

APAM – WIRE #4 | Summary

Residencies and Performance Practices

Wednesday 7 March 2020 4:30pm

Eliza Roberts (Executive Director, Res Artis) in conversation with
Bilqis Hijjas (Dance Programme Director, Rimbun Dahan, Malaysia)
Amrita Hepi (Choreographer/Dancer)
Naomi Velaphi (APAM)

Res Artis Overview

- Res Artis is an artist residency program, with a value-based membership program, offering professional development opportunities for artists.
- It focuses on advocacy and partnerships to maintain the network of global residencies.
- Res Artis has a definition for a residency (moving on from the original 1900s definition): A residency is organized time and space for an artist/s to further a practice or a project. Res Artis proposes that it should be profile-raising, and that the residency has clear mutual responsibility between artist and residency host.

Eliza Roberts (ER): Residencies can be a critical stepping-stone for opportunities and funding; what are your thoughts on this?

Amrita Hepi (AH)

- International residencies are useful to create a network of people and peers and to engage with new audiences.
- At [PACT](#) (Australian centre for emerging and experimental art) there is a new residency which has recently called for applications (closed 15 March).
- Effective residencies focus on resource sharing.

ER: What challenges are faced by those running a space for residency programs?

Bilqis Hijjas (BH)

- The main challenge is to find the human resources required to properly support residencies. Visual artist residencies run throughout the year however they require fewer human resources. Performing artists need more support in terms of the provision of bodies (dancers, etc).
- Rimbun Dahan deals with resources on a case-by-case basis. In some respect this is up to each individual artist.
- Planning is essential for good support for rehearsals and performance and other events.

Amrita Hepi (AH)

- Each project is different; in solo work it can be difficult to maintain momentum in a residency.
- At Banff, AH was on a choreographic residency with a group, and this was fully funded with great resources (studios, accommodation in nature, catering).
- To be 'in residence' at a museum, is a very different model, with different contingencies.

- Research residencies are another thing again, and although there is not a definitive outcome for a performance, they do usually have a deadline as a constraint.
- Artists work in such different ways. It's helpful to be nimble and flexible: remaining open-minded is the goal in residencies.

ER: The opportunity for an artist is to take things up as they arise. There are many models, beyond the outcome vs time and space models. What expectations can surround residencies?

Bilqis Hiijas (BH)

- We don't have specific expectations at Rimbun Dahan, and partner organisations often make the selection of artists for residency.
- We aim to give the artist the most flexibility possible, as this is the most productive way to support them.
- Longer residencies are preferred as it takes time to work things out, to 'land', and all the practical aspects of being in a different place.
- For Rimbun Dahan it's about appreciating the place. Offering a different environment allows for different ways of thinking.
- We are not publicly funded so we don't have to have financially connected outcomes.

Amrita Hepi (AH)

- The connection between people takes a couple of weeks – between other residents, locals, coordinators, collaborators, workshop participants etc.
- Extended periods of time for work development are essential.
- Deadlines are certainly part of the practice, but other formats offer the time to figure out what and how we want to work.

ER: More and more residencies are charging for the opportunity. Res Artis' position is that there should be a combination of both free residencies and ones that are free for artists (via publicly-funded support), as well as other models. Do you have recommendations about how to prepare for a residency?

Amrita Hepi (AH)

- AH recently undertook the Dancweb residency. It's important to dedicate time to the residency. Undertake research about the residency organization, and the place it is located. It's important to approach the residency with something that you want to achieve. And of course it is important to remain nimble and open to change during the residency. Human resources are often an integral part so it's a strength to remain responsive to what is available.

Bilqis Hiijas (BH)

- We have a mixed mode in terms of financial models. We have a pay model for professional artists, Asialink and Asia NZ select and pay for residencies for artists, and Rimbun Dahan supports South East Asian artists to undertake residencies, based on reviewing portfolios. So it depends on which of these an artist applies for.
- If the residency is a rare opportunity it is more important (less so for those artists who move from residency to residency).
- For those on a year-long residency, the question is primarily about whether the artist can live in Malaysia for that long. It is a challenge and it requires resilience and an independent capacity.

Naomi Velaphi (NV): What is a residency's role in cultivating long term relationships? Do international residencies build longevity for an artist's career?

Amrita Hepi (AH)

- These can be a bridging point, and connections are often led by artist conversations with those who run residency programs.
- Artists, presenters and programmers can often give great recommendations for a residency or an artist.

Bilqis Hiijas (BH)

- It is challenging to continue long term relationships with artists who have previously been in residence, as people move onto other things once they have completed a residency.
- Residencies are wonderful for providing space outside of the marketplace.

Tips and highlights

- Ensure you have sufficient time for the residency.
- Underline the timeliness of the residency.
- Outline what the residency will do for you and why it's needed in your practice.
- Speak to peers who have undertaken the residency.
- Research the residency before you apply.
- Gauge your capacity for a new environment.
- Be realistic about your dedication to the residency and the place.
- Create further opportunities while you are on residency.
- It's important for both artist and residency organization to be explicit about the situation and their respective commitments.
- For community-based residencies, have an in-depth conversation with the programmer, undertake research, and find a trusted producer. It's important to identify the community prior to proposing the residency, so the residency is connected to a specific community. Engage with someone who has a knowledge of the place.

Further links

Res Artis <https://resartis.org/>

Rimbun Daha <https://rimbundahan.org/>

PACT <http://www.pact.net.au/pact-residencies>

Banff <https://www.banffcentre.ca/programs>

Santarcangelo Festival <https://www.santarcangelofestival.com/en/residenze/>

Echigo-Tsumari Art Field www.echigo-tsumari.jp/eng/

Micro-residencies <https://microresidence.net/>