to produce something concrete and should have the option of engaging with the city ephemerally. However, meaningful engagement should be the applicant's priority. Either during the residency, or to conclude, a public event would create possibility for the public to get to meet the residents, their work and the residency's activities.

Call for Applications

PREPARATION

- Timeframe for accepting applications should be around 7 weeks as the residency is unknown for the moment, allowing for enough time for the call to circulate.
- Communication will be vital in garnering interest for it, especially from more experienced applicants who have semi-established careers. You will need communication partners across Europe to disseminate the call.
- Residency duration — 2 months.
- There should be no application fee.
- Clearly communicate Art Futures's mission through this residency program so that future residents can refer to it. They can be articulated briefly on the website and the open call. Stating Art Future's position clearly helps also attract candidates who share these aims.

APPLICANTS

Accept applications from professionals working in the fields of architecture, critical writing, design (product design, graphic design, design research), film, media arts, music and sound art, performing arts, photography, visual arts and curators active in research fields connected to cultural and pedagogical practices. Practitioners engaged in eco-social transformation are particularly encouraged to apply. Emerging as well as established practitioners can apply.

Note: International or just Europe-based candidates - this depends heavily on available budget resources.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Project proposal (max. 700 words) and a proposed timeline.
 - a. A general outline, referring to one or two objectives the applicant wishes to pursue or explore.
 - b. Candidates must demonstrate an interest in the guiding theme laid out in the Art Futures Residency call and address why their practice or project stands to benefit from being developed in Athens.
2. Short biography including a brief description of the applicant's practice (max. 300 words)
3. CV (max. 2 pages)
4. Digital portfolio
 - a. Selection of four projects
 - b. Work samples should have been completed within the past five years
 - c. Collaborations must be noted clearly and roles must be credited
5. Applicant should specify any accessibility needs and requirements.

SELECTION

To ensure a fair selection process, participant selection should be done anonymously and overseen by an interdisciplinary jury. The jury, comprised of Critical Friends members, should also include curators, artists and/or other culturally engaged practitioners based in Athens.

BUDGET 1.1

Budget breakdown per residency running for 2 months, including one collaboration and one event.

	Unit	Amount	Total	Notes
RESIDENT				
Monthly expenses	2	700,00 €	1400,00 €	Figure based on online databases.
Return Flights	1	350,00 €	350,00 €	Slow travel should be encouraged when possible.**
Visa Expenses	1	80,00 €	80,00 €	When/if applicable
Materials for production, research, recording, etc.	1	800,00 €	800,00 €	
Potential transportation	1	300,00 €	300,00 €	If applicable
EXTERNAL/INTERNAL WORKERS				
Fee for facilitator/curator/mentor	2	1200,00 €	2400,00 €	Based on full-time work. Resident in Athens.
Fee for collaborator/s	2	1200,00 €	2400,00 €	Variable amounts. Depending on level of engagement.
PUBLIC EVENT				
Rental equipment for events, i.e projector, sound system, screen	1	200,00 €	200,00 €	Very general estimate and not applicable to every event.
Catering/Hospitality	1	150,00 €	150,00 €	Drinks, food - depending on activity.
Review by guest art critic/curator/journalist	1	200,00 €	200,00 €	Advisable, maybe not in every case
TOTAL			8280,00 €	

NB. Some expenses will not apply each time and some expenses can also apply only part time. However, fees should be paid to everyone involved and having a production budget available for applicants makes it quite appealing as a residency, hence attracting a lot more applications.

*** Funding for travel grants can be found on on-the-move.org.*

BUDGET 1.2

Breakdown based on available amount.

	Unit	Amount	Total	Notes
RESIDENT				
Monthly Expenses	2	700,00 €	1400,00 €	
Flights	1	350,00 €	350,00 €	
Production costs	1	300,00 €	300,00 €	
EXTERNAL/INTERNAL WORKERS				
Fee for facilitator/curator/mentor	2	500,00 €	1000,00 €	Part-time/month
Fee for collaborator/s	1	250,00 €	250,00 €	Fee should correspond to level of contribution. This fee corresponds to very little engagement.
PUBLIC EVENT				
Rental equipment, drinks, promotional material	1	200,00 €	200,00 €	
Total			3500,00 €	

WHAT SHOULD BE OFFERED BY THE RESIDENCY

Art Futures Residency should provide assistance when and where possible for procuring visas for the artists.

Art Futures Residency should provide networking assistance, communication and administrative care in Athens for its residents.

Art Futures Residency facilitates the outcome by organising in conversation with the resident the public event that is best suited to the resident's output, whether that is a public lecture, exhibition, zine, or app, map, etc. Collaborating with a local space, print shop, community space, gallery space or public space to host one part of the event, would be a good way to build a network and foster a dynamic public.

Art Futures Residency can also help the residents by promoting their work on their channels too including their website, newsletters and social media. Applicants will be encouraged to apply if they see that the hosting organisation has the ability to also help promote their work/research beyond Athens too.

Art Futures Residency can begin looking into offering residents access and resources on sustainable materials for production. i.e develop collaborations with [Future Materials Bank](#) at Jan Van Eyck Academie and local initiatives.

FUNDING POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

For clarification, the “you” I am referring to is Art Futures.

For the first iteration, you can forego some of the elements listed in the budget and apply for the necessary funding in due time for the next residency. You mentioned that you would be applying for further funding, so perhaps you are already underway. Funding possibilities and necessities depend on your needs and expectations from this residency. I recommend looking to European grants or establishing collaborations with institutions and organisations that Critical Friends are part of. Usually, EU grants support projects regardless of practice or nationality, such as the Culture of Solidarity Fund by the ECF. For obvious reasons, it has been redirected to supporting projects related to Ukraine. However, securing a partner with no say on who is selected is ideal, albeit hard to find.

Additionally, you could also apply for funding to grant schemes by cultural institutes and/or ministries that support artists of their nationalities to cover expenses like flights and per diem; a few also offer production budgets. However, on the one hand, this leaves you and the applicant exposed to the grant decision. On the other hand, some applicants will have an unfair advantage over others as some countries have more robust cultural infrastructure than others that you may ultimately favour. All this is underscored by the open call being released well in advance so that you have time to make a selection and apply for funding in time for the residency while also having an administration that can follow up with grant writing and application deadlines. This approach is precarious and messy. Instead, you can approach certain partners through art institutions networks you are close to to help you reach institutions that would be willing to fund the residencies. Depending on the institution, you would probably have to commit to choosing artists from specific countries or regions. Usually, this means excluding creatives who are not from wealthy European countries. Reproducing this dynamic is highly problematic as it is artists from countries that lack this support that residency frameworks should support.

If you intend to create a robust and sustainable infrastructure for all involved, the budget of 3,500 EUR needs to be reconsidered.

SWOT ANALYSIS: PRE-LAUNCH STAGE OF RESIDENCY

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive, new residency in sought-out location • Contributes to local arts scene • Innovative approach to residency-making • Space/accommodation already secured • Lars already has on-site knowledge and experience • AF provides a catered mentorship program 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few but well-known residencies already existing in Athens • Unidentified on-site collaborators • Unidentified local and international communication partners • Small budget available • Lack of financial plan • Short residency slots • AF mentorship program only online (?)
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AF has wide network of experts and friends with experience, resources and skills • Residency offers a different model to existing options • Collaboration with existing residencies • Opportunities for transcultural and transgenerational dialogue and collaboration • Initiate partnerships with local and EU-wide organisations to fund the residency 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or not great applications first-time round • Competitive, or unsupportive environment • Lack of outcomes by residents • Too object-orientated or exhibition-orientated • Residency used as a site for tourism • Create unsustainable engagements with the site • Reoccurring applications for funding • Limited funds available for cultural initiatives in Greece

* This analysis is based on what information I have been given so far. Some of these points may not be applicable.

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