

PRUDENCE ISLAND ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

The PI AiR program offers artists the opportunity to spend time and be inspired by the natural beauty of Prudence Island and Narragansett Bay, and to learn about the nature reserve and the history of the island. The residency is best suited to established artists who are not currently enrolled in an academic program. We are committed to providing this experience to individuals who would not otherwise have the opportunity or resources to spend stretches of time on the island.

Prudence Island is part of the traditional and ancestral lands of Wampanoag, Narragansett, and Pokanoket people past, present and future. The Narragansett name for Prudence Island is Chibachuwese or Chibachuweset, which has been translated as “Little place separated by a passage” and “the place apart”.

The Residency is based at the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR), South Prudence Island in Portsmouth, RI. The Reserve is a state-federal partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and RI Department of Environmental Management and comprises 4400 acres on Prudence Island. NBNERR is part of a national network of 30 reserves whose mission is to practice and promote coastal and estuarine stewardship through innovative research and education, using a system of protected areas.

Resident artists stay in a dormitory that has 4 bedrooms, bathrooms, and a full kitchen. The NBNERR campus also consists of a visitor’s center with educational materials, a classroom, and a covered outdoor pavilion. Most areas of the NBNERR campus are ADA compliant. There is no dedicated art space, and artists-in-residence must bring all materials and supplies needed to generate their work. Access to the island is by ferry only. The Prudence Island ferry leaves from Thames St. in Bristol (schedules vary seasonally).

GROUP RESIDENCY

The Residency period spans approximately 9 months, From June/July to the following April. During this time, three individual artists will attend four 4-day stays on Prudence Island as a group, staying in Reserve accommodation. The cohort of AiR will be accompanied on all stays by the program director, who will facilitate logistics, coordinate meals, etc.

The group residency format works well for several reasons:

- Makes it possible for us to provide this residency opportunity to a larger number of artists.
- Creates community during and after the residency.
- AiR have the option to pool their resources for spending time on the island (e.g., carpooling, sharing supplies, etc.)
- Facilitates the logistics of spending time on a relatively undeveloped island.

OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Artists may propose a specific project or product to pursue during their residency, or they can use the time to explore new ideas and techniques.
- There may be opportunities for artists to observe activities happening at the Reserve during their stays, but this is not guaranteed and is subject to the schedule of research and education activities at the reserve. There are some self-guided learning activities, a small library, and other materials available at the Reserve’s Learning Center.
- AiR will be asked to provide at least 4 hours of volunteer/stewardship time during their residency period. A range of options are available, or the artist can suggest their own in consultation with the AiR program director.
- AiR will also be asked to review applications for future AiR application cycles.

MATERIAL SUPPORT

- The Residency program provides:
 - Use of the Reserve accommodation during AiR planned stays free of charge and under a standard short term lease agreement (artists have their own rooms and share a bathroom, lounge area and kitchen)
 - Use of other NBNERR facilities during the 4 group stays, when not in use for other NBNERR programming
 - Ferry travel between Bristol RI and Prudence Island.
 - All meals, to be coordinated by the program director.
- Participating AiR are responsible for:
 - Bringing their own bed linens, art supplies and other necessities and incidentals for each 4-day stay on the island.

- Their own personal living expenses, supplies and any other expenses related to the cost of producing work that may be incurred during their residency.
- AiR are welcome to bring snacks or other foods to supplement the meals that are provided while staying on the island.
- Other important info:
 - Artists in Residence are not permitted to bring partners, friends/family, children, or pets with them during residency-related stays at the Reserve.
 - No public transportation is available on the island, and many roads are unpaved.
 - The residency director will have a car and be available to transport AiR while on the island.
 - The cost of ferry transport for one additional car will be provided for each group stay.
 - If you wish to bring a bicycle, make sure the tires are in good shape. It is also advised that you bring a spare tire or patching kit and air pump.
 - Participating AiR are welcome to do personal fundraising for all expenses related to their time as an Artist-in-Residence (e.g., through RISCA, GoFundMe, etc.).
 - The residency program's cornerstone is giving artists the chance to spend extended time on Prudence Island. Priority will be given to applicants who have not yet had this opportunity.

OUTCOMES / OUTPUTS:

We will ask each Artist in Residence to propose their community contribution with feedback/approval of the AiR directors. This could take the shape of a workshop, demonstration of the artist's process, a talk or reading, an open studio, or a public performance or exhibit.

- A "meet-the-artists" event on Prudence Island will be organized/hosted by the NBNERR PI AiR program.
- The artist's residency and work will be featured on the Reserve/AiR program website/blog/social media.
- An off-island event / exhibit may be planned.

WANT TO KNOW MORE BEFORE YOU APPLY?

- [Watch this video](#) of a recent information session.
- Click here to see the [outside the lodge](#) and [lodging accommodations](#).
- Take a day trip to Prudence Island! PI is a 30-minute ferry ride off the coast of Bristol (check out this NBNERR link: <http://nbnerr.org/visit/>).
- Contact AiR director Sheryl Kopel: PIArtistResidency@gmail.com.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Applications are submitted online via [this form](#) (you may preview the application questions [here](#)).
 - a) Draft your responses in a document file (Word, Google Sheets, etc.) that can be saved and backed up.
 - b) Compile your work samples and the list of artwork into a Google Drive folder.
 - c) When you have finalized your responses and other materials, copy/paste your responses and a link to the folder containing your work samples and samples list into the appropriate fields in the online form.
2. There is no application fee.

REVIEW INFO AND NOTIFICATION TIMELINE

1. Applications will be accepted from **December 1, 2025 - January 31, 2026**.
2. Decisions will be communicated by **May 1, 2026**.
3. Each application will be reviewed by a combination of AiR alumni, Prudence Island-based artists, and other regionally-based artists. The program director will read all applications and reviewers' evaluations.
4. Selection criteria are described in the [information session video](#). *Note that we have updated the application process since the video was recorded, so please follow the instructions above and not what is detailed in the video.*
5. Our administrative capacity is very small and our reviewers do not receive compensation. Therefore, we cannot offer feedback on individual applications.