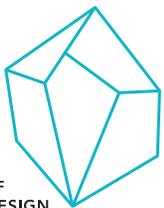


alone together

RESIDENCY

motivation tools



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Getting Started

"You can't just dance or paint or write or sculpt. Those are just verbs. You need a tangible idea to get you going. The idea, however minuscule, is what turns the verb into a noun..."

- TWYLA THARP¹

Let go of any judgement. Come up with a routine and start making. Start small, spend one minute, then two minutes, then three, until you find an amount of time that works for you. Leave judgement out of the process - you'll have more to work with that way. It's okay to not know what you're making, it's okay to make things you don't like, the process is more important here. Remember, your process may also include brainstorming, mindmapping, or doing observation exercises. Take a look at the [Creativity Prompts](#) if you need help getting started.

Scheduling Tool

“Do the work every day. Fill the boxes on your calendar. Don’t break the chain. And should you start to despair at your progress, always keep in mind the words of Harvey Pekar: “Every day is a new deal. Keep working and maybe something will turn up.”

- AUSTIN KLEON²

Refer to your goals and plot out the schedule you’ve planned. Use whatever format works for you, you may find it helpful to plot out the days of the weeks for the entire duration of your residency out on a piece of paper, you may want to use a calendar tool on your phone. Whatever works for you. Creating a regular schedule of some kind can help you keep doing what you’re doing. A good thing to keep in mind is that things may take you longer than you think. Readjust your expectations as you go, don’t feel bad if something is taking longer than you thought. [Here](#) are some examples of schedules, if you need them.

Setting Goals

“...her philosophy on residencies was forever altered after she learned that an artist friend had spent his entire nine-week residency at Skowhegan—one of the world’s top programs—doing nothing other than reading.” - LISI RASKIN³

Deciding how to spend your time and set manageable goals is hard. We’ve tried to make sure you feel encouraged to make this self-directed residency what you want it to be. Be honest with yourself and set realistic goals. Maybe all you can set aside is a few minutes, maybe you need to dive deep and spend some solid hours working something out - both scenarios are valid. Your creative practice will benefit from both. You will also want to figure out what kind of time you have, is it time alone? Is it time in the company of others (for example young children)? Once you know what kind of time you have you can more easily figure out what will be a manageable goal for you.

When creating your goals for this residency consider creating SMART goals:

SPECIFIC: be clear, what are you going to do

MEASURABLE: think about how you will judge your progress

ATTAINABLE: it serves no purpose to set unattainable goals, be honest and ensure your goal is something you can take on.

RELEVANT: make your goal relevant to your artistic practice

TIME BOUND: choose a beginning and end date, develop a schedule

Use these as a way developing goals that will be manageable but will also push you out of your comfort zone. Remember, a goal doesn’t have to be a finished project, it can be taking part in a process. For example, you could do a meditative practice, like making french knots everyday for a week.

Anxiety / Stress

“You must not be frightened, dear Mr. Kappus, when a sadness arises within you of such magnitude as you have never experienced, or when a restlessness overshadows all you do, like light and the shadow of clouds gliding over your hand. You must believe that something is happening to you... Why should you want to exclude any anxiety, any grief, any melancholy from your life, since you do not know what it is that these conditions are accomplishing in you?” - RAINER MARIA RILKE

Creating at the best of times, let alone during a global pandemic, can invite your anxiety monsters to rear their heads and stop you in your tracks. Activities that have results, like a completed project, or a regular activity, can be good for you and can help you to work through whatever anxiety or stress you may be experiencing. Consider the following when participating in this residency.

INVEST IN YOUR BODY: Stretch, yoga, eat well, exercise.

INVEST IN YOUR MIND: Meditation, breathing exercises, positive mantras!
Take a moment to get outside and feel the air on your face.

INVEST IN YOUR SPIRIT: Create, move your body, sing with friends.

INVEST IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT: Clean, tidy, reorganize, tend your garden.

You may find the perfect outlet for your residency project in any one of these realms. Make work out of your experience, not necessarily about your experience, though you may find they are one in the same. Identify your obstacles and you may find they can be a source of material. Use that material to then nudge you out of your comfort zone.

Accountability

“Not only do we encourage each other and cheer each other up, but our sometimes brutal honesty helps to make sure we’re moving in the right direction. While it is great to have someone there to say, ‘You can do it!’ whenever you’re feeling stuck, it’s even better to have someone who can say, ‘This isn’t working. Have you tried doing it this way instead?’ It’s a fresh, constructive perspective.” - MEGAN K. BALL⁵

Find a way to keep yourself accountable. It’s always easy to give. Don’t give up.

- Use the scheduling tools.
- Reach out to friends and family and check in with them on your progress, ask someone to be your accountability buddy.
- Create a regular time to check in with your accountability buddy, that way if you’re finding you’re putting off working on something - that check in might put your toes to the fire.
- Use the Facebook Group to share what you’re working on.
- Think about documenting your work on your own social media profiles or start a new website or blog just for this project.
- Document your process. Keeping track of your journey can help you recognize what you’ve accomplished, see where you’ve come from and maybe gain some insight into where you are going.

“To be human is to be a complicated tangled ball of emotions, and we need to talk about it.”⁶

References

¹ The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Life by Twyla Tharp

² <https://austinkleon.com/2013/12/29/something-small-every-day/>

³ <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/want-get-artist-residency-7-simple-tips-1247657>

⁴ Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke

⁵ <https://www.creativelive.com/blog/how-an-accountability-buddy-can-help-you-meet-goals/>

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