Artists in National Parks

Artists have had a long-standing impact on the formation, expansion, and direction of this country’s national parks. Painting the dynamic landscapes of the 1800s American West, artists publicized many of the natural wonders of a land little known to the eastern populace. These artists’ visual records focused attention on an emerging western landscape, and their work helped to stimulate the establishment of many of our national parks.

Painters of today continue to document the landscapes of the national parks with contemporary approaches and techniques. Writers, sculptors, musicians, composers, and other performing artists also draw upon the multifaceted quality of parks for inspiration. All of these artists translate the national parks purpose, as a place of pleasure and preservation, into images or works which bring others enjoyment and a deeper understanding of the parks some may never visit.

Mesa Verde National Park’s Artist-in-Residence (AIR) Program provides professional artists the opportunity to become a part of a long established tradition of artists in our national parks. Mesa Verde's AIR Program is managed by the Mesa Verde Museum Association (MVMA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner to the National Park Service (NPS). The AIR Program was reestablished as part of the park’s Centennial Celebration in 2006. The works completed under this program contribute to the public understanding and appreciation of our national parks, create a legacy preserved for future generations, and offer park visitors and the public an opportunity to see our heritage through the eyes and ears of the contributing artists.

Artists-in-Residence

The AIR Program at Mesa Verde National Park offers professional writers, composers, and visual and performing artists the opportunity to pursue their particular art form while being surrounded by the inspiring ancient architecture and natural landscape of the park. The park provides a historic, rustic residence to selected participants for five two-week periods:

- May 1 through May 13
- May 15 through May 27
- September 4 through September 16
- September 18 through September 30
- October 2 through October 14 (preference to local artists)

Living Arrangements

Another aim of the AIR Program is to ensure the preservation of the historic residences within Mesa Verde National Park. The historic residences are constructed from native stone and wood, many in a Pueblo Revival style typical of the area. A one-room Hogan-style house is used for the AIR Program. It was selected for its interesting architecture and originality. The building has a hexagonal shape with front and back porches. It has a skylit studio/living area with a divided bedroom and bathroom. A kitchen area is shared with the living room, with a central propane stove for heating. The building stays cool during the heat of the summer.
Living Arrangements (con’t)

The Hogan is fully furnished including linens and kitchenware. Artists will need to provide their own groceries, and may choose to bring personal amenities. At the end of their residency, artists are to clean up the cabin and gather together used linens. Pets are not allowed.

Spouses, friends or family may come with selected artists; however, the Hogan is very small and sleeping and work space is limited. If selected artists elect to bring guests, only the artists themselves are entitled to the residency.

The Hogan is within a short driving distance of the popular cliff dwellings Cliff Palace and Balcony House, as well as the Mesa Top Scenic Loop. The historic district of Chapin Mesa, including the park’s museum, headquarters, and Spruce Tree House cliff dwelling, is within walking distance. Because of the historic nature of the Hogan, the facility is not fully accessible for individuals with disabilities. Personal accessibility needs may be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Transportation to, from, and during the residency must be provided by the artist. The Hogan is 27 miles from the nearest amenities such as grocery stores, medical care, gasoline, and restaurants. Limited cafeteria-style and table service dining options are available in the park; most food services are 5 miles from the Hogan at Far View Terrace and Far View Lodge.

A pay telephone and self-service laundry are available near the Hogan. Internet connections are not available in the Hogan, but wi-fi service is normally available at Spruce Tree Terrace and Far View Terrace. Due to the remote location and topography, cell phone coverage is extremely limited throughout the park.

Expectations

Participating artists are to donate at least one professional digital image of an original piece of work from, and representative of, their residency at Mesa Verde National Park. Artists reserve the copyright of the donated artwork, but will give written permission to MVMA to use or print images for publicity, publication, or retail product development. Artists must agree that if the donated image is employed for their personal use, that a statement must be included near or on the image that this is a donation to the Artist-in-Residence Program of Mesa Verde National Park. The donated digital image must be delivered to MVMA within one year of the residency. Should exhibit/storage space become available, original artwork may be requested.

Artists working in other media are to donate to MVMA one copy of their manuscript or finished work. Artists will retain the copyright to their work. If they have their work published, it is to be accompanied by a statement that the work was created during their artist-in-residency at Mesa Verde National Park.

Participating artists are to present a public program on the second Friday of their residency. This interaction can be tailored to an individual’s medium, interest, and experience. Examples of programs include a demonstration, talk, exploratory hike, or a performance. Artists must provide their own supplies, equipment, and logistics for their public presentations. Artists are also responsible for providing information and images to support a press release announcing their residency and public program, which will be issued by the NPS.

Upon acceptance to the AIR program, participants will receive a program agreement, press release information requirements, a DVD of self-paced backcountry etiquette training, and other information pertinent to their residency. Proof of training completion, requested press release information, and the signed agreement must be returned to MVMA at least two weeks before the start of the residency. Participants will receive an on-site orientation on their arrival day.

Past donations from the Mesa Verde Artist In Residence program include — (left) Spruce Tree House Splendor, watercolor, by Jan Wright, (center) untitled fabric art by Carol Watkins, (right) Square Tower House Ruin, stained glass, by Kay Malouff.
Applications are accepted from November 9, 2016 through December 30, 2016. A panel of artists from diverse disciplines and staff will choose five finalists and three alternates. Selection is based on artistic merit, the Statement of Purpose, a statement on how your submission fits with one or more of Mesa Verde’s interpretive themes (see below), and appropriateness for a national park residency. Selection and notification are made by January 30, 2017. Residencies for those selected are scheduled for one of the following sessions:

- May 1 through May 13
- May 15 through May 27
- September 4 through September 16
- September 18 through September 30
- October 2 through October 14 (preference to local artists)

For full consideration, it is critical to follow the application requirements precisely. Insufficient or excessive submittal materials will be cause for application rejection.

All application materials are to be submitted in CD form or on flash drives. CDs or flash drives must be compatible with PC computers. To apply, submit the following five items:

1) A one- to two-page resume, copied on a CD or flash drive, that includes the applicant’s name, mailing address, phone number(s), e-mail address, and website address (if applicable) as well as a summary listing of the applicant’s creative works, exhibitions, awards, accomplishments, etc.

2) Samples of the applicant’s work. (Apple computer users, please make certain your electronic submissions are compatible with Windows PC-based systems.) Limit yourself to the following:
   a) Visual artists: no more than six digital images on CD or flash drive, formatted to 72 ppi, no greater than 3 MB, and 2,000 pixels on the longest side as a JPEG (.jpg). Label each with your name, the title of the work, size, and medium. Make certain the files work by opening them on a computer other than your own, and are compatible with Windows PC-based systems. Quality of images is considered by jury and is projected up onto a screen.
   b) Musicians or composers: one CD or flash drive, labeled with your name, the title of the work(s), and instrument(s).
   c) Performers or dancers: one DVD, labeled with your name and the title of the work.
   d) Writers or journalists: a writing sample on CD or flash drive of no more than five pages (double-spaced) of text, stories, articles or poems, labeled with your name and title of the work.

3) A brief Statement of Purpose describing
   a) what you hope to achieve from a residency;
   b) the value of the opportunity for personal growth;
   c) your proposed public program (scheduled for the second Friday of the residency) as well as any other visitor interaction you would provide.

4) A brief Statement of Theme(s)
   a) Explain how your submission addresses one or more of the Interpretive Themes of Mesa Verde National Park (see next page).
Interpretive Themes

• Interaction between the Ancestral Pueblo People and the Environment
  The interaction between the Ancestral Pueblo people and the environment revealed in
  the archeological record offers an opportunity to understand how environment shapes
  culture, and how culture shapes environment.

• Establishment of Mesa Verde National Park and World Heritage Designation
  Grassroots concern about site destruction and artifact removal from the Mesa Verde
  served as a catalyst for passage of the 1906 Antiquities Act and the establishment of Mesa
  Verde National Park. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1978, the park continues to
  inspire present and future generations to become stewards and offers global collaborative
  opportunities in preservation and learning.

• A Living Link between Past and Present Ways of Life
  Mesa Verde National Park is a living link between the past and present which reflects the
  diversity of the human experience.

• Natural Landscapes, Systems, and Processes
  Mesa Verde’s natural landscapes provide an outdoor laboratory for investigating the park’s
  dynamic biotic communities, natural setting, and formation and physical processes, while
  protecting wilderness values and scenic views.

• Archeology
  A continuing desire to understand Mesa Verde’s past has shaped and continues to shape
  the discipline and practice of archeology

5) $30.00 application fee by personal or cashiers check to Mesa Verde Museum Association.

Submit all application materials and fee, postmarked by Friday, December 30, 2016 to
AIR Coordinator, Mesa Verde Museum Association, P.O. Box 38, Mesa Verde National
Park, CO 81330. For more information, please contact MVMA’s administrative staff at
970-529-4642 or info@mesaverde.org.