

For over a decade, XXXXXXXXXX has hosted a residency program where artists and designers from various disciplines have shared living and work space in an intimate, collegial setting. The facilities are located in the midst of an expansive, beckoning natural environment that frames the creative processes of its inhabitants – and oftentimes does much more. While offering a peaceful, retreat-type respite from the distractions of daily life, the XXXXXXXXXX grounds have also proven to be an inspiration and provocation for the curious and daring to incorporate its materials and imagery into their works and to interact with it directly through site-responsive installations and narratives. With due regard to its responsibility as the steward of this precious site, XXXXXXXXXX has a tradition of granting extraordinary permission and material support to those wishing to undertake environmental interventions that reveal the inner character of the land while reimagining its meaning. Few who have inhabited this space leave untouched.

From the earliest days of the residency program, artists have been drawn to the wild, gnarly spirit of the XXXXXXXXXX landscape. Visual artists were the first to break the bonds of their studios – exploring, pausing, scheming and sketching. As their works became more ambitious and affecting, XXXXXXXXXX as an organization took note and soon became an avid supporter of this unforeseen development. In recognition, a special residency session devoted exclusively to the field of environmental art was created in 2007. 15 artists, with heavy international participation, came together to create the first serious exhibition of this genre at XXXXXXXXXX. All the while, individual visual artists participating in the traditional residency program were creating a parallel body of site-specific works, the most exceptional of which, Mie's Trail from 2002, is still being actively maintained. XXXXXXXXXX will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2012 with a series of walks.

The 2007 program was followed up in 2009 and 2011 with subsequent exhibitions that garnered increased interest and recognition. For the 2011 exhibition, again due to artists' 'demand,' XXXXXXXXXX officially opened its environmental art program to those proposing site-responsive installations from following disciplines: the language arts, performance, landscape/garden design, new media and music/sound sculpture. The program is now also supportive of inter-disciplinary and participatory collaborations.

For the 2013 Environmental Art Biennale, a special initiative will be to better document and disseminate the sights and sounds of the new installations, but also to cast a gentle spotlight on the particular mode of creative process that brings this kind of work to life. The goal is to promote greater awareness and audience engagement of this dynamic field (XXXXXXX is presently one of the few programs in the U.S. that explicitly nurtures this practice) – a movement that has potential to inspire an alternative, more deeply poetic understanding of the natural environment and perhaps a greater respect for its preservation.