Research innovative and successful artist residency programs to apply within an Australian context.

Report by – Emma Crimmings – 2016 Churchill Fellow

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Signed
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headlands Center for the Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemis Center for Contemporary Art</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Studio and Curatorial Program</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunstlerhaus Bethanian</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasworks</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delfina Foundation</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cove Park</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

As an island nation, Australia has enthusiastically exported its best and brightest cultural talent to far-flung regions of the globe. Historically, Australian creatives have always considered the opportunities that exist overseas, and therefore sought to realise dreams and forge careers within the larger markets of Europe and North America. Government agencies are now primed with the resources and strategic objectives to promote, support and embed creative talent internationally. Correspondingly, creative practitioners continue to be passionate and curious and hungry for experiences and adventure, and seek out opportunities for inspiration, growth and professional development.

While cultural cringe slowly recedes from Australia’s geopolitical identity, its sentiments still echo in the policies and perceptions that impact our creative industries. While it is productive and sensible to push our creative talent out into the global market, it is also important to consider what mechanisms we have to attract that same calibre of overseas creative practitioners to seek adventure and professional development here, and to engage with Australia’s cultural sector as part of a globalised market.

The purpose of this research was thus to explore best practice international artist residency programs in order to find ways to expand those in Australia, to value and develop artists, and to promote Australian cultural leadership in the global market, on the ground.

In terms of a basic definition, an international artist-in-residence, or residency, program gives an artist the opportunity to live and work outside of their usual environment, providing them with the time and resources to reflect, research, experiment and/or produce work. As Helsinki-based curator Taru Elfing suggests, a “residency can be understood as a retreat: [a] particular space-time “stolen” out of the regular flows and frames of professional practice, where introverted reflection merges with openness to novel inputs and unexpected encounters.” For many artists, the balance between the pressures of daily life and creativity is a delicate one. Residencies can be a form of floating life, a momentary escape from everyday competing pressures in a space, place or environment that understands, celebrates and values artists and the creative process.

As a means of background, it was originally the International Studio and Curatorial Program’s business model that captured my attention and catalysed the questioning around why Australia’s cultural agencies are not fostering international artist communities and corresponding investment like their overseas equivalents. If one of the key strategic objectives of the Australia Council, our national cultural agency, is to “to build capacity of the Australian arts sector to engage and participate internationally” then, as I argue here, it is critical that we find the resources and mechanisms to provide best practice creative residency programs locally.

While residency programs are only one component of how Australian access to international markets can be achieved, they provide a vital platform for creative and professional development that are not to be underestimated in terms of career impact. Residency programs can play a critical role in meaningful networking and exchange, leading to relationships and collaborations that would be otherwise unimaginable. The longitudinal impact of these professional networks and relationships is realised in ways that are sometimes difficult to capture or quantify. However, in speaking with arts professionals and alumni from a range of residency programs, the ongoing connection to global networks of peers emerges as a powerfully consistent benefit.

Further, while in Australia we have invested in state-of-the-art centres, institutions and festivals that exhibit, present, collect and celebrate the work of our creative practitioners, we do not have the requisite investment in, nor scope of platforms to support practitioners in the process of creating their work and developing professionally. There are avenues for post-graduate support for creative practitioners who wish to remain within the university environment and academic structure. However, there is also a need for more avenues and environments outside of those formal structures to encourage creative learning, respite, experimentation and exchange. This is why residency programs are so important.

In Australia, there are a range of small to medium sized organisations that offer important and cutting edge programs, predominantly for contemporary visual artists, writers and curators. Some of these successful and renowned programs, although this list is not comprehensive, include: Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne; Artspace, Sydney; Hill End, Broken Hill; Carriageworks, Sydney; Varuna, Katoomba; Parramatta Artists Studios, Sydney and Artsource, Freemantle. However, these programs generally do not cater to a broader range of...
artistic disciplines, nor do they have the investment and facilities to provide competitive and comprehensive programs for both local and overseas practitioners.

From an international perspective, Bundanon Trust – supported by state and federal governments, and with purpose built studios on the south coast of New South Wales – is the nation’s most developed and expansive cross-discipline residency program. Bundanon Trust provides an artist-in-residence program that is open to professional artists and thinkers from all creative disciplines and supports the production of new work, along with collaboration and research. Bundanon Trust is one of the few residency programs in Australia that encourages international artists. However, at the time of writing this report there were limitations, including that Bundanon Trust does not offer stipends, living allowances, travel assistance, catering and require participants to pay a modest accommodation fee.

In order to conduct an analysis of best practice artist residency programs, I selected and visited nine organisations across the globe and attended a conference for small to medium residency programs. The following analysis reflects on the strengths and opportunities within each program, and concludes with recommendations for improvement and leadership within an Australian context.

**METHODOLOGY**

With literally thousands of residency programs in operation around the world, the research methodology was to identify the most renowned, competitive and influential organisations and programs operating in the international sphere today. Residency programs were selected for a range of reasons including but not limited to: the calibre of alumni and the prestige or impact that the program has on an artist’s career; what the program offers in terms of support and resources; the longevity, location, scale and creative discipline of the program.

Additionally the focus of this research was more from the position of arts management and administration than it was from the perspective of a singular artist’s experience. Residency programs across the globe offer a diversity of options and benefits for creative practitioners and the purpose of my research was to interrogate these models, platforms and structures and understand what the fundamental elements were for their impact, sustainability and continued relevance. What does best practice look like in an international residency context? What are the sustainable revenue models? How do you attract and nurture the world’s best creative talent?

Beyond the larger and more renowned organisations, I also attended the annual ResArts conference in Rovaniemi, Finland. This conference provided a more expansive insight into the advantages and challenges emerging from smaller and/or more bespoke residency programs. How such programs formulate their missions, reach audiences and attract specific artists without the staff and support mechanisms associated with larger and/or more renowned organisations. A prevalent model that emerged through this sector is the user-pays structure. Self-funded residency programs, while an important part of the arts ecology, vary in quality and raised ethical questions around benefit. However, as the conference and my travel revealed, larger is not always better. Networking bodies such as ResArts and the Alliance of Artist Communities play a critical role in promoting and advocating for creative practitioners of all disciplines to find the space, time and financial support to develop their work.

Lastly, in order to ensure that the research captured in this report is maximised with regard to its impact and value for the broader Australian community, I plan to disseminate the findings through a range of avenues and platforms. The first of which includes targeting key stakeholders and decision makers within state and federal governments, philanthropic organisations and the cultural sector. It is anticipated that as a result of informed and engaged conversations with these stakeholders that a feasibility study and/or business case exploring a number of the ambitious and achievable recommendations outlined in the report would be catalysed. On a more localised level, through the mobilization of relationships and contacts within the cultural and university sector, I also plan to innovate and deliver a series of talks and forums focusing on promoting the research findings represented in this document.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support and generosity of staff at Headlands Center for Arts, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, International Studio and Curatorial Program, Residencies Unlimited, Banff Centre for the Creative Arts, Kunstlerhaus Bethanian, Gasworks, Delfina Foundation, Cove Park and Res Artis. I would also like to acknowledge the many artists who generously provided their time, insights and experiences.
PROGRAM

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

San Francisco, California
Headlands Centre for the Arts
Key contact: Sharon Maidenberg, Executive Director

Omaha, Nebraska
Bemis Center for Contemporary Art
Key Contact: Chris Cook, Director

New York City
International Studio and Curatorial Program
Key Contact: Susan Hapgood
Residencies Unlimited
Key Contact: Nathalie Angles
Meetings with artists and alumni from ISCP, Skowhegan, Headlands

CANADA

Banff, Alberta
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity
Key Contact: Brandy Dahrouge, Director Visual & Digital Arts Creative Residencies
Meetings with Laurie Edward, Senior Lead, Projects and Initiatives, Leadership; Tyler Los-Jones, Production Coordinator; Megan Power, Program Manager, Literary Arts; Tamara Ross, Director Programming Operations.

FINLAND

Rovaniemi, Arctic Circle
ResArtis Conference – Exploring Sustainability within the artist residency sector.

GERMANY

Berlin
Kunstlerhuse Bethanien
Key Contact: Valeria Schulte-Fischedick

UNITED KINGDOM

London
Gasworks
Key Contact: Alessio Antoniolli, Director
Delfina Foundation
Key Contact: Aaron Cezar
Glasgow, Scotland
Cove Park
Key Contact: Vanessa Paynton, Director Public Programs and Facilities
Headlands Center for the Arts is a multi-discipline facility situated north of the Golden Gate Bridge at historic Fort Barry in the Marin Headlands, which is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Approximately thirty minutes drive from downtown San Francisco, Headlands boasts a unique location that sets it apart from other city-based programs and organisations, in so far as it delivers a perfect paradox: an inspiring natural environment in close proximity to a major urban centre. While driving to Headlands, you pass under a mountain through a long, single lane tunnel that presents as a threshold between the urban landscape and the coastal retreat. Once through the tunnel, the location is nothing short of breathtaking. The campus comprises a cluster of restored red and cream military buildings nestled into a hillside that overlooks windswept cliffs, beaches and coves. The environment instantly feels otherworldly and remote, despite its remarkable access to all the facilities and networks offered by a major city.

Headlands – parade ground

While location is a key ingredient for Headlands’ continued reputation and impact, another strategic advantage of the residency program is the focus on, and the facilitation of dialogue and exchange between artists. This ‘dialogue and exchange’ objective is cleverly achieved through the simple act of sharing a meal. As Sharon Maidenberg, Headlands Director suggests, “the only obligation you have while you are here is that at the end of the day you come to dinner.” Dinners are conducted in the communal, family-meal-style environment of the Mess Hall, which as part of an artist-led architectural rehabilitation project at the founding of the site in 1984, is actually an immersive sculpture by renowned American artist and alumni, Ann Hamilton.

The communal dining feature continues to play a central role in this artist residency program and presents as a key point of difference for the organisation. The staffing structure, which comprises of a team of 16 reflects this focus through the provision of a fully equipped open kitchen, chef and assistant chef. Additionally, the alumni that I interviewed all mentioned the dinners as a highlight of their time within the program. New York City based, Australian artist Jessica Rankin who attended with her then partner, artist Julie Mehretu, in 2003 cited both the inspiring natural environment and the ability to engage with other artists as defining elements of her stay. Rankin also explained that the connections and relationships fostered during her time at Headlands have continued to play an ongoing role in her career.
Another important operational element of the communal meal is the development of a readymade platform to engage and leverage current and potential supporters from a range of sectors, including corporate and philanthropic. Throughout the year, in complement with the public engagement program, management is able to target and invite guests to attend dinners. These events provide the opportunity for a range of stakeholders to be exposed to Headlands unique atmosphere and to experience first hand the impact that the artist-in-residence program can have on an artist and their work.

While the facilities overall are discernibly lo-fi and rustic, Headlands remains true to its vision of risk-taking and experimentation. It achieves this in part by avoiding an outcome driven structure and is instead self-directed, offering live-in studios and a variety of spaces to experiment, rehearse, create, exhibit, contemplate via a cluster of historic artist-rehabilitated former military buildings. The buildings carry a weighty patina of history and, more recently, artistic overlay. However, they still beam with natural light, expanse and atmosphere. With the salt air and the relentless ocean wind pounding the windows, there is an inherent sense of optimism and grand positivity, that anything is possible.

In describing the average response from an artist beginning their residence, Maidenberg explains:

> When you applied you would have told us what you think you might work on, but by the time you get here it might be completely different. So you kind of have to re-orientate your mind to the place and we really are pretty hands off about that. If you need something, come and tell us. Otherwise you are a grown up, we trust you, sort it out. I think some programs are geared toward younger artists or have a more didactic model or a content-based model. There are courses and curriculum and symposia etc. Headlands really is about creating a forum for exchange and creativity, but not about necessarily driving it.

Maidenberg further details that:

> Most people when they arrive have an initial knee-jerk reaction of, what am I going to do!? Then within a few days they say that this is the best thing that ever happened
to me. I needed to slow down; I needed to check out a bit, I needed to put an auto response on my email. There is something about slowing down that I genuinely believe is part of the model... There are the rhythms, the rhythms of dining. But the rhythms aren’t defined by typical work culture – it’s about food, it’s about the length of the day. It’s about taking a walk. It’s just a different pace that feels more natural to the human body in some ways. Allowing space for the mind.

THE PROGRAM

Headlands Center for the Arts describes itself as multidisciplinary, international arts center dedicated to supporting artists; the creative process; and the development of new, innovative ideas and artwork. Structurally it does this through a range of programs including:

- Artist-in-Residence Program
- Affiliate Artist Program, which is designed to support local Bay Area artists through subsidized studio space, access to the artists in residence
- Graduate Fellowship Program
- Designer-in-Residence
- Artist Awards

However, it is the primary artist-in-residence program, which receives over 2000 applications a year, for which the organisation is best known. This program awards fully sponsored residencies to approximately 45 local, national, and international artists each year. Residencies of between four and ten weeks include studio space, accommodation, travel and living stipends. Artists become part of a community of practitioners participating in Headlands’ other programs, allowing exchange and collaborative relationships to develop within the artist community on campus. Artists selected for this program are at all stages in their careers and work in all media, including, for example: drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, film, video, new media, installation, fiction and nonfiction writing, poetry, dance, music, interdisciplinary, social practice, and architecture.

The program has an open call, where anyone can apply, followed by a rigorous process for selecting participating artists. The open call is also augmented by an informal nomination process, whereby promising potential applicants are ‘tapped on the shoulder’ and encouraged to apply. Maidenberg notes that, “word of mouth is one of our most powerful tools. We rely very heavily on our alumni community to get the word out, to make recommendations, tell people about it. I think artists have gotten good about trusting other artists.”

Everyone who applies goes through a panel review process and the panel profile changes every year. Typically there are three panelists per discipline category. The staff run approximately 12 different panels a year. Once a shortlist is agreed interviews are conducted with the top 100 finalists. Then, from the 100 finalists, only 45 artists are selected to undertake residencies throughout the course of the year. This cycle then repeats annually and within that final 45 the organisation is looking for a mix of discipline, geography, stage of career, and diversity, in terms of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality.
PROGRAM GOALS

– To support and invest in individuals at the cutting edge of their fields, whose work will impact the cultural landscape at large. To provide these artists with the support and opportunity to take their work to the next level and to explore and experiment

– To bring artists and thinkers into a dynamic community of local, national, and international artists: a professional network of creative practitioners and thinkers

– To encourage artists to explore their ideas and work within the context of the Marin Headlands, a part of the Golden Gate Recreational Area.

– To bring an international community of artists to the Bay Area and create opportunities for engagement and cross-cultural exchange with local artists and audiences.

When talking about the organisation’s mission, Maidenberg explained that Headlands primary goal:

“I[1]s that artists need to be supported to be their best selves and that their job as custodians of the center really is about providing every resource available to taking care of [artists] and providing whatever they need to be the change-makers that we believe they are. The artist-in-residence program has always had a slight political agenda, in so far as we really tend towards artists who are actively working at the cutting edge of their fields; who are pushing boundaries, who are risk taking. It’s not just about people who make beautiful or accessible commercial work, we really are looking for people who are challenging the system. This is across all the disciplines.

GOVERNANCE / SUSTAINABILITY

– Currently 16 staff and a Board of Management and Advisory Committee.
– Funding is a mix of federal and state grants, foundations and private and self generated through fundraising.
– Annual alumni auction and dinner.
BEMIS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Founded in 1981 by a group of artists who were in search of an environment in which to work and experiment without market expectation, Bemis sits resolutely in the middle of America in Omaha, Nebraska. Flanked by the cultural influence and activity of the East and West Coasts, Bemis’ key point of difference is precisely its distance from these centres. Situated downtown in the historic Old Market district, location once again plays a critical role in the effectiveness and reputation of this residency program.

The Old Market district is one of the Midwest’s best-kept secrets and a testament to the impact of urban preservation and cultural renewal. Boasting an authentic, industrial old-world-charm, the red brick warehouses stand as relics to more prosperous times and are connected by cobbled streets and covered walkways. The former bustle and industry of farmers, wholesalers and manufacturing have been replaced by new apartments, restaurants, bars and ice creameries, and during weekends the pavements swell with street performers and young crowds in pursuit of a ‘big night out’.

It is precisely within these post-modern folds – where the past overlaps with the realities and contradictions of the present – that Omaha reveals its uniqueness, or as Josh Johnson, Bemis’s Program Technician describes it, “[somehow Omaha is like this city that is not a major city, maybe like a third tier type of city that hasn’t found it’s own voice yet. It hasn’t really decided that it has a brand and that it is seeing itself as being cool... [T]his residency is really informed by the location.” Bemis Executive Director, Chris Cook agrees, stating: “it is a city that is in a state of becoming and I think that is one of the attractive elements for a creative. A city like this ... because you can still affordably make a mark and it’s arguably not a city that is done. Like New York City is done, Portland Oregon is done.”

In response to being asked about the importance of ‘place’ to a program such as the Bemis, Johnson reflected that “this residency is really informed by the location,” while Cook offered:

*I think to have a residency program like ours in an urban context sets us apart. We are very different to Headlands because of the urban setting and it’s not really a place that is conducive to retreating. Although the residents often describe Bemis as a spaceship as you can be on board for a long period of time and never have to step...*
off. Which is great if that is what you want it to be – but I think the urban component of us being here is really, really important and I think the political climate in this country right now and having the Bemis be this... perhaps refuge. We're basically a place that supports and delivers a progressive forward thinking agenda that is counter to the dominant narrative within the state and within the region.

Another advantage, and possibly the most distinguishing characteristic of the Bemis program is its scale. Unlike many urban-based programs, Bemis has the luxury of space. With ten-thousand square metres over five levels, the former wholesale grocery warehouse provides an expansive headquarters for a range of programs, including exhibitions and public programs. However, it is the originating artist-in-residence program for which the Bemis Center is best known. Spaced across the refurbished, industrial warehouse are 12 live-in studios, each equipped with a kitchen and sleeping area. Directly across the street is another nine-hundred square metre refurbished building, retro-fitted as a workshop and basic (i.e. not specialised) sculpture and ceramics facility.

The physical scale of the artists' studios coupled with the monthly stipend and access to technical facilities is attractive for artists looking to focus, spread out or upscale their work. Which, in most major cities across the globe, has become increasingly difficult due to the all-to familiar narrative of gentrification and resulting increased cost of living and real estate. Therefore, artists with a demonstrable career trajectory who are looking for an opportunity to momentarily step away from the demands of everyday life and re-imagine, reinvigorate and/or upscale their work, the Bemis program presents as an attractive platform.
Artist, Shaan Syed notes:

One of the reasons I wanted to come here was because there is no expectation. It frees up a lot of space, mind space to just experiment and do whatever and not have the pressure of having to create something for something specific. I don’t think it is uncommon, but a lot of residencies give you a show after or there is some sort of expectation that comes along with them. I mean most artists would put expectations on themselves right, and in my case that is enough, that’s enough pressure.

There is also a relatively new element to the program, the first of its kind in Nebraska, with the introduction in 2016 of Bemis Center’s year-long curator-in-residence program. This newly structured and fully subsidised position was implemented to respond more effectively to the sector and provide a curator with the opportunity to: participate in the Bemis residency program; serve as a professional resource to Bemis resident artists and the greater Omaha arts community; and to organise exhibitions and public programs at the Bemis Center.

THE PROGRAM

Currently Bemis provides opportunities through the following strands:

- Artist-in-residence (local and international)
- Curator-in-Residence
- Exhibition Program, Public Program and Community Outreach.

The residency program is possibly best know within, and directed towards, the visual art sector. However a range of disciplines are encouraged to apply: visual arts, digital media, performance, architecture, film/video, literature, interdisciplinary arts, music composition, and choreography.

Fundamental to Bemis’ identity as a leading arts institution is its history as an artist-founded organisation. This artist-centred premise exists within the DNA of the institution and drives the programing and direction. With a 40 year history of providing local and international artists and most recently curators with time, space, financial support, technical and administrative assistance, the program is often cited as one of the top international residency programs.
programs. With over 1000 submissions a year, this fact is reflected in the volume and calibre of applicants. Add to this the slow, quiet pace of the Midwest and you have a competitive, reputable program with strong, marketable alumni.

There is a rigorous selection process with a review panel of relevant arts professionals refreshed each year. There are 35-40 slots per year with applicants going through a two-phase panel review process. Once selected the average length of a residency is three months and overall this period of time is ultimately self-directed. Cook suggests that “this independently driven atmosphere and communal environment encourages creative growth and experimentation. This is a process-based residency and there is no expectation or promise of an exhibition in our first-floor galleries.” With regard to financial support, Cook also describes that “[t]he monthly stipends for the residence this year is roughly $1000 per month and we also cover airfares. The curator in residence is fully subsidised with relocation allowance, research travel budget, monthly stipend and quarterly curatorial fee it’s about $46k for the 12 months.”

Unlike the International Studio and Curatorial Program or Kunsterhause Bethanien, Bemis’ exhibition program sits separately to the residency program. While the exhibition program is in fact completely discrete from the artist-in-residence program, as Cook states: “the public program links them all.” Further, like many studio-based residencies there is an annual ‘open studio’ program, which encourages local engagement and has become extremely popular.

GOVERNANCE / SUSTAINABILITY

— Bemis has 12 staff members and is run by a Board of Management.

‘Place’ plays a key role in sustainability as Chris Cook concedes that he doesn’t think that an institution such as Bemis could survive at its scale or ambition in many other cities as Omaha has a very strong, deep culture of philanthropy with individuals committed to giving.

_We can be a city of 500, 000 people and have an amazing contemporary art space like the Bemis and an amazing opera and symphony. The symphony employs over 40 musicians full time and for a city of this size is completely rare. So I think because the community is very supportive we can have over 600 non-profits in a town of 500,000. So that is one element that points to the importance of place and it being able to sustain this type of organisation._

With regard to funding, Bemis has a well balanced income with approximately one-third individual support, one-third grants and foundations, which ranges from local, state and federal governments to one third earned income, which is derived through events. Each fall Bemis organises a major fundraiser – their signature event with over 800 people attending. As Cook suggests, for ‘not-for-profit organisations in the visual arts, having that amount of balanced income is extremely rare. It is normally closer to 60/70% grants, which is a business model that has been shown to be highly unsustainable in the long-run; if an organisation’s grant reliance is that high that means they do not have the necessary support from the community. If there is a cultural shift in terms of politics and the economy and those grants retract, then the non-profit sector will also retract._
As outlined in the introduction, it was originally the business model of International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) that piqued my interest and catalysed the questioning around why Australia does not foster international artist communities and corresponding investment from their national cultural agencies, like other countries. Residency programs can play a critical role in the meaningful networking, professional development and creative exchange of artists, which leads to relationships and collaborations that would otherwise be unimaginable. The long-term impact of these networks and relationships emerge in ways that are often difficult to capture or quantify as they can occur long after the fact.

Arguably New York City has one of the most influential art markets in the world, with over 300 commercial galleries, auction houses and museums in Chelsea alone, the city dangles the lure of a free market whereby if you succeed as an artist the scale of your success can be extraordinary. Within this context, ISCP is a residency based visual arts organisation that attracts artists and curators from all over the world and provides them with a platform or doorway to access the New York City art scene. However, like any success story there are always many factors at play, nonetheless the desire to be at the beating heart of things, or as close to the heart as possible can be an urgent and driving ambition for any creative individual. This sense of urgency and ambition has no better home than New York City.

ISCP’s entire program and reputation is built on the understanding of New York being the centre of the global art scene. Based in East Williamsburg, Brooklyn in a converted factory, the program boasts 35 studios which are anywhere between 10 – 25 square metres in size. ISCP hosts around 100 residents each year and in speaking to staff and alumni, a number of artists arrive assuming the ‘artworld’ will come to them, only to learn that this is far from the case. Rather, it is the artists who quickly learn that New York is an enormous transactional crucible, where blind-luck is the result of time, persistence and ferocious commitment to building and maintaining active and productive networks.

The residency programs are not outcome driven, instead artists and curators are relatively self-directed. While on the surface there does not appear to be any expectations, there is an inherent urgency or self imposed expectation to maximize the finite period of the residency. ISCP provides a basic framework with which to navigate the New York art scene by providing field trips, facilitating studio visits by arts professionals (critics, curators and others, for which ISCP pays a fee) and augments these elements with exhibition and public programs. As the director, Susan Hapgood suggests, “we provide the platform and community and it’s up the artists to make the most of it.”
With real estate at a premium in New York, ISCP also does not provide accommodation, which in speaking with a number of alumni is possibly the most challenging factor when making the necessary arrangements to attend the program. In addition to the program fee, most international bursaries / cultural agencies / consulates build in additional allowances to cover living and accommodation.

THE PROGRAM

– International Artist Residency – residencies can last anywhere between two and twelve months. Generally, artists and curators are in residence for six months and there is a community of approximately 35-40 fellow residents.

– One of the core elements of the program is artist talks. Every week one of the artists participating in the program presents their work. Speaking with a number of alumni, developing relationships with other resident artists is possibly the greatest benefit of the program.

– Curatorial Residency Program – approximately 5-10% of residents each year are curators. The program is structured to provide the following opportunities: Curators can propose an exhibition for ISCP’s project space or offsite at El Museo de Los Sures in Williamsburg; speak on or off-site about current projects; field trips to cultural institutions / private studio visits with professionals from other institutions; open studios and access to resident artists; pairing with senior curators for professional development sessions.

– Ground Floor Residency Program – this program is structured to support New York City-based artists, and in many ways provides another clear step for alumni who are committed to remaining in New York. The program offers 24-hour access to a subsidised studio and access to elements within the ISCP international residency program. It is also provides a crucial platform to build a local community around the international program.
PROGRAM GOALS / MISSION

— To support and enhance the professional development of emerging to mid-career artists and curators from around the world.
— To introduce New York audiences to exceptional international art practice.
— To engage communities of Brooklyn and the New York City area through public programs that enrich the appreciation and understanding of contemporary art.

GOVERNANCE / SUSTAINABILITY

ISCP operates with a seven staff and is structured with three core streams, complimenting these streams are exhibitions, public programs and off-site projects. Operating on an organisational budget of approximately $1.1 million, core to ISCP’s business model is income from international cultural agencies. Cultural agencies, consulates and foundations from all over the world charged with the objective to promote, support and develop their most promising creative talent are a critical revenue stream. Located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn ISCP is well placed to provide a readymade community and structure with which to offer artists and curators professional development opportunities within the broader New York scene.

In the case of Australia, successful applicants enter through a variety of avenues and are responsible for securing sponsorship or support to cover the residency program fee (self funding is not permitted). There is one annual slot established by an Australian living in New York who wished to support artists wanting access to the New York cultural scene, and financed through The Dr. K. David G. Edwards and Margery Edwards Charitable Giving Fund Trust. The Australia Council, who also administer the selection process, match this funding with $20,000 to cover accommodation and living expenses.

Other notable New York and/or New York State residency programs for a broad range of disciplines for emerging, mid-career and established creatives: Residencies Unlimited, EMPAC, Ox-bow, McDowell, Skowhegan, Yaddo.
Geographic location and its impact has consistently appeared as critical element for every organisation visited. Within this context, the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity is without peer. Located an hour’s drive from Calgary in the mountain town of Banff, the Centre sits at the base of the Canadian Rockies; an unparalleled landscape that can only be described as breathtakingly sublime.

Traveling directly from New York City, I completely underestimated the impact that Banff’s environment would have on my sense of wellbeing and was fascinated by the subtle physiological changes – lightness, gentle euphoria and inspiration. As a visitor (in summer), surrounded by a panorama of snow-dusted mountain peaks disappearing in and out of clouds, it is impossible not to feel a sense awe and wonder. Within 24- hours the relentless pace of New York City dissolved into yesterday and the future appeared calmer and clearer. Moreover, the location (classified a World Heritage Site by UNESCO) provides an environment that literally vacuums the mind, invariably creating a space for new thoughts and ideas. This, I believe is one of the primary reasons for the Banff Centre’s continued success.

In addition to location and place, history plays a critical role in relation to an organisation’s ongoing identity and positioning within the marketplace. For the older and more renowned organisations like the Banff Centre, history provides the cornerstone of their core values and mission. The Centre began as a single, short course in drama, founded in 1933 by the University of Alberta with a grant from the Carnegie Foundation in support of adult education fine arts programs. The success of the experimental theatre course generated additional arts programs and the blueprint for a multidisciplinary centre was created and became known as the Banff School of Fine Arts. While arts programming continued to grow and expand, the centre diversified its scope and capability for alternative revenue streams by including conferences and management programs.

PROGRAM GOALS / MISSION

In articulating its vision and mission, the Banff Centre’s 2016 strategic plan states that:

*Banff Centre exists to inspire artists and leaders to make their unique contribution to society. Human potential is realized at Banff Centre. As a unique creative and learning experience, we curate innovative programs that develop artists and leaders, inspiring them to conceive and create powerful works and ideas that are shared with the world.*
Within this plan, six priority initiatives are also identified:

- A commitment to advancing artistic learning
- Banff Centre as a cultural destination.
- A Centre of excellence for Indigenous programs
- A destination for creativity in leadership and conferences.
- A creative home on sacred and protected land; an adaptive and resilient organisation.

THE PROGRAM

On the surface, the Banff Centre has the hallmarks of a university with its sprawling campus, overarching bureaucratic administration and faculty nomenclature. However, what is so interesting and unique about the Banff Centre is its non-parchment or post-graduate status. Since its early beginnings in the 1930s offering short courses in theatre, the Banff Centre has remained as an alternative learning and training environment. The program does not have tenured staff, nor does it have to have a curriculum approved by the Government. Rather, the Banff Centre has short term (4-6 weeks) ‘residencies’ and the flexibility to identify and target leading practitioners, thought leaders directly from industry whose expertise, knowledge and reputation will attract prospective applicants.

STRUCTURED RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

The program is most suitable for emerging and midcareer practitioners, however this is not the case for all disciplines. Additionally, access into the Banff Centre’s programs is competitive and an important marker in terms of career development. There is an open call process and applicants generally apply with a project. The project along with the calibre of the applicant and their ability to benefit from the program are reviewed and adjudicated by the appropriate discipline. Approximately 60% of successful applicants are Canadian.

As a residency based creative arts institution, the Banff Centre is at once unique and ambitious. Its programs and expansive facilities support all artistic disciplines, including:

- Performing Arts - music, theatre, dance, opera
- Visual, Digital and Media Arts - photography, sculpture, printmaking, papermaking, ceramics, textiles, painting, performance, video, and digital media, as well as curatorial and critical studies. [21 Visual arts studios. Approximately 230 residencies per year].
- Literary Arts – fiction, non-fiction, literary journalism, translation writing, spoken word, poetry, mountain & wilderness writing.
- Indigenous Arts – incorporating all disciplines and leadership.

LEIGHTON ARTIST’ COLONY

Also located within the Banff Centre’s campus is the Leighton Artists’ Colony. The Leighton Artists’ Colony is a collection of nine studios made available to established, senior artists and participants from select programs. Each studio has been custom-designed by Canadian architects for specific artistic disciplines. These studios provide all the amenities and support needed for artists to self-direct and fully immerse themselves in their craft.

In contrast to the primary, more structured residency programs, the Leighton studios offer a very different experience that is more aligned with the McDowell and Headlands model. Insofar as artists are self-directed and the spaces remain independent and cannot be accessed by the public. A number of the placements are also financed through partnerships with international consulates and Arts Councils. The studios are managed centrally and are accessed by a cross-section of disciplines. Further, there are also a number of fellowships tied to the studios such as the Fleck (last year awarded to Australian Artist, Brook Andrew), which are identified and nominated internally.
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS AND CONFERENCES

A significant point of difference and a unique opportunity both in terms of revenue, building reputation and capacity within the Canadian cultural sector are the leadership programs. These programs integrate arts and Indigenous practice, along with the extraordinary beauty of Banff National Park. Programs connect participants in arts and cultural institutions, Indigenous communities, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government.

Cultural leadership programs at the Banff Centre are designed and marketed to provide leaders with the skills and frameworks they need to navigate the complexity of the cultural landscape. In 2017, the Banff Centre launched a Cultural Leadership program for mid-career leaders, cultural governing bodies, and board volunteers. The Banff Centre also partners with leading cultural organizations across Canada to provide the greatest public value and impact in this sector.

Banff Centre has long been a destination for cultural leaders – the first program of this kind was established in 1971 by David Leighton, then President of the Centre. Cultural leadership has always been naturally congruent with artists’ training here; both are essential to strengthening Canada’s arts ecosystem.

ONSITE EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

In addition to its internal residency programs, leadership and conference programs the Banff Centre has an active and highly visible public program. A draw card for attracting conference clients, local and international visitors, the Banff Centre offers over 400 public performances, events and exhibitions, which includes approximately one third of works commissioned and co-produced on site. Presenting a diversity of emerging and major headlining names from a range of art forms from all over the globe.
THE BANFF CENTRE FACILITIES

Operating for over 85 years as a cultural Centre, Banff boasts exceptional facilities that comprise the campus at the base of Mount Buffalo. According to Tamara Ross, Director Programming Operations, this is the result of former Banff Centre leaders who were committed to leaving a legacy. Facilities include:

- Kinnear Centre for Creative & Innovation (café, 17 meeting rooms, Library and archive)
- Max Bell Building – 330 seat auditorium and additional meeting rooms
- Music, sound and Theatre complex – Eric Harvey and Margaret Greenham Theatres and a cabaret-style club
- Rolston Recital Hall and Bentley Chamber Music studio
- Shaw Amphitheatre
- Professional Development Centre
- Recreational facilities (indoor heated pool and gymnasium)
- Walter Phillips Gallery

The rooms themselves are state of the art, accommodating a wide range of individuals from artists in residence, conference participants and general public. The orientation of the desk and the bed facing a generous window create a light calmness to the room, privileging sleep and the capacity to work. The outlook is green and generous and the overall size of the room is well-proportioned and generous. With strong, simple geometric proportions complimented by natural light and materials, the space feels intimate and open.

The dining facilities are communal buffet-style with a large dining hall overlooking the surrounding mountains. Everyone eats together, although there is a separate restaurant or in-room-dining option for full paying visitors/conferences. In theory, the impact of the mixed accommodation and open access, means that visitors are both welcome and encouraged to attend performances and public programs and become part of the creative community.

GOVERNANCE / SUSTAINABILITY

The Banff Centre is a public, board governed, specialized Arts and Culture Institution operating under the authority of the Post secondary Learning Act of the Province of Alberta. In 2009, the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology approved a mandate for the Banff Centre. The mandate articulates the Centre’s role as a specialized Arts and Culture Institution providing non-parchment programs in the arts and creativity, and in leadership development, mountain culture, and the environment.

In terms of primary creative program management, each of the artistic disciplines is represented by a department or faculty, which is managed by a role referred to as a Faculty Head. These roles are fixed term positions offered to creative professionals with strong networks and reputations. Generally these Faculty Heads are professionals at the top of their
field and, in practice, act more as advisory and/or mentoring roles. Departmental Directors support the Faculty Heads and act as project or general managers for each faculty and its associated facilities. Working with the Faculty Head, the Director ensures the continued relevance and delivery of the cycle of residency programs. Further, within each faculty or discipline there are Facilitators who provide specific on the ground support and technical expertise to the residents. Assigned to the Facilitator roles and also supporting the residents are Practicums (interns). Practicums apply for year-long structured programs, which are fully funded. Practicums operate within all the departments gaining networks, skills and experience that in speaking to staff nearly always result in ongoing work.

Fundamentally, the Banff Centre is a training and educational institution and receives federal funding under this umbrella. Overall the residency programs are very structured and there is a strong expectation of high material outcome. I asked a number of staff what they thought the Banff Centre's strength was, and they responded saying that the program was: “artist focused with a very clear education focus which is mandated.”

Outside of federal funding, foundation and trusts, conferences are the key revenue engine for the Banff Centre. The Banff Centre can accommodate conferences for up to 1000 participants and can tailor the conference to suit client needs within an unparalleled environment. The primary challenge is to balance the pressures and commitments of the revenue engine with the vision and mission of the centre as a cultural destination that supports creative endeavour.

The accommodation, located in the Lloyd Hall Hotel is a clear revenue stream catering for tourists and conference cohorts. Tourists or individuals attending conferences who pay full price can occupy rooms, which at the same time accommodate artists whose expenses are covered by the Centre. This revenue structure is articulated throughout the services / information provided in the room: “Proceeds from your visit help support the creative potential of artists.”
KUNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

Künstlerhaus Bethanien is an international residency-based cultural centre in Berlin. Originally located in the former hospital complex on Mariannenplatz in Kreuzberg, Bethanien quickly built a reputation as a creative hub with incredible spaces. However, after complicated negotiations the organisation elected to relocate, and since 2010 has enjoyed a new home within a former light-bulb factory on Kottbusser Strasse, but remains in Kreuzberg.

Künstlerhaus Bethanien’s eighteen hundred square metre gallery boasts prominent street frontage and plays an important role in the program and local art scene. Unlike other residency-based visual arts organisations, the gallery is used to exhibit and promote the work of artists participating in the program who are working toward this outcome as part of their stay. Berlin cultivates a trans-global identity with artists of all disciplines and nationalities flocking to the city to enjoy cheap rents (until recently) and an atmosphere where being a creative practitioner is the norm rather than the exception. Künstlerhaus Bethanien sits very comfortably within this context and the program is structured accordingly as an exclusively internationally studio residency. Künstlerhaus Bethanien knows its mission and market and is perfectly positioned to provide a year-long platform or testing ground for promising emerging artists exploring the possibility of remaining in Berlin.

The artists’ projects are presented in the Künstlerhaus Bethanien galleries toward the end of their stay. There is also the capacity to produce a project-related publication.

Studios operate as live in workspaces and range from 40 to 75 square meters with high ceilings and large windows. With a total of 25 studios, Künstlerhaus Bethanien represents one of the largest establishments among international residency programs.

THE PROGRAM

– International Studio Program
– Monograph Publishing Program

The International Studio Program is a platform for emerging artists from around the world. The structure is outcome oriented and artists in residence are given the opportunity to develop and implement a project over a fixed period of time, and to explore and/or consolidate their position in the Berlin art scene. As International Studio Program Manager, Valeria Schulte-Fischedick suggests, the focus of Künstlerhaus Bethanien’s efforts lies in providing individual support and establishing connections between the artists in the program and the wider local context.

Street entry to Künstlerhaus Bethanien’s Gallery.
Künstlerhaus Bethanien, live in studio
As part of the International Studio Program, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien offers a range of support resources, which include:

- providing curatorial support for artists’ projects;
- supplying workshops and technical infrastructure (on staff personnel);
- presenting the projects produced at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien within the gallery;
- advertising all events organised by the resident artists;
- facilitating Open Studio events;
- permitting artists to take part in larger projects (e.g. exhibitions at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien or other venues);
- editing and distributing the publications related to the projects presented at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien;
- encouraging exchange and connections with international curators, critics, publicists, theorists, gallery owners and collectors (e.g. through individual studio visits);
- hosting seminars, talks and readings; and
- liaising for the artists with international institutions, projects and exhibitions.

A distinct point of difference for Künstlerhaus Bethanien’s international program is the focus on publishing, with an expansive library and back catalogue of publications. Künstlerhaus Bethanien offers residents a platform to produce a monograph. The pathways for publication are supported by staff however the cost is either self-funded or provided for within the international bursary covering the resident. Publishing has always played an important role within contemporary arts sector, with monographs operating as career calling cards for galleries, institutions and curators.

GOVERNANCE/SUSTAINABILITY

The Künstlerhaus Bethanien operates with seven staff. Residency costs are covered by international bursaries / cultural agencies, which also include a monthly fee towards living costs for the duration of the artists’ stay. In the case of Australia, this is administered by the Australia Council who also facilitate the selection process (which is highly competitive). The grant covers travel, studio rental, along with a stipend for basic living, materials, and the presentation of a final project. Residencies generally extend over a period of twelve months.
GASWORKS

Established in 1994, Gasworks is a not-for-profit residency-based contemporary visual art organisation. In a city where space is a premium and rents are beyond prohibitive, Gasworks successfully future-proofed its home and program via a major capital campaign, which saw the organisation secure its premises in Vauxhall, London. This operational stability has assisted in building Gaswork's reputation within the sector more broadly.

With a focus on process and development the program provides three-month residency opportunities for international artists looking to research and develop new work in London. The studios are modest in size and like the ISCP model these are mostly financed through international partnerships with cultural agencies / ministries from the artist's country of origin. Gasworks does not provide live in studios, rather accommodation is provided offsite in a house shared by other artists in the program (four in total).

Alongside the international strand is longer-term, subsidised studios for London based artists. The aim of this program, housed within the east London site is to foster an ongoing exchange with the rolling international program. Like a number of residency programs specialising in visual arts, Gasworks also has a gallery and exhibition program. All programmes are accompanied by events and participatory workshops that engage audiences directly with artists and their work.

DELFINA FOUNDATION

Historically connected to the famed Delfina Studios Trust, which originated in 1988 and later occupied an old chocolate factory in Bermondsey Street, Bankside until its closure in 2006. The Delfina Foundation was rebirthed in 2007 as an international residency program open to emerging and established artists, curators and writers to develop their practice and encourage connections. In January 2014, the Delfina Foundation expanded into an adjacent building at 31 Catherine Place in central London and, staying true to its historical origins, has become London's largest provider of international residencies.

Residents are selected to take part in the programmes for a maximum of three months at a time. Since its physical expansion, Delfina host six to eight residents at any one time. Based near Buckingham Palace, in the heart of London, the property includes flexible space for living and working.

As a point of difference, the Delfina residency program is largely thematic and focused on critical issues in contemporary art and everyday life. While the program is open to all international artists, curators, writers, Delfina has in recent history promoted a particular geographic focus with the Middle East and Africa featuring prominently. Another notable element is the kitchen / living facility which has been designed to encourage exchange and accommodate informal gathering around the preparation and enjoyment of food and hospitality. There is also an exhibition program located in the gallery in the base of the building. During my visit the annual fundraising exhibition was on, which featured works for sale by notable alumni.
COVE PARK

Cove Park is located on the west coast of Scotland, and was a late addition to my research itinerary, thanks into a word-of-mouth recommendation from a writer who had participated in the program a few years prior. However, as is often the case with unexpected discoveries, Cove Park remains one of the most impactful programs I visited.

From the outset, the journey to the location set it apart from other travel experiences; comprising a train from London to Glasgow, and another to Gourock where a connecting ferry transported me across Loch Long to the small and picturesque village of Kilcreggan. On the pier, I was greeted with a warm smile from Cove Park’s Director of Public Programs and Facilities, Vanessa Paynton who engaged me in conversation while at the same time deftly driving the chicanes along the capillary sized coastal road.

On arrival the power of location is undeniable, at the end of a manicured courtyard is the recently completed Artist Centre, which situated modestly on a hilltop overlooking Loch Long offers a panorama of breathtaking views. The Artist Centre, which operates as an office for staff and a communal space for residents to utilize for work and/or interact, provides an environment that is at once contemplative and multi-functional. Also part of the Artist Centre complex are two additional studio and accommodation spaces.

A short walk down the hill from the Artists Centre are the main accommodation spaces, referred to as cubes or pods (Cube A, Cube B, etc...) as they are constructed from converted shipping containers. The cubes are all fairly similar in providing basic facilities, but all are equipped with a sense of solitude and spectacular views. Vanessa explains that Cove Park has more accommodation spaces than it does corresponding studios (outside of the Artist Centre – five studios and a basic workshop). As a result the program is often able to accommodate writers more easily than other disciplines, as writers are often happy to work in the cubes or pods. As Paynton suggests, “[w]e are a very polite team in negotiating needs ... and we do our absolute best to make sure if someone needs a studio they get a studio.”

As part of a small community on the peninsula, Cove Park is welcoming while at the same time maintaining an exclusivity that is critical for its reputation, as well as for artists requiring the quiet remoteness. It is the discrete scale of Cove Park that gives it a quiet, secluded air. The built structures are simple and in keeping with the environment. The same could be said of the program.
THE PROGRAM

Possessing a clear and strong identity as an established residency organisation, Cove Park is careful not to stray from its core mission to provide time and space for creative practitioners. In remaining loyal to this mission the program plays to its strengths and operates with a uniquely simple, light touch that artists rave about. Cove Park tailors its programs to cater to mid-career and experienced practitioners from a range of disciplines including architecture, craft, literature, visual arts, film and performing arts.

Each discipline is supported by a staff member or Producer, who is responsible for residents in their area of expertise. Paynton explains:

*For example, the person running our craft program was once here on a residency as a craft maker and now is the producer for that discipline. Producers have many functions and one of those functions is shortlisting for interview but the other function is when people arrive in the summer that discipline specific ‘producer’ is the person who meets you, welcomes you and gets you settled. They ask if there is anyone you would like to invite to dinner this month. So there is a care element in there that is quite important, that personal relationship which isn’t to say that the rest of us aren’t interested in someone from another discipline (we absolutely are) but that relationship is already there.*

Moreover, beyond the arrival and orientation, Cove Park’s residencies are for the most part self-directed with support provided from staff as needed. Paynton suggests that the lightness of touch has grown out of a mix of history, practicality and necessity.

The residencies themselves are structured within three primary strands and staff (producers) focus on specific disciplines in order to provide specialized support. The three primary strands are as follows:

- Cove Park manages the call out, selection and fully funds the residencies. This includes travel and living expenses. The duration of the residency is anywhere from one to three months depending on the need and project proposed.
- Cove Park works with a diverse range of partners. The partners essentially fund the program and are treated in exactly the same way as any residency in so far as Cove Park are part of that selection process. (This is a positive structure that is a growing part of the program).
- The whole site is taken over by a third party. Creative conference or think tank etc...
Cove Park does not have a role in curating the program and charge an amount for exclusive use of the site. While this strand is a strong revenue opportunity, Paynton advised that Cove Park’s primary residency program is the priority and they only work with organisations that are aligned with their values and ethos.

While Cove Park doesn't specifically cater for early career practitioners, it captures more emerging artists in an annual program that is specifically tailored to their development. Further, for the past three years Cove Park has diversified in offering winter programs, which offer subsidised residencies for three months from November through to January. These self-funded residencies are filled through an open call, selection process and are available to artists and collaborative groups of all disciplines.

*Hands-On* is Cove Park’s primary community engagement programme providing free creative workshops for children and young people along with talks and events for the local community. Running parallel with Cove Park’s international artist residency program, *Hands-On* facilitates access to the creative talent on site throughout the year.

**GOVERNANCE /SUSTAINABILITY**

Founded in 1999 by Peter and Eileen Jacobs, Cove Park is funded by Creative Scotland, trusts, foundations and individuals. Cove has a board of trustees and an operating budget of approximately £250,000.

Notable alumni include writers Margaret Atwood and Christos Tsiolkas, artist Simon Starling and actor Derek Jacobi. Like the Banff Centre, Cove Park works with external organisations such as the Royal Opera House and Sadler’s Wells who use the space to research and/or develop new work.
CONCLUSION

Australia has a very productive and sensible approach of financing our creative talent to participate in overseas residency programs and thereby enter into, and make the most of, the global market. This support for professional development and exchange should continue. What Australian governments, cultural institutions, philanthropic organisations and residency programs are not doing is creating the facilities and mechanisms to attract that same calibre of overseas creative practitioners and investment back to Australia. Given the benefits of overseas exchange and investment to our local artists and to Australia's cultural sector, this is a missed opportunity.

The purpose of this research was to visit some of the most renowned, competitive and influential international residency programs for creative practitioners in order to explore best practice programs, financial models and support structures. Having finished the research, a number of best practice features emerge from overseas, which are outlined below.

PLACE, LOCATION AND HISTORY

Firstly, there is the importance of place, location and history in helping to define the identity, focus and value of a residency program within the marketplace. For example, the remoteness of the location and beauty of the natural environment of the programs and facilities at Cove Park off the west coast of Scotland and Headlands Center for the Arts, situated in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, create a sense of refuge and retreat, ideal for creative renewal and experimentation. Whereas, the facilities and program at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York City and Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin provide a proximity to a concentrated market centre, ideal for building reputation, networks and relationships.

The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity is unique in this regard when it comes to the scale of its inspiring natural environment in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and significant Indigenous history, which fundamentally shapes its program. Situated in a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site and located on the lands of Treaty 7 territory, the Banff Centre acknowledges and is inspired by its location and history as a sacred gathering place. Founded in 1933 by the University of Alberta, with a single course in drama, the Banff Centre’s history is one of growth and expansion in relation to arts, conferences and the provision of artistic education and training. It is this history that also continues to provide the cornerstone to its core values and mission.

TIME AND SPACE

A feature of many overseas residency programs is a valuing of the sense of time and space that is created for practitioners. Time and space are essential ingredients for creative practice, regardless of artistic discipline. As indicated above, at locations such as Cove Park in Scotland, this sense of expansion is achieved through the remoteness and beauty of the natural environment, the views from the facilities, and the simple light touch approach of staff. At the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art in Omaha, Nebraska, a sense of space is created though the size and scale of its studios and facilities; a ten thousand square metre warehouse over five levels with live / work studios, and enormous spaces for installations, and a downstairs gallery for exhibitions and public programs. Over the road, Bemis provides another nine hundred square metre facility across the road for sculpture and ceramics. These facilities offer expansive spaces to rehearse, experiment or simply contemplate. Additionally as the cultural sector in Middle America is small and sufficiently removed from the density of the East and West Coast, there is freedom to explore and experiment.

Another mechanism to create a sense of time and space is reducing the expectation that artists will produce specific outcomes, shows and performances to justify the time spent in a program. This is a feature of Headlands, Cove Park, Bemis and the Leighton Artist Colony program at the Banff Centre.

Finally the studio and facilities available ultimately determine the suitability for particular disciplines and the extent to which programs can provide for interdisciplinary crossover. One of the best examples of genuine support for a range of artistic disciplines is the Banff Centre.
RESOURCING AND SUPPORT

A critical factor in attracting high calibre creative practitioners to a residency program is the ability to resource and support their journey and experience. This includes financial support such as flights, accommodation and a stipend as well as technical and/or specialised on the ground support and mentoring. Of particular relevance is the ability of some programs to support families, which can especially help women with small children wanting to continue their careers.

On-the-ground support is particularly necessary for emerging artists, although later career artists also appreciate access to collaborators. This support works well when practitioners are given an orientation and properly introduced to the program and other residents and where discipline specific staff is available.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The best practice creative residency programs overseas are financially sustainable. This is a key to stability, longevity and continued investment. Some of key strategies that are employed by the programs visited include:

- Organisations that own their own premises.
- Organisations that partner with cultural agencies and consulates who are paying for international artists to participate in their programs.
- Organisations that have a mixed revenue model that includes government, private and self-generated income, preferably weighted evenly.
- Organisations that have efficient and innovative ways to generate revenue, such as events, the use of conference facilities and in some cases tourism (for example audiences for performances and exhibitions created on site).
- Organisations that have invested in community engagement and therefore have strong local ‘buy in’ and philanthropic support; for example, Headlands who use their dining room for fund raisers and for encouraging stakeholders to dinners.
- Organisations that enable like-minded third parties to pay a fee to occupy the site for their own business purposes and thereby subsidize the residency program objectives. This strategy as well as conference and venue hire needs to be carefully managed so as not to undermine the purpose and focus of the core creative programs.
- Organisations that have an educative focus in order to attract revenue from a range of sources, for example Hands On at Cove Park that is designed for school students.

EXCHANGE AND NETWORKS

Creating an environment for exchange and facilitating access to networks is an important feature of many successful and competitive programs. Exchange enables artists to share ideas, collaborate and be inspired and supported to experiment and push their practice. The peer-to-peer relationships that are often solidified through residency and other cultural programs can continue to create opportunities and be enriching long beyond the program.

Some of the practical ways in which a number of programs encourage social and creative exchange is through sharing food and the act of dining together, creating break-out areas for shared interaction, thematic programs to facilitate collaboration, orientations and field trips for groups of practitioners. One of the best examples of dialogue and exchange between artists is provided at Headlands, which mandates dinner every night in its communal, family-style Mess Hall. As the Headlands Director, Sharon Maidenberg says: “the only obligation you have while you are here is that at the end of the day you come to dinner.”

A key observation to emerge as a result of the research travel is the fundamental differences between mega-city based residency programs, and more remote and/or urban residency programs. Not to diminish the fact that individuals vary in terms of creating the optimum environments with which to experiment and generate new work, but as a rule city-based residency programs appeared to be less about the support for the production and creation of new work than they are about exposure to current cultural institutions, networks, exchange and markets.
Programs such as the ISCP in New York, Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Gasworks and Delfina Foundation in London, are important professional development platforms in this regard, as they introduce new creative talent to a community and also provide a critical entry point for artists choosing to remain and become part of the localised community. Correspondingly these programs provide a reputational currency for artists and their presence on curriculum vitae is powerful.

VALUING THE ARTS, CREATIVITY AND INDIGENOUS CultURES

One of the unique features of the Banff Centre model is its scale, which enables it to privilege all art forms and invest, value and celebrate creativity and the role of the arts and ideas within society. The emphasis on training and learning provides rigour and pathways, without having to spend years completing a university degree. Additionally, the Banff Centre is committed to creating a ‘centre of excellence’ for Indigenous programs which crosses and informs all disciplines with a particular emphasis on leadership.

In terms of harvesting ideas for an Australian context, the Banff Centre model provides an extraordinary precedent in opportunities inherent in the co-mingling of multi-disciplinary creative residencies with leadership programs and conferencing facilities. Time spent at the Banff Centre caused me reflect and question: Why doesn’t Australia’s cultural sector have a Banff?
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are to assist the Australian cultural sector move toward a global leadership in arts, culture and creativity and provide a range of practical suggestions for an expansion of creative residency programs.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Australian creative leaders, Indigenous leaders, governments, philanthropic organisations and individuals need to vision and resource residency programs that are capable of attracting the world’s most promising creative talent and placing them in direct contact and exchange with local practitioners and local communities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Australia should create, and invest in, a large-scale Centre for Arts and Creativity that supports local and international artists and the pursuit of creative endeavor across a range of disciplines, including performing arts, visual, digital and media arts, literary arts, architecture, and design. This Centre and its programs should have an underpinning commitment to Indigenous arts, culture, history and leadership.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The features of a large-scale Centre for Arts and Creativity should include:

- A cultural location or destination that reflects what is unique about Australia’s natural environment and therefore attractive to overseas practitioners and cultural institutions.
- An underpinning commitment to Indigenous leadership, history and programs.
- A focus on creating a learning experience as well as a creative experience.
- A funding model that includes revenue from government, philanthropic, international, universities, and self-generated sources.
- A series of programs that are outcome driven as well as self-directed, target and cater to creative practitioners at different points in their career, and facilitate and support exchange between overseas and local participants.
- A range of purpose built facilities that can support interdisciplinary programs and create revenue streams.
- An active and highly visible public program that presents the work of creative practitioners, a percentage of which has been generated on site.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Existing and newly established medium sized residency programs in Australia that provide programs for local artists should build capacity to attract overseas practitioners and leverage revenue opportunities from international cultural agencies and foundations.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Depending on their unique value proposition, medium sized residency programs wanting to attract high calibre international practitioners should consider the following range of best practice features and strategies:

LOCATION, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

- A clear vision, purpose and identity underpinning the organization and its programs that is unique in the marketplace and maximized through its location
- A location that is proximate to an urban centre in order to access transport, facilities and networks
- High standard accommodation
- Access to facilities, studios and work spaces that support a range of disciplines,
if possible, and enable the organization to generate revenue
— Financial support for practitioners, including flights and a stipend
— The availability of ‘on the ground’ support and expertise such as discipline specific
  mentors, curators, studio managers
— Structures to create exchange between practitioners, including: cross-disciplinary;
  emerging and mid-career artists; peer-to-peer; cross-generational; and which acti-
  vate the support and experience of the organisation’s alumni
— Exposure to broader networks, cultural leaders, local communities and opportunities
  in the marketplace.
— A rigorous selection process to enable exceptional caliber participants

GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

— A stable and sustainable governance structure.
— A funding model that includes innovative and commercial ways to generate income
  as well as government and private support and which preferably has the organisation
  owning its main premises.
— Partnerships with overseas cultural agencies to fund international participants.
— Partnerships with local organisations to provide support with facilities and networks
  and to enable programs to be broadened to include other disciplines (for example,
  universities, theatre companies, dance companies etc...).