

# Visual Arts in Rural Communities Artists' Residencies

Visual Arts in Rural Communities (VARC) is inviting visual artists to apply for twelve-month residencies at Highgreen in rural Northumberland. The Trust is hoping to appoint two artists from applications submitted; one artist to hold the residency October 2010-2011 and another artist to hold the residency October 2011-2012.

## Aims

VARC's primary aims are to:

- Promote interest, awareness and understanding of visual arts in a rural community through engagement with an artist.
- Offer a unique opportunity to an artist wishing to develop his or her practice by working and living in a remote rural community.

## The Residency

VARC is looking for:

artists who feel that 12 months spent living in an isolated rural location will significantly benefit their practice. Although the Trust feels that artists who might most benefit are those who have lived in an urban or city environment, artists will be considered regardless of their current location, as long as they can explain how this would benefit their practice. The length of the residency is one year, as this would allow the artist to experience the full cycle of seasons as well as the time for the rural community and environment to have an impact on the work. However in exceptional circumstances six month residencies are not ruled out. The aim is to give the artist a unique opportunity to concentrate on his/her practice in a remote setting, away from the constraints of city life. It is hoped that this experience will have a lasting effect on the artist.

Artists who want to be part of a community and who enjoy contact with people. The resident artist is expected to spend a minimum of six weeks during the year working on projects with people (15 days contact time). What form this would take would depend on the artist and the nature of his or her work but could include projects with specific groups, open studio days, practical sessions, talks and participation in local events. The Trust hopes that the experience of having a practising artist living and working in this rural community will offer people an insight into how professional artists work as well as adding an enriching creative element.

## Information

In addition to work in the community the artist will produce a body of work for an end of year exhibition to be held at Highgreen . The artist is contracted to spend a minimum of 22 hours per week on work for the exhibition and the community aspects of the residency, but VARC would expect that to fully utilise the opportunity and integrate with the local community, the artist would wish to devote their time fully to the residency. There is a Liaison Manager to support the artist, liaise between the artist and the Trust, arrange community projects in consultation with the artist, promote the artist's work and the residency, produce the catalogue, help organise the exhibition and facilitate other avenues the artist may wish to pursue. The artist will be expected to provide documentation about the experience of the residency in an agreed format.

## Accommodation

The residency is based in converted stable buildings, part of the estate of Highgreen in the North Tyne. Highgreen is remote with stunning views across the moors. There is an immediate community of about 20 people. The hamlet of Greenhaugh with an inn is about three miles away and a mile beyond this at Lanehead there is a village hall. The local shops are in Bellingham, some 10 miles away and Newcastle is 40 miles away. It is strongly recommended that the artist has a car as public transport is infrequent and only runs from Bellingham and Otterburn.

There is a 498 sq ft studio for the sole use of the artist, as well as fully-furnished one-bedroomed living accommodation. Heat and light for the studio and flat are included and council tax is paid by VARC. A telephone, computer with broadband internet access, printer and scanner will be provided but phone bills will be paid by the artist.

## Financial Package

- £5,400 per annum paid monthly by standing order
- £2,500 materials costs and artist's expenses (for community projects and work towards the exhibition)
- A catalogue will be produced
- Reasonable costs associated with the exhibition (transport, presentation of work) will be paid
- Accommodation (flat and studio) worth £6,000 per annum.
- The studio is equipped with basic tools and furniture.

## Selection criteria

Criteria on which shortlisting will be made are:

- Strength of work
- Need/desire for the opportunity
- Experience of, and enthusiasm for, working with people
- Commitment and ability to living at Highgreen

Final selection of artists will also be influenced by the desire to create a balance across media and artistic approach from one year to the next.

## How to apply

Applications are invited from professional visual artists with three or more years of proven work outside full time education. Artists working in two or three dimensions in any medium/material as well as those working in new media, land art, installation work etc are welcome to apply. An exhibition record and a desire to work in community settings are essential. The artist should have a strong visual language and a commitment to living and working in a secluded rural environment.

To apply please send:

- Between 10 and 20 images on CD with titles, dates, dimensions and descriptions on a separate sheet OR clips on DVD totalling no more than 10 minutes duration if this format is more appropriate
- A CV
- A written statement of not more than two pages describing the artist's work and reasons for applying for this residency with regard to the criteria listed above and a brief outline of community work experience (to be not more than 2 pages in length)
- Two referees (to be followed up if shortlisted)
- A SAE for the return of materials
- An indication whether you are applying for the residency 2010-2011, 2011-2012 or either

Please send applications to:

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# [www.varc.org.uk](http://www.varc.org.uk)

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