

Interpretive Themes for Artists in Residence

1. **Wilderness.** The Badlands Wilderness Area engages the very deepest aspects of human connection to the Badlands and mixed-grass prairies, and reflects an inherent contrast between that natural world and our modern existence.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Use of contemporary and traditional subjects, mediums and approaches.
- * Nature's designs
- Metaphor

2. **Mixed-Grass Prairie.** The Badlands National Park mixed-grass prairie ecosystem is a surviving fragment of the once expansive native sea of grass, deceptively complex and diverse, with the majority of life hidden below ground.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Biological subjects and relationships within the prairie ecosystem.
- Rhythm, balance and repetition in nature.

3. **Fossil and Geologic Record.** The paleontological and geologic records of the White River Badlands provide scientific context for understanding the dynamics of climate and the evolution of life past, present, and future.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Exploration of climatic events.
- * Changes over time.
- * Erosion
- * Land forms
- Colors, textures shape and form

4. **Vast Landscapes.** The Badlands vast, contrasting landscapes inspire people to appreciate the beauty and value of spectacular scenery.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Perspectives.
- * Historical interpretations.
- * Beauty/Aesthetics
- * Light, color, value
- Artistic Traditions

5. **Prairie Dog Colonies.** The park's careful and deliberate management of the prairie dog colonies supports the continued survival of interdependent species, including the endangered Black-footed Ferret.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Ferret & prairie dog subjects.
- * Symbiotic relationships.
- * Stewardship

6. **Science of Paleontology.** Mid-19th century fossil discoveries in the Badlands were the catalyst for conducting the first major fossil explorations of the American West, initiating the

modern science of paleontology and improving our understanding of the transition and origins of the North American grasslands ecosystem.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Fossils - form, shape, texture.
- * Paleontological art & scientific illustration.
- * Earth's history.

7. **Human History.** The challenging conditions encountered through time in the Badlands region dictate perseverance, adaptability and flexibility by humans to survive.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Cultural context.
- * Human migration.
- * Adaptation.

8. **Sacred Landscape.** The survival, hope and vision of the Lakota are tied to the history of western expansion, personal experience and sacred landscapes found within the prairie and Badlands formations.

Possible Art Explorations:

- * Native arts, design & materials.
- * Symbolism & spirituality
- * Tradition.
- * Contemporary native art forms.