



Library podcast

Seattle Writes: Residencies Revealed

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[00:00:35] Hi everyone thank you for coming here today. My name is Linda Johns. I'm a librarian here at Seattle Public Library and I'm one of the co-leads of Seattle writes with my colleague Andrea Goff in the back. So thank you for coming to our program. Seattle writes is now a yearlong series that is supported by the Seattle Public Library Foundation and we're very grateful to them for funding us again for 2017. We're gonna have monthly programs at the Central Library the second Sunday of every month beginning February 12th at two o'clock and then in the fall we'll have a big concentrated series with about 20 to 30 writing classes that will be free and they'll be all over the city. Let's see. We are partnering today with Hugo house and Molly from Hugo house is here and she's also going to be doing this live streaming this on Facebook today. So if your friends missed this we'll have it on the Hugo House Facebook page and also the Seattle Public Library Facebook page and there are sign up sheets in the back for so you can get on Hugo House's mailing list. Today's program was put together by our partner Hugo House mineral school until Chelsea in the back is from tell and putting it all together as Jane Hodges who's the founder and one of the board members of mineral school and she's going to moderate our panel. Our first panel then we're going to mix things up and and Chelsea will moderate a panel of authors who have attended residencies.

[00:02:11] So this is Jane Hodges.

[00:02:16] Thank you all for coming out and Chelsea and I put this together together. So thank you to Chelsea for collaborating. And before we get started I wanted to just talk about residencies generally. What is a residency how is it different from a conference or a retreat and residency is simply time and space to create new work.

[00:02:37] There are day residencies where you go in and have studio space and work you know maybe it was in a gallery or library Hugo house has a writer in residence program. Seattle Public Library has experimented with one with someone who's here today but mostly what we're focused on today is overnight residencies and all of this have sort of different cultures and different ways of serving creative people so they can get their work done. And so what we hoping you will come away

with today from our two panels are a sense of you know what's it like to be residency when's a good time in your writing life to go to one and what's the vibe of each place some places you're there you're like the only person there or there's two or three people other places are bigger some places you're there for many weeks some places you're there for five days so we just wanted to sort of give you all sense of all that the flavors of residency in the Northwest. There are a bunch of hand outs in the back for residences on this panel as well as the information sheet that's in your your chair with ways to find out about residences not just in the northwest but elsewhere. So we're going to start out with a conversation from people who are on the leadership or groups for resonances and what I'm hoping we can do is just go down the line and have each person talk five minutes max about their residency its history sort of what it's like there and kind of the philosophy that guides what you're you're hoping to help writers and creative people do. So we're to start with Art Smith with Tina Shuman and if you need a Mic I think I think you can pull it over.

[00:04:15] Yeah okay. I am with Art Smith on Orcas Island and I'll give you our Web site right now because I'm woefully

[00:04:23] Lacking in handouts. It is www.orcasartsmith.org one word because if you Google Art Smith you're gonna get the chef Art Smith. We should come up if you just do orcas. Art Smith. We're a residency that takes place in a BMV on Orcas Island called the kangaroo house. There are five bedrooms. We sponsor all kinds of artists writers, painters. We do not have studio space. So just in a warning in your application if you're doing any kind of graphic arts or statuary or things like that just tell us how you're going to use this time to apply to your art. You may not be able to do it in that space but you can use your time in whatever way affects your art best. We are from one to four weeks. It's up to you and your application to tell us what you would like. It's usually during the month of February I'll tell you that because of high season for the B and B of course this summer and the other months we also have a salon series we have a writers workshop every year called writer island. This year it's full it's usually full pretty quickly every year. But take a look for that too. We do non-fiction poetry fiction and that is a four day workshop. Also at the BandB. Ask me questions if you need to I'm gonna put these on the back. It's a beautiful space it's so worth it. I just I can't say enough about the owners and I am the assistant director of Tina Shuman the director is Jill Johnson her and her husband live at the B and B they're there you get for dinners you take care of the rest of your meals you can walk down to the beach. Art Smith, check it out thanks.

[00:06:08] Hello I'm Laura council and I'm here with the Bloedel Reserve. We have a creative residency at global reserve global reserve as a public garden and forest reserve on Bainbridge Island. It's a one hundred and fifty acres space. The mission of Bloedel Reserve is to connect humans with nature and we had the privilege of having this two bedroom beautiful home situated in a private location on the reserve. And it was not being used. So we decided to use it for residency purposes. So we welcome anywhere from eight to 10 residents per year and each person stays from between three to four weeks. We're fiddling a little bit with that number in 2016. We allowed folks to kind of identify a two to four week period and we learned that the two weeks just wasn't quite long enough for the folks who stayed that shorter amount of time to feel the space to live and breathe that space and move forward with their work. So we've adjusted that to three to four week stays. But if folks do need

just a tad bit shorter we're willing to work around any means. The intention of the of the residency is to allow a very immersive experience in nature and the hope and requirement is that your work have some connection with nature. We are open to all disciplines including writers scholars. 2017 we're welcoming to composers, sculptors, painters. It's you know we're inviting all of folks and that is kind of that thought in a nutshell.

[00:08:01] Michael Newman. We're

[00:08:06] opening the Chicapage and Center for the Arts. Bring this up because the spelling is often odd and it's a native chestnut tree from Oregon basically. But we don't have any on the property the owner founder liked it so much because we started it it's a long process of saying why we got started we started up in another area but he never got going. But he liked the idea. Oh I know you've got to get the Mic

[00:08:32] And he'd like a good he liked the idea of artists in general.

[00:08:36] He'd been the founder Steve Radcliffe has been in non-profit for quite a few years. Around the West Coast basically on the East Coast he's worked out of Bellingham and a lot of bluegrass so he foundation Bluegrass all the time. He's been that has gigs here in Seattle too not nowadays when he was younger and so he's been involved with non-profit arts and music in a sense so he quit his job in San Francisco working with the golden state park system and came up and decided he wanted to devote his life to the arts. But he means it not just his music. I myself as a painter, an artist, a sculptor and he wants anybody and everybody to come and do what you want. The one thing he's asking is not required is that you come together and a meal and you talk I mean if you're a sculptor you're an artist or whatever we do. It's the attribute that going to create the artist to create more and stimulate you to feel it more or new. We've gone through a variety of artists from painters, sculpture we had a libretto writer there recently on down in Ashland oh we're in

[00:09:50] Portland Oregon. I apologize not for the Grants pass Oregon about 10 miles south of Grants pass a little town called Murphy of 40 acres with nothing except your own creativity and whatever the major aspects you can gather in winter it's cold. But the idea is to reiterate what do you want as an artist. These are the questions we are everybody ask ourselves especially an artist and we go through the young and old we go through these challenges and these challenges need different environments within all six of us here and you go how your having different environments to cultivate your self which is your work sense that you come for. These are the aspects we're trying to offer you that we all will offer you a room where I even have a workspace for tools. And we're hoping for grant money to expand. We can only handle a couple of sign up here before I had only one but we have two or three at the most. And we're hoping for more but only about a year and a half legal. We've had more coming but we have found already within the short period of time the variety of the artist and mixture has created enough confidence in the artist themselves.

[00:11:10] I'm putting this more to you than as an art retreat because all I'm offering we're offering is a space and it's going to be up to you to do it. And the other artist coming around we have found if a

musician might like I said the founders is in bluegrass. But when you talk to a libretto writer you're having a different aspect of looking at music but it's really the same. How do you vote how to feel how to create I think my five minutes is probably up I'll get too excited but it's open to everybody and if you have any questions please afterwards and talk. We like the idea of an artist creating for themselves a writer or what we've had installation artist we've had painters, sculptors and we had it. Oh we just had some people from New York come through and they performed down there in Grants Park and in Ashland which is close by. We're right off I five. So it's easy to come and visit say hello Chicapage and Center for the Arts. Thank you.

[00:12:11] Thank you. Hi I'm Kathryn Willis Cleveland and I'm here from Hedge Brook and we're on a writing retreat for women up on Whidbey Island. It's 48 acres looking over useless Bay and we were started by Nancy Skinner Nordhoff in 1988 as a private family foundation vision for a farm that poised itself for something new in the world. And we became a nonprofit in 2006. So sometime after that and we are tagline is women authoring change so we really lean toward moving the needle on social justice issues. At our core is our writers and residents program. I think that's what we're most well-known for and that is seven cottages in the woods where I think the best way I can describe it is it's more like going back in time you have a wood burning stove no internet access and you are there with owls and Cedar trees. There's some nods in the room I'm thinking there's probably some alumni here I know for sure in the front row here and then each evening the writers gather together at our farmhouse table and they collaborate share a meal support each other offer insights on what they might be working on. That's our writers in residence program but we recognize that of the two thousand or so applicants that apply every year only 40 some get into that for residencies that are around four weeks.

[00:13:49] So we know that that's not enough for championing women authoring change. So we also have actually coming up. We have three day weekend workshop called Vortex. Coming up may 5th 6th and 7th where we have amazing alumni writers from around the country that come and teach classes and we have a sliding scale scholarship program for that. If you're interested you can look at our website and we also have recently started a women's documentary, women screenwriters lab which is now turning into women's documentary film lab. We also have musicians songwriters come and we have a women's playwright festival that's in its 20th year. So a few different programs and it's hard to be succinct but all of those have their own application processes and they're all available on our web if you want to take a deeper dive. I would I would just maybe conclude by emphasizing that we don't do this work alone. It's very much in partnership with our community to say the very least and so we. For example for our Women's playwright festival we partner with Seattle Rep Theatre, Act theater and we get dramaturg and folks in the room while the women are working on plays that can help act it out and bring it to life as a first run in our longhouse where there's pure learning and feedback and then we bring it to stage it's actually quite exciting.

[00:15:20] Coming up the first week of June if you're around we each of the seven writers gets to watch around eight minutes of the play they've been creating to live on the stage and it's some folks are nodding it's quite an amazing string of our live time and you get to hear from from the playwrights. And we also partner and one other example with the why we program young women empowered and

in fact our alumni here. Anastasia in the front row is one of the teachers that engages with. With that said why we yay exactly why we yay. Exactly so so. So we rely on our community partners and it's part of what makes this work possible. We just had our annual board retreat. I've gotten here in the last minute from that retreat and we have a nationwide board of women gathered. You can imagine in this particular time in history what the energy was like and the pictures of marchers being exchanged on iPhones. And so we feel like our work is especially important. And it's an honor to be here with you all. Thank you.

[00:16:24] Hi I'm Elizabeth Eve and I am on the board of mineral school. I joined about a year and a half ago because I am a writer and I feel like being a writer is often just feels like a lifelong search for a quiet place to write. And I wanted to be able to help provide that. I was going to say I thought mineral was one of the newest residences that would be on this panel but that's actually not the case. I realize now that I'm here there's a few folks here that are just one or two years old so but we are very young. This coming summer will have our third season of hosting residents and our application period is actually open right now for two more weeks. Applications are due by February 15th and then this year's first residency will begin in June and the last one will end in October. So our home is a brick former school house in a very tiny town called Mineral. That's why we're mineral school. It's a little lake town. It's about 30 minutes from the entrance to Mt. Rainier National Park which leads up to the Paradise area. So we are literally at the gates of paradise. You can see Mount Rainier out our front door and about two hours from Seattle.

[00:17:43] The town is so small you're more likely to see a deer crossing the street than another person sometimes. There are very few opportunities for distraction. Cell phone service doesn't work very well.

[00:17:55] The gas station is open seasonally. There's a bed and breakfast a post office. There is a tavern called the headquarters which has karaoke night on Saturdays. If you do need distraction and there's Mineral Lake which has a fishing derby once a year and you can rent kayaks or pontoon boats out there in the school.

[00:18:15] So every resident has an 800 square foot former classroom that serves as a studio and bedroom.

[00:18:21] They have hardwood floors and chalkboards on the wall so if you like outlining that way that's a good thing. And there's typically six people in house at any given time. So for residents and then a cook and a dorm parent who is usually a board member or volunteer. And actually this summer a couple of our past residents are coming back to serve as dorm parents.

[00:18:44] So we're happy that they they want to be there some more so residents my in my experience from from the times I was there you know people tend to work in their room. Most of the time and then interact over meals.

[00:18:57] Meals are in a central dining room. There's kind of no obligation to do anything but it's a nice combination of people who want a lot of solo writing time but also some interaction and feedback with their fellow writers. So it's great for that.

[00:19:14] Oh so usually are typically in the past or residences have all been two weeks long. This year we're doing something a little different.

[00:19:21] We have a mix of two week and one week residencies the one week residencies are specifically for writers who are parents because that seemed to be sort of a need in the market and we got a grant to help us provide these and those are all fellowship covered the one workers.

[00:19:40] So over the course of a two week residency like I said it's pretty quiet. There's usually two nights that are a little more busy and active. One of those is the night when residents share their reading with each other and share their work with each other and the public if they want to.

[00:19:58] When we open the doors and people come from the local town and sometimes from from hours away because it's a widely scattered county and then there's usually one night where we have visiting author or two from the area Anastasia who's here in the front row was was a visiting author this last summer I think and we know a couple of our visiting authors lined up for this year.

[00:20:20] I don't know all of them but I know we'll have Claire Deborah and she's a memoirist and then Neal Thompson who is a novelist and also has a memoir coming out will be some of our visiting writers. And if you want to get the dates on that those are on our Web site.

[00:20:36] We are residents here are a mix of free and paid the paid ones are four hundred and twenty five dollars for two weeks.

[00:20:44] That's of course all your room and board. And then we will have 12. So out of this summer we have we'll have 20 total spots 12 of which are covered by fellowship and several of those Fellowships are specifically for writers from the Pacific Northwest which I would imagine applies to people in this room. So we should look out for that applications or I'll just anonymously.

[00:21:07] Jurors don't see don't see the name on the application.

[00:21:11] And so I guess to conclude I just say that you know even in a very short history one of the things I think I'm most proud of and we're most proud of is the writers who've come to us and told us that they have really pushed through finishing a manuscript or you know really really getting something done in some cases that work has been published. Now a couple of our alums are here and I think are going to speak Gabriela and Kyra some other folks who've who've worked on things recently where Jane Wong whose book over poor she's a poet. Her book over poor came out in the fall. And I think she worked on that at all. We have Leon Dupnik has a book coming out in April to love the coming. And she was a resident this past summer. And then one of my favorite comments was from the young adult novelist Stephanie Kushner who told us that Miss Keener sorry.

[00:22:07] She told us that in addition to writing a synopsis for a new book and revising a memoir she wrote twenty three thousand nine hundred ninety nine new words.

[00:22:15] So I don't know where the last one went. We'll leave it at that.

[00:22:18] Thank you Jeanne was coming to hedge but this year. Yeah we're all connected.

[00:22:27] So till it takes place in two parts. When Chelsea United started it decided to stagger its writing in our fourth year and when Chelsea and I came up with the idea I'd just come back with a three month residency in New Mexico and she'd been rejected from a we're going to a couple residencies and where I know there's a really great time that I was completely dead broke and and we decided we would be great to create a residency program that fits in with more of how people live. So we have a five day residency at at smoke farm by Arlington and the property used to be was a dairy farm and now it's been kind of letting its running feral and turning back and just native habitat and there are a few of the outbuildings from the farm have been converted into like a big communal kitchen and then like there's a dorm area and a letter press print shop and in that space we we create writing spaces in the woods and also in the buildings so that people can experience the property and walk around and have some place to kind of unwind and be somewhere outside of their normal normal life. And then also be able to write and do some work and some people show up and wander and simple sit down and write the whole time and produce a lot of work.

[00:23:50] And two years ago we added workshops and those have been like really really successful and we've been working really well in a couple workshop leaders are here attestation soccer and pretty rock. We provide a we do dinners and we have we try to incorporate the meal into some part of the residency. The first year we had meals we had some graduate students from both school in Portland but part of their MFA program was doing a large communal dinner as an art piece and there was Belem in tracing paper as is the tablecloth and so they could trace the movement of dishes and and write parts or you know whatever graffiti people wrote and then we chopped that up included included that in the chat book that we produced at the end of every every mean for every year up till and yet we pressed the chapel there and then the other half until is we have a monthly reading or writings sessions in the city and we in the summertime we'll meet at Denny Blaine Park and in the wintertime we'll meet usually in a loft at speckled drag and it's a three hours of just writers who can get together and work and we keep it really is a really affordable and accessible residency program. And with the idea of just really trying to build community writing can be a really lonely practice and it's and it's not doesn't have to be but it really is.

[00:25:24] And so it's great to have that build community and create like intersections between people and work and get people to share what they're doing. We have a couple of chat books in the back there like every year we we at the Reds at the end of the residency in the last day and we have a print workshop where we have whoever wants to can help run print and run copies of the covers and then a couple of months after the summer residency we ask people to submit stuff and it could be anything they want but it's great if it's something from that came out of a workshop or something at

the farm and then we use that and release it in the wintertime and there's a couple of copies back there. They're two bucks apiece and we also have some business cards. The residency this year is June 22nd to 25th up at the farm and we we'll start taking applications now. We have it. We we just got the farmers a little odd and they're planning the calendar. So we've just got our data now it's like two days ago. So and so we'll start we'll get on our Web site and start taking applications in next week's thank you.

[00:26:40] I also mentioned there was a residency that couldn't be here today.

[00:26:44] It's called Hippie shit in the woods. The two board folks were speaking to both have the flu. I understand there's someone here though who's a past resident. What's your name. Brenda winter Hansen. So when we're on the breaks maybe. Would you mind telling people about your experience at it and I know the patient the woods is for women and they have a deadline coming up a February 15th since they're not here to say that. I thought that was important information to get over to you. I can ask questions if you all are shy but I think it's better to hear what you all want to know. So does anyone have any questions. Everyone ready to ask the question. OK. I'll ask some questions. One thing that's come up in panels of these panels before is the matter of the application process. Different residences have different volumes of people applying and and a finite number of spots they can make available to residents. So we're not trying to whip up a crowd and reject you it's just usually there's more people wanting to come in residency than we have seats for. So I thought I would ask a little bit about how the application process works with. If we could kind of go down the line is it informal if that kind of statement and dates and if they're free to come or is there a deadline and a season and then a process and sort of what what should applicants know about how you're reviewing their work. Sure.

[00:28:08] With Art Smith we have a changing panel of up to four or five experienced published writers who take a look at the applications and give it a thumbs up or thumbs down depending on how much they think this particular residency would help your your art form. It is not anonymous. We do see your name and your material. We are on submit a bill so you can submit samples of your work whether it's writing or paintings. What else. There is a fee. I think it's 30 dollars. Don't quote me on that but we're very amenable to being flexible whatever timeframe works for you. If you can't make it let us know will you know Jill is very flexible about working with you. If you are accepted we're getting more and more applications every year. I will tell you that. So it's getting harder and harder to judge because there's so many good artists out there. I hope that answers your questions.

[00:29:08] Yeah. The question is emerging versus published writers. I wouldn't I wouldn't say we curtail it that way.

[00:29:13] We are illiterate and as far as that goes high our hotels opening runs from September 15th through October 15th. We are in twenty seventeen will be our second full year of residence. So we've received between one hundred and one hundred and fifty applicants for the last two seasons. I expect an uptick this next year. We've not done any advertising for our opening leading up to this last year's opening cycle and we will be doing some for in within this year gearing up for the 2018 cycle and then

we see it between eight and 10 residents per year. We have blowed all reserve as a nonprofit and we have a board of trustees. There is a committee that is specific to the residency program and that and that committee serves as our primary jury. Your applications are not anonymous. And we also invite other experts to help us specifically with writers our committee members. There's quite a few visual artists as part of our committee and we do have some writers but we know how much attention writers applications take in order to be really well just processed. So we do have a couple folks that help us in that area. As far as emerging or established writers I will say that to date we've definitely been looking more at established writers. We are looking at having at least one seat a year. That's specific for an emerging artist slash writer slash scholar to ensure that we are nurturing that aspect. So that is about it our application to date has been offered on cafe that has not been the best platform for us or for applicants. So we will likely be switching over to submit a bill or something of the like for next year's opening but you can always find that on our Web site. There will always be a link to the to the application on blow Dell's Web site and then we're on the artists of alliance communities as well.

[00:31:37] I think that you is a couple things about art Smith real quickly just to let you know the the residency takes place January 2nd through the 9th and beginning in 2017 artists selected for the residency you receive a 50 dollar honorarium to help offset travel costs and the application fee which opens in the spring of 2017 is thirty five dollars.

[00:31:58] Thanks well cheekbones Senator down in the middle of Oregon we're open to most anything like I mentioned any kind of artist in any way that can be done everything can be done online submitted by mail. Copy it or you can spend it right online. It's a 30 dollar application fee. The judges are not really us nor our artists.

[00:32:24] The intent is whether you're a professional or amateur beginning whatever it's for you to decide in others what do you want as an artist is what we're looking for. And then there's the serious intent. As an artist in a way we want.

[00:32:38] Because quite frankly a lot of resonances a lot of people like to float that's great but if a fine artist has to put on the application isn't is intent he has to focus on himself. Do I really want.

[00:32:53] And that's the hardest part really because once that's done it's basically just do it. So if that is cleared by the artist himself he has more of an intent here than in doubt. What's going to be done there. And that's the criteria and we look at it obviously but also we have the community and it this varies especially if there's a sculptor come in. We're not judging it by the quality of work per say that's that's something we didn't want to get involved in to zoom out too much. So what is important to you as an artist is what we would be looking at and all these are application or things you can see on the line that you could submit in or if you have questions you can contact us that way to my telephone or whatever. Give an example. We also do international artists we just had a Taiwanese artist come through installation artist. She wanted one year because she she works with nature. She works wanted to work. She wanted to work with the seasons but the government wouldn't give it to us without a couple of years working on it. So we had to only give her the government would only give her a three month period. So we're open to what every time frame you want to work with. But like I

said it has to be kind of clear. And what you expect may not be one actually expect what actually comes out of it. That's not the criteria I kind of think about what your goal will be. And if you succeed great if you don't. That's great. We didn't we didn't move along.

[00:34:18] Oh yeah. Any question I have. I have cards. You're going to get the website. Everything. Everything is on the website if you have any questions personal. I'm here.

[00:34:30] Ok. So we have an anonymous process. It's adjudication process that goes through three rounds. Pretty elaborate it's a group of alumni. So it's not decided by staff. Thank goodness. There's a lot of applications to process. We are. I should clarify there were an entirely free residency. So that's exciting and that again going back to community engagement and partnerships. We are grateful to the support of the Seattle community for that to be possible. And in all of our partners I mentioned I didn't mentioned town hall or Seattle you but that part of what we also do is have a speaking engagements and chances to engage with with alumni in the community. So I'm I want to leave you all with not being too demoralized when you hear that there's so many applications and only 40 get in. I encourage you to apply and I encourage you to sign up for our email send list because in addition to that poor writers in residence application process which is through slide room on the on the Web you can see that. And it runs spring to fall. So it's not time yet. But in addition to that we also have master classes I mentioned the weekend for. We have salons so there's all kinds of different opportunities for you to engage if in fact you're looking for something less than four weeks all at once. I'm trying to. There was quite a bit of layers there but I think we do do emerging as well as established writers. We're intentional about wanting to support both categories of women. And I would also say that our our women's play right applicant we have few allocations in that space and women screenwriters fewer applications so there's less competition in some of the more satellite programs than in the writers and residents. Sara Treme the writer for the affair on TV came through as one of our playwright women initially so there's a couple different ways for you to access and apply so feel encouraged to join up and go for it. So hopefully that answers all the layers. Thank you.

[00:36:50] Our Web site is mineral dash school dot org. And going there we'll take you lead you to our submit a bill page and we use submit a bill for applications and it's a twenty five dollar application fee this year we use an anonymous during process in our jurors I believe we have for this year they are authors professional writers literature professors people who people in the field including an alumni I think and they do so they don't see the applicants names. We will have. So we've been primarily focused on writers. We will. We had our first visual artist resident last summer though and we will have another visual artist this summer.

[00:37:36] That application process is also on our submit a full page you forget it.

[00:37:41] Oh. So like I said this is. This will be our third season of having residents and we've been growing. So we think we're gonna have about 200 applicants this year give or take.

[00:37:52] And since we have 20 positions it's about one in 10. So keeping track of the odds. Think about it if you have any more specific questions just raise your hand.

[00:38:02] Thanks. We take a 30 30 writers for the summer residency and. There is no reply by our website to writers and sorry till writers dot org.

[00:38:19] And it's a forty dollars per day and we take riders at any stage of their career. And there's no submission process other than just registering we take the first 30. We may may change that. We've been growing steadily every year. And so we're in the beginning it was just the idea of just let's try this. And then we had 17 people in work to up to 40 now. I mean including staff and volunteers. So but for now it's just a pretty pretty simple process. And then the writing events we have in the city or are free you can just show up and you can get on our mailing list and we'll let you know now that's and I think we don't have a lot of time left before we want to have a little break and let you guys have a snack.

[00:39:10] But any. I have another question I can ask but he for the audience one of his hand.

[00:39:14] Yes sir. So you're asking are there particular populations that

[00:39:31] Oj onerous. OK.

[00:39:33] So any genres that are thought or not thought jail generally moral athletes come in the ball.

[00:39:44] No no we embrace all different genres and I'll just say our masterclasses are focused on certain genres. So there will be a memoir writing class and so forth. So yeah thank you.

[00:39:58] Yeah.

[00:39:58] We don't exclude any genres so we've had poets memoir writers novel writers a young adult novel writers.

[00:40:06] We had a horror author yes pretty much all all writing genres.

[00:40:13] Yeah we tried to keep a balance of poetry and prose and its and its deputy Alexandros one word. Yeah

[00:40:28] February there's there's no disadvantage to the last minute.

[00:40:39] It's a disadvantage for us because we are anxiously waiting to sort of see how many people apply. But know that everything is judged after the 15th. So as long as it's in by the 15th you're all in the same pool and then we start the during process then and I think we notify people in April but late April.

[00:40:58] Yeah we at least two months before they would come and since ah it starts in June we want to especially make sure June people have plenty of runway to make plans to get off work or

what do they have to do. Is there any timeframe before people come when there is acceptances from these residences. Do you know what your notification period relative to when they would first come. So we we finish adjudication and late fall we get up the award letters like

[00:41:26] Late October early November and then it's our program is a year round so we're then we pieced together this elaborate jigsaw puzzle and they're coming all year round so it could be like three or it could be three to ten months kind of thing right. Yeah well that's the longest a writer stays with interstate cricket is like four to five weeks.

[00:41:46] No I mean how far before they come. Yeah. Yeah. Yes yes yes. So it could be anywhere from at least three months kind of thing.

[00:41:52] Yeah well we have some writers that got in in October and they're not coming to residency till the following year.

[00:41:57] Yeah. So. Right. Yeah. Yeah. If you have a question and then then I want us to have our breaks so we can take a breath. Yes please.

[00:42:07] Oh it's. PATIENT IN THE WOODS It's on your handout sheet and they're in the Shelton area and they've been around a while. They there was a I believe their founder passed away and there's so there's the board has had to reorganize they think how they run things but they've been around a while.

[00:42:24] They're open to women writers. They also serve entrepreneurs and people who are creative and need just like sort of alone time to do that kind of work. I think it's one to four weeks it's on their website but yeah. Is that right. Okay Brenda I can tell you more with that right Brenda. OK. I don't have a good.

[00:42:43] All right. I think we should take a break. Everyone's been working really hard.

[00:42:46] Thank you everybody especially people who have traveled or come from a board meeting or from Arlington.

[00:42:53] And please feel free to talk to us get a handout.

[00:42:57] And that's it. Hello.

[00:43:06] I think we'd like to get started with the second half of our program. So if the panelists could please come to the front. Hi.

[00:43:13] I just wanted to let everyone know who grabbed a blow Dow brochure that there's a complimentary blow doll admission past paper clipped to the brochure. It is a public garden so there is admission if you want to just come and walk around. But if you want to come visit for free please

do. Also there's a public transportation from the Seattle ferry terminal that runs Monday through Saturday. We're not we're not open on Monday so Tuesday through Saturday for our purposes that will take you directly from the ferry terminal to the reserve and back. So if you want to come over on the boat there's free admission and public transportation.

[00:43:53] Ok. Thank you for staying for the second half where we have five riders six with Chelsea six riders as our guests to talk about their residency application and attendance experiences. And I'm going to turn this over to Chelsea Werner Chatzky. Thank you.

[00:44:12] Hi everybody. Thanks for sticking around for the second half of the panel. So what we have here today with us a number of writers working in all different genre all different style and different levels of their careers and they have all attended a number of different residences many of them have attended residences that you heard from earlier today and they're going to share with us sort of their experiences a little bit about themselves. And we can talk about you know application processes and we'll open it up to you if you have questions for them as well.

[00:44:44] And I just wanted to get started by saying that you know you can tell from the panel earlier that there is a large diversity of residency options available and finding the one that is right the right fit for you can really impact your experience your productivity everything about it.

[00:45:03] We also have a diversity of writers and I'm just gonna have them go down the row. Let's go the same order we went previously. If you can just talk a little bit about what you write and the residences that you've attended.

[00:45:16] The name is Cora. Yeah kind of. I'm mostly a fiction writer. Most I guess most mostly novels are write novels and stories probably more naturally write novels. And the first colony of residency ever went to was MacDowell about 20 years ago and I went there a couple of times. The most recent one I've been to is mineral school and that's connection probably to the reason I'm here right now and I appreciate by the way thanks for inviting me and I'm honored to share the panel table with with these people. Thanks Jane Hodges for inviting me and I appreciate whoever let me into mineral school also. So I've been also to in between during that time during those 20 years I've been to a lot of different different residences Virginia's Center for the Creative Arts was when I went to more than once as well as McDowell and a lot of smaller ones and other Northwest when I've been to is called Dara which I think has changed its format maybe since I've since I was there but it was a lovely one it's a week long wanted Oregon at least a week long when I was there and one called Kimmel. Kimmel Harding Nelson center for the Arts. It's in a small town in Nebraska one called Hamburg center for the Creative Arts and Sciences in Georgia North Carolina border. So all kinds of all kinds of different ones. And I'm kind of addicted to applying for them probably.

[00:46:37] So that's my that's my background with residencies Hi I'm Karen Finney Frank and I started off writing poetry and spoken word and then moved to young adult fiction and my first residency was hedge Brooke. I have since been a resident at Wardell reserve. I recently taught at till and I was the writer in residence at Hugo house which is not a live in residency but is a one to two

year residency that I think was mentioned and I got to visit mineral school have not been a resident there but got to see the space. I've also stayed at the hell in our Whitely center which I don't think which is on the handout you have. It's sort of a self guided residency it's not free but it's another wonderful residency we have in the civic Northwest. And I have also stayed at Centrum in Port Townsend.

[00:47:28] Hi I'm Gabriella Frank and I'd like to thank Elizabeth and Jane with mineral school for having me here today. I am really excited to talk about residencies and my past experience. So far I've been on three very different residencies and I'm about to head off onto the fourth one this September at Vermont studio center. The first one I had was in a very tiny Italian hill town where I lived for two months writing a book a collection of essays. The second was in this very building in fact just downstairs on the third floor where I installed my living room inside the living room of this library. I was doing nano Ramo as a performance installation so I was actually writing the first draft of a novel while the entire city watched. So that was an interesting experience. And the third one was just this past summer at mineral school where I spent two weeks living and writing in a former classroom and I was very drawn to that. For starters just because of how unique the context was and I knew I needed two weeks of undivided attention where I could work on four different pieces that I had struggled to complete. Some in the case of more than two years. And as was mentioned earlier it's a tiny little town. There are very few distractions and I was able to complete all of my work. And in fact I within about two weeks of the end of my residency one piece was picked up by true story just came out and so far it's been my biggest publication to date and I totally credit the available time and focus that I had at mineral school in order to put that into my work.

[00:49:11] I'm happy to answer more questions about that but thank you.

[00:49:15] My name is Jay I started off as a poetry writer.

[00:49:34] Is that better. There it is. All right. So I've had residencies at the Vermont studio Senator I was there for about 10 weeks. I've had a two week residency at Centrum over in Port Townsend.

[00:49:46] And then I've participated it till for the last couple of years as well I started out as predominantly a poet but I am across genre writer at present for the last four years.

[00:50:00] But my first residency was with Carver Cornum.

[00:50:04] And at the time I received I became a cop a kind of fellow. I think I was young in my writing world and I didn't know what a big deal it was. If that makes sense. So I was also a mom and I was also working full time so I would write when the children went to bed at 10 o'clock I'd write till 2:00 a.m. and then get up at 6 a.m. and go to work. So the idea that I could go away for a week to write was like Are you kidding me. And I kind of was a generative residency or fellowship meaning that you do new work every day. And then the next day there is a workshop. So what I learned was every residency is different. And that was was you are definitely going to work. And it also had a bit more structure. So you were writing new work every day and then you your work that you wrote that night.

The next day it was workshopped and then you wrote more work and you were then going to another workshop facilitator. So that was like high energy generative workshop residency and that was my first since. After that I went to vote Volta and then I did hedge Brooke and Ragsdale and I would say they were all very different and I went to all of them depending on what I wanted to do as a writer. Some people pick residencies just because they want to go. I hope to be that person one day but for my life because I was doing so many other things. I really had to be thoughtful about where I was going. The feel of it what I thought I could offer if it was going to be structured or if I just have time to write on my own if I wanted to spend a lot of time with other writers or if I wanted to be more isolated. So I had to think about a lot of those things when choosing a residency.

[00:51:57] So those are my experiences as already mentioned. So I'm co-founder tell with Ani part of part of why I wanted to start tell was I'd been applying to so many residencies just applying applying applying getting rejected or just rejected left and right. Also you know it's hard like as a writer you're if you're submitting work you're getting a lot of rejection if you're applying for your opportunities you're getting a lot of rejection. So I was I was happy to start tell us something that is open registration but I think that it a lot of residency is something you're going to apply to as you can tell there's a lot of demand and there's limited seats there's limited space. You just can't fit that many people in a remote setting. There's only so many cabins in the woods.

[00:52:39] So I was hoping we could talk a little bit about maybe like tips on on really getting yourself out there and and especially you sort of address this sort of where you were in your life when you sort of cracked that first residency acceptance letter which you know a lot of people will say that once you get accepted to one it really opens up the door to others.

[00:53:01] So if anybody has thoughts on that feel free to just jump in I think for me the the process of actually going through the questions and then most residences will ask you some type of question that maybe goes beyond just what your project is but it's a little more about where you're at in your creative lives for me rather than to come up with something that I think is going to please the people who are the jury. I use it as a tool of self reflection and really ask myself what is important to me right now. How is this organization or the place that I'm going to connected with my work. Do I really need the time is something you know am I going to be able to accomplish in two weeks or a month or two months. Is that really going to give me what I need. And I try to be as honest with myself as I can and I would say that directly led to the first residency where I looked at my Italian heritage and I realized that it was something that I had been separated from for lots of reasons in our family and by applying to this residency it kind of cracked something open in me and I wanted to go back to my roots and really investigate how those were related to my writing life and I let that come out on the page very honestly without really any expectation. I had never been on a residency before and I thought you know this is ridiculous it's not going to happen but I'm going to submit it anyway.

[00:54:33] And I think that was my my lesson learned and that of you know I've applied a lot and have been rejected to some programs for sure but the ones that I've gotten there's always been that spark of truth where I just came out and said this is really what this place means to me and it's what I would bring it and say I absolutely agree it was the first thing that came to my mind as well and I had the

experience of being a reader for a hedge book one time so being on the other side of the table and one of the things that I realized is there is a question on the hedge book application or at least there was at the time. And the question is why hedge book why now and again and again I read applications where the person said well I just love being alone in nature and I need quiet to write.

[00:55:22] And you know we all do it so don't put that on any application you do. And but it made me realize that it's it is so obvious if the person hasn't done that work of really investigating well why you know what is it about quiet time in nature that improves my writing and what is it that I most need to look at right now and where could this help me get to. But if you honestly put all of those things on the page I think that's a tremendous step in the right direction and then the other thing that I would say is the same thing that you know for grants and residences the advice it's always given is that the writing sample is the most important thing. And the other mistake that I have seen people make is to choose to to not lead with what is their strongest writing and for for whatever reason you know maybe I think like oh well this other piece I think it's about nature and maybe this will be what they like or you know that sort of trying to please someone else rather than choosing what is really your your freshest strongest work. You don't often you don't have to submit what you're going to be working on when you go there. So if you have some really rough draft stuff that you want to work on maybe don't submit that you know really look for what is my polished best writing and use that knowledge about from that.

[00:56:39] So I've been someone that got a residency without a real clear idea of what I was going to do when I was there. And it was tremendously unproductive. It was valuable. I mean the time spent was valuable in terms for me as a writer. Like it was me it was really validating to get accepted and it was validating to be surrounded by other artists that took you seriously. But I didn't produce a lot of work while I was there. And and it's I haven't applied for residencies in a long time because I haven't really had a clear idea of what I would actually accomplish during that timeframe because I have poor work habits in my regular life and I'm going to bring those poor work habits to a two week extended vacuum of time. So so I would really encourage you to kind of focus on the process in your work that would most benefit from this chunk of unstructured time not necessarily the process in the work that you find most difficult because for me the most difficult process is when I tend to procrastinate the most and if I've given a lot of time to procrastinate I will I will procrastinate with it with excellence so maybe don't put that on your application. Please don't oh that sounds really good procrastinating with X

[00:58:06] So I received received a lot of rejection sort of after I've received the great residency the coveted one that people want and I didn't even know it was a giant deal I applied to a lot of places and got rejected and I got on some this thing we call a wait list which means no. Yes and you have to decide how great that feels or not being weightless it means you didn't make it with the ones we chose to move over but we really like you. And if some of these people say no then we will probably pull you from this pile that didn't quite make it over and at first that was really hard I thought wow I don't I don't want to do this I don't want to keep up because for me it takes a lot of effort to do the application it having the pieces ready to submit I'm never worried about those. For me the hardest part is coming up with an artist statement and a plan for what I want to do. And I used to get so

caught up in that at two o'clock I will rise from the table and I will type my inch my my intro and then at two thirty I will I will search this sorry for words I mean I was so caught up in the plan for what I wanted to do that it stopped me from applying because I got so caught up in the application process and I think once I decided you know what sometimes you're accepted and sometimes you're rejected and you just apply and see what happens.

[00:59:34] That sort of must I gave myself permission to be rejected and be ok with that and knowing that I might some some I'll get some some I won't. It's sort of made it less stressful and then I found myself applying more because I wasn't holding so much weight and I wasn't letting the rejection inform who I was as a person. They weren't rejecting me as a person. I took it personal. They are rejecting I'm sassy. They hate me. Not really. This is just not what they wanted at the time or the space was limited. So once I gave myself permission to be OK with that it opened me up to wanting to apply to a lot more things that maybe I would have never thought fit me for. For my writing style and I went to a residency I had a grand plan I was accepted I got there and after two days I realized I don't want to work on what I said I was going to work on.

[01:00:28] I know I told them what I was gonna work on and I have a grand plan for that but I'm just not being moved to work on that and everything shifted and I'm grateful for that residency because then I realized wow I'm a crash genre writer. I'm not just a poet. I wasn't giving my self permission to write fiction or or be prose or go back to those editorial essays and so I had an epiphany at a residency after breaking down because I thought you're not doing what you said you were gonna do. You were a complete failure. Did some procrastinating but it was really it was really helpful. And the ones that I. The places I have been rejected from. I always circle back and ask myself Is it really bad I was rejected from that place. Maybe maybe I didn't want to go there or I will apply again. I will become a repeat offender and I will keep applying. If it's something that I really want. So but the rejection can be can feel really.

[01:01:27] I don't know about you all but I used to take super personal.

[01:01:31] I was the first residency I attended I was waitlisted for and I had to call them numerous times.

[01:01:40] I'm I'm very persistent to see if there was room for the time that I had applied for and if I hadn't done that they probably wouldn't have been like Oh yeah. Turns out that somebody can't come. We've got a two week opening and was like what I had to call you. You know persistence is great you know. Don't let don't let it get you down. Keep putting yourself out there. That's that I was only able to go for one week at that time and I will say that I think it was one of the most productive weeks I've ever had. The next year I got a residency that lasted for a month and I had I switched what I was working on I had more time than I knew what to do with my sleep schedule went out the window.

[01:02:21] I bought a bike and went swimming a lot and so I guess I guess the question is you know what or what were some of the largest challenges like Jay was talking about or what were some of

the largest successful outcomes that you've experienced from a residency whether it be publication or community or anything like that so you can pick good or bad you can share with us.

[01:02:50] Let's see you don't have such a dramatic. That's a great group Gabrielle the story of the mineral school's success the publication within a couple of weeks after I don't have quite something like that I think it's more I think it's just I think actually it's probably the community the people that was able to meet it residencies especially ones that are not just for writers actually. So probably that's been the most valuable thing just to meet people from other art forms not that the writing only ones. I think when I think of the writing only ones I've been to they've tended to be the ones that are smaller I guess and I've tended to just focus on writing and then that's been nice to have good memories of the one I went to in Nebraska even though it was like Roach written that don't apply to that one I guess. But I still have nice memories of it just because of how much work I could do and it was a nice a nice room other than other than the you know the kitchen. I guess they just avoid the kitchen there. I guess I named it before but but yeah. Places like McDowell or the bigger West Virginia Center the bigger ones where you'll meet people from other art forms it seems like that seems like those are the ones that stay in my mind as experiences it's interesting whether you go for the experience or go for the work. I mean ideally you're where you're going for both and you hope for both. And it's not like one cancels out the other but it's interesting that the most memorable ones for me are the ones where I remember the other people I met who I wouldn't have otherwise composers or visual artists when I wanted to blow Del Rosario last year.

[01:04:18] In January I wrote in my journal that I was looking forward to unplugging and as soon as I got there there was a big windstorm and the power went out for 24 hours and I was alone in a giant house in the woods with no power.

[01:04:33] And the reason I bring that up is that that I have had lots of unexpected situations that residences and I think it's great. I think it's pretty thrilling. The sort of things you expect and do accomplish when you go and then the things you don't expect and how it can surprise you as an artist and as a person.

[01:04:54] And so some of the residences we're talking about like Balotelli reserve are very solitary. I was really alone in a house in the woods for two weeks till however is wonderfully social I mean you can also find plenty of time to be alone if you prefer that it's a big farm. But you know you're sort of sleeping in kind of bunk bed style with thoughts of other people in the room and dinners are these really lovely communal affairs kind of you know out out on these long farm tables with big fire roaring and so they're very very different in that way. And I think that knowing what on the one hand knowing what works for you and is going to be useful is great but also allowing yourself to be surprised.

[01:05:39] I would say I will echo the flexibility part and both in attending a residency but also in applying for one. And I'll give mineral school as an example of this as well. I had applied for a fellowship that was for women writers over 40. I thought this might be a good way for me to get in there it might narrow the field a bit. It's also a chance right. Like every time you're applying and there's only one thing that you can possibly get. However there was this little tick box that said would you like

to be considered for a paying residency if you do not receive this fellowship. And I take it yes and the only reason that I'm sitting here today is because I ticked that box because I did not get the fellowship but I was offered a residency and it wasn't the first time that something like that had happened I had served as a juror for a different program and there were applicants and there were offerings of either a two month or one month residencies and there were certain applicants we loved the idea of their proposals. However we didn't feel like they were worth two months and if the applicant had simply said Yes I'm flexible for either a one month or a two month those people would likely have gotten to go.

[01:06:50] So think of that when you're applying you know try to be as flexible as you can be because most programs are trying to balance even if it's you know technically a small number like 20 to 40 residents. That's actually quite a lot of juggling for those folks to do. And I would also echo it on the side of actually being a resident. I liken the experience to like adults sleep away camp right because you're away from your friends and family. You don't have any of the food that you have at home or you may not have any like cell service or basically all the creature comforts and it's you know you might just be by yourself or you might be with a cohort of other people who are likewise removed from their daily lives and you know the goal of those residences is to be around another cohort of artists. And so you want to try to be your best self. But at the same time realize everyone might be coming from a standpoint of being a little off center and being flexible in those moments. And so that you allow yourself to experience something where you can't control all of the circumstances but it ends up kind of pushing you into a different mind space and a different opportunity for creativity and for bonding with other people.

[01:07:59] So I would say flexibility is definitely one of my big lessons learned I would say for me the aspect of community has always been one of the larger payoffs for the residences. When I was at center I was kind of one of the only people over there at the time and it was I felt really isolated. I was only there for two weeks but it I find it easier to work when there are other people around that are working because then I know I can't procrastinate as much.

[01:08:30] I feel guilty because like I tell you like you know like Oh I'm stuck maybe I'll go for a walk and you walk by the main house and there's like a dozen writers out there just like hammering away and you're like maybe I should go back and work some more. So that's always been nice for me. And in Vermont it was helpful.

[01:08:47] That was a great because it's there's lots of visual artists there as well and I find it fascinating just to see how different artists have different processes. And that's really inspiring. Again you kind of walk into a painter studio and they've like thrashed through like twenty four different sketches in the last two hours and you're like wow I've been like zeroing in on two sentences maybe I should just loosen up a bit and try to get some work done. So anyway that's been my experience.

[01:09:15] I think I really love the flexibility and the community that I experienced at till and comic Barnum and and Boehner and I needed some structure for me.

[01:09:27] Again I'm not the same kind of writer every day and with those residences I needed some structure I needed a workshop I needed to be with other writers I needed the energy I needed to be able to walk outside and find another writer and say hey I have writer's block or where are you with your stuff. Because though I'm in the real world and I encounter writers I feel like we're sort of passing through. Hi how are you. What are you writing. What are you working on. Well I have this thing. OK I'll be there and there's no time to really sit and chat about the work.

[01:09:58] So when there are residences where there are lots of other peoples there maybe a workshop involved here. You're eating together you can take a walk go for a bike ride have a cup of coffee listen to somebodies work I am I am then rejuvenated and sort of excited to then go on my own and go right. However I appreciate it. The solitude of hedge book and Ragsdale because when I was in those spaces I was thinking I don't want to talk to anybody. I have a plan I want to execute the plan I will see people at dinner I really want to write these six pages between 12 and 3 and I want to do it by myself with no one there. And so what I really like about residencies is you get to pick and choose what you want for the time. One thing I will bring up that I didn't know that could be seen as good or bad is I didn't realize for me when I stepped away from the real world and sort of unplugged that so many emotions would come up for me because I didn't have time to really think as hard in the real world. So I want to warn anyone in a good way that when you go away and you go right you might say why am I thinking about the car ride I took when I was five and it was winter. What does that have to do with anything. And I think being away out of your real world opens up your creativity and it opens up your memory and your nostalgia and you may feel you may feel emotions that you just don't feel in the real world and I appreciated those I unlocked a lot of things and it opened up avenues for different genres and better writing for me similarly I when I applied to the Vermont studio center I applied for a fellowship of course because it's much easier to take a month off from work if you are going for free or getting a stipend.

[01:11:56] It's really difficult to make that time to give that time to yourself otherwise I didn't get the fellowship but I did get a work study and I found that washing the pots and pans three days a week was like the highlight of my week. I felt like the most normal thing I was doing while I was there because other than that I was doing whatever I wanted you know. But like the simple act of doing the dishes became like a point of solace for me. Although a lot of the spaces were quiet spaces but in the kitchen I could play music and sing along and didn't matter.

[01:12:30] I guess I'm going to ask one more question and then we'll open it up to you guys. I guess I'm just interested in maybe like the strangest things you know some some residences if they're bigger like the Vermont studio center you have 60 residents and all kinds of media there's sort of like a reputation let people kind of like hook up with each other there you know there's like strange things gonna happen if you put too many artists together so I guess any outstanding incidents.

[01:12:55] When I was in Vermont. So Vermont they bring in a lot of international artists and there was a group of artists from from Asia. It was right around Halloween and they took them into Burlington for the afternoon and they went to the mall and everyone was dressed up in costumes going trick treating at the mall and all these artists were like well what is going on here and there. And

the curator was like oh it's Halloween and they misunderstood them and he thought like that was like a weekly occurrence. And I did that. That's just what Americans did every Friday.

[01:13:28] I think I had at Ragsdale where I'm a night owl so my my cohorts would be it be I would see them at 12:00 and they're like you know I've been up since 4:00 a.m. I've had a walk. I've had a bike ride. I've ridden twenty thousand words and I'm like. Good morning I'm waking up because that's what my circadian rhythm is wake up late and stay up.

[01:13:51] I mean wake up late and stay up really late to write. So I was up really late maybe 2 a.m. at Ragsdale and I felt like someone else was just sitting there with me writing. You know that feeling you feel when someone walks into the room you know it feels somebody walks into the room and they sat down and it felt it felt like that. And I wasn't alarmed or anything. I thought was pretty cool but that was one definite experience that was memorable.

[01:14:20] I don't know if I should say this because now this is being broadcast by this room. I think something surprising and strange that happened to me when I was doing the fellowship in Italy. I was there to write about the town and what it was like to live there. And at one point this person I met convinced me that what we should do at midnight was to jump over a fence and go exploring. One of the estates of someone who some wealthy person who lived in Rome and we should be doing this again as we're hopping over. I was thinking well I should probably go back to my house because this is ridiculous. And if we get caught I'm going to get into huge trouble. But I'm here for the experience of what it's actually like to live here so. All right I guess I'm gonna go and I won't say anything else other than that. But it was a great experience and I'm glad that I did that.

[01:15:12] I did it self directed residency one time which I want to talk about to just briefly.

[01:15:18] And what that means is that one of the organizations I worked for some some one of their donors said oh we have a house on shore island that we are not using during this part of the year and do you think any of your writers would like to come stay there and you know part of the reason that I have done a lot of these residencies is that it is such like for me to write novels I just find it really difficult to be you know living in the city in my day to day life and sink in enough to edit a book length work. So I'm kind of always planning my teaching schedule around where can I fit in two weeks out of the year to go someplace. So as soon as I heard that I said me I'll do it. I went to shore island which if you don't know is a residential island there's one or at the time there was one sort of country store on the island. And that is the only business there.

[01:16:08] And it snowed. There was a snowstorm. How often does this happen in the Pacific Northwest right.

[01:16:13] Like as soon as I got there I got snowed in to the house and there was no cell phone reception and it sort of quickly turned into this sort of like Stephen King novel you know a situation where I just felt like it's so isolated and unable to contact anyone and I don't even live on this island and I'm suddenly snowed in here and so things change quickly.

[01:16:38] But I do want to say this about this idea of the sort of self directed residency is that you know some of the residences that have been mentioned like hedge Brook are extremely competitive. And I just think it's important to remember as Chelsea did that you can also make your own residency you know there's lots of houses that can be rented and find other writers and sort of set up the dates and you know give it a fun name and pretty soon people will be like how do I get into that residency and I just think there's a lot of value in this sort of doing it yourself.

[01:17:12] I mean that's how all of these residency started too. And so if you are having trouble getting in places I think that's a great idea.

[01:17:21] It's good that I go Alaska and I get ideas that people have said I think one thing that's one theme that came out actually reminded me of what is so appealing about them is especially if you're writing fiction maybe especially the bills that you're kind of in a make believe world and when you get a lot of artists together they kind of enjoy making a make believe world together. And actually yeah your your your memory of of doing something a little bit transgressive as an as an adult you know touches on that. So MacDowell at the bigger ones the bigger ones like MacDowell with more people there there's more of that kind of energy that I wish I could. I wish I could actually have a story of a ghost sighting and McDowell MacDowell was famous for the ghosts. And people will swear that they have seen them. I stayed in one of the when they're two different times in the second time they put me in a cottage where they were supposed to be a go some of those cottages are. I guess they've been there since the 18th century so there was supposedly a ghost in the one I was staying in a young maid I guess a young woman I guess she would hear people would say that she adhered to them any way I would listen to noises and think you know that's probably the ghost.

[01:18:26] But I guess I'm just not the No. I don't know. It's like the people who remember their dreams really well there's something like that. I need to maybe I need to do that then I can see the ghost and then actually in Virginia centers similar that skinny dipping was a big thing when we were there I don't know if it still is it's been some years since I've been to these some of these residences it's a lot of mostly women there. I mean it's not just for women but it just it just seemed to be. But both times I went there it was mostly women and men at the time they were mostly kind of older than me and it was kind of like a revelation like oh look at these all these sexy middle aged women and everyone everyone enjoyed skinny skinny dipping in the I guess their guest was a pool there with Earth. Yeah it was. It was it was a manmade thing but yeah.

[01:19:07] So just that make believe world is. That reminds me of of kind of that's the magic of residences and it's you know that's sort of the artistic spirit I guess we're all kind of children at heart and that's what kind of often divides artists from the other adults or it's your chance to do that again as an adult.

[01:19:24] So we've got about 15 minutes for any questions from the audience anybody any burning.

[01:19:30] Yes Jane we'll start with you.

[01:19:34] Okay fine. AUDIENCE MEMBERS OF HANDS UP

[01:19:52] I'm just going to repeat that for the podcast. Is the question is about finding where where to find your voice best either in within the procrastination within itself directed residency or within something that's got more structure is that essentially okay.

[01:20:09] No.

[01:20:10] Yeah I'll just start by just kind of talking at the end of I'll give an answer but I just I love the question actually that touches on. I always feel awkward when I first get to a residency and I wonder if that's the that's the reason why I mean I would think I used to always just think oh I'm Oh I feel awkward because I feel so much pressure to work there because here you are at the residency and so you really start writing right away but I sit right down and start to write especially if you if you're extremely busy or if you a lot of part time jobs or you don't have much time to write in your regular life. So I've always assumed that I felt awkward about it and just sits that pressure but I actually wonder if it's just it's a voice issue that's really interesting. Yeah. Because yeah you have to listen you have to hear your own voice. I guess in a different way now you're in a new setting so I guess you do have to go through a process at first to get used to what your voice will be there and I guess sometimes it's sometimes you might not find it at that place and I wonder I wonder. Yeah. Now I'm wondering whether it's the other people who are there who have something to do with it. I don't know though I guess the times when I've been by myself in the smaller ones I've sometimes found it in that case it's maybe just cause I'm already so deeply into the project. That's what I would say to that I don't have a specific answer but I really like the question.

[01:21:21] I have a specific answer just for me having done a lot of different kinds. The perfect balance for me is I'm alone all day and I have dinner with other people.

[01:21:30] That's the way hedge book does it I think it's the way mineral school does it. It just for me it sort of it makes me know I will have a little bit of human interaction during the day. Gives me a deadline to work against like I really want to finish this before 5 o'clock get down to dinner. It makes me feel not that just wide open expanse of time that can be a little terrifying. So I think if I ever do it another self directed residency with other friends I'm gonna like force them to sign a piece of paper that says they will not try and talk to me during the day we will not knock on each other's doors unless there's an emergency.

[01:22:03] But we'll have dinner together I'm totally with you on that one.

[01:22:08] In fact my if my mineral school cohort were here they would laugh and they would give me a hard time. I really appreciated being with them at meals and so we had actually breakfast lunch and dinner together. I mean you could choose your time you know you could have not necessarily overlapped at every single meal but we had a group we really clicked and so we liked seeing each other but after breakfast I would look and go Okay it's 8 10 I'll see you guys at lunch and I would get

up and go and conversations would sometimes keep happening or I'd see people chatting but I will say I just kind of took to it really quickly and I really valued those nice big blocks of like four or five hours together and then you take that mental break you get right back into it. So I felt like for me I really did need both like total quiet but then those moments where you can hang out with other people and just talk about sometimes anything other than writing.

[01:23:02] I write a lot of first person narrative short fiction so I tend to find the voice of each piece in the piece and and by working on the piece and I don't necessarily have the voice when I start working and that that can be one of the reasons while I'll avoid the project first for a period of time because I think that I'm for some reason not prepared to start on it that it's going to that's like some magical voice is gonna descend and I'll be like then I'm going to finish the piece. But but what I find that it works more often is that work generates the work and if you can just stick with a project and keep delving deeper and deeper into it eventually that voice will emerge on the page and then you can kind of rearrange what you have written before to try to fit it in with that voice that's starting to emerge.

[01:23:54] Oddly enough I agree with everyone in my voice sort of comes when it comes. But one of my tricks is that I always bring something to edit I hate editing in the real world not my favorite thing to do although I do it but I know if I take a project that I need to edit or revise with me to a residency somewhere and all that the voice is gonna say Oh no I really want to work on this theme and that's my in to the to the to the work I set out to do. So I just wait for the voice to come and I know it will when I'm editing and revising or working on a project that has nothing to do with what I set out to do. And with the residency I usually can't even settle in until maybe the second or third day because I'm either anxious or I'm just getting to know my surroundings or I'm trying to make my own rituals and schedules for my am a ritual person. So I need to figure out what my new ritual is based on the new space.

[01:24:52] So I don't even really get into my zone until maybe the second or third day and on days 1 2 and 3 I just spend time editing and waiting for the magic hour I guess to have other questions so the question is about the practicality of attending a residency.

[01:25:46] Taking the time off balancing your job or your family.

[01:25:51] Everything in the beginning. I had children so I would always apply for a residency. That was like almost a year out. If that makes sense. If the applications were open in February and they said the residency will be in June you have all these choices and we have one for June or July.

[01:26:08] I would choose the June or July because I knew I needed time to get that together. So it took a lot of planning and a lot for me. But it was an investment. I knew writing wasn't a hobby so I have to say you know I make I make it work for other things then I need to make it work for the writing. And with the with more recently my children are 18 and 22. So they don't need as much care. I still schedule far out. I'm one of those people someone would call and say we can get you in next week. I wouldn't be able to do it. So one of my tricks is to be to schedule the latest that is available so that I do have time to plan.

[01:26:55] I was fortunate when I was when I got my first couple of residencies. I had kind of a seasonal and freelance career so it was really easy for me to not take work in a specific window so I could do the residency and then I'd be able to pick up some other after the residency. Now it's my life is more complicated and like a normal person's and I find that when I do think about doing a residency I think about it in much shorter periods of time than I did when I was younger and I also think that's why I'm a little more hesitant to wait to apply till I know exactly what I'm going to be doing there so that I can really really make use of that time because it is difficult to to take it out from from my everyday life.

[01:27:46] I'm similar to Anastasia and the fact that I will have a year ahead. Look out calendar and kind of know you know when the application windows are you know when you ideally want to go there. I don't have kids but I have a team of people I manage so I also have to think about when my absence is going to most impact everyone else's work.

[01:28:06] So there there are times where sometimes I don't get to do everything I wanted to do. But like for instance if I finally did get into hedge book I would take a leave of absence for him in order to get in there. But it also really helps to have a partner who totally supports my work at home. And if you're gone for a couple of weeks and hopefully you have that you know the people who are supporting you at home. And as for the time off. That's how I use my vacations most often if I get well now. Starting now this year I get three weeks a year but basically I get two weeks of paid vacation and any other time.

[01:28:41] Beyond that I would take off unpaid if my employer will allow me to.

[01:28:48] I am a teacher I teach writing so my students at Hugo house are about to have a really weird two week break in there in our school year where I'm going to go out to the Whitely center. So that's part of how I do it is just planning that ahead. I think I was trying to think if I'm lying about this I think since I started really thinking of myself as a writer and being serious about it which for me was around age 27 I don't think I've had an actual vacation like I take time to visit family.

[01:29:18] But in terms of like I guess some people like go lay on the beach for a week or something like I just. It's all about just trying to go find a place to write for me. So that's kind of what my vacation is I guess. And the only other thing is you know we're all different and we have to we have different things we have to answer to. So I understand a lot of people can't do this but I would say as much as possible fight as hard as you can to preserve that time so that you don't have to like if you go thinking well I'll just do a little emailing for half an hour every morning and that won't interrupt me. The problem is you get there and you need to just sort of sink into the work and forget the world and if you can try to make sure you don't have to do anything else if at all possible I don't have a whole lot to add I guess.

[01:30:07] I guess teaching always struck me as the ideal job to have. When you're a writer just because of the time off during the year. So I had a full time teaching job recently fulltime temporary so

that was that was nice. So it's over now and I'm back to the part time part time cobbling together now living living back in Seattle. So yeah the only I guess the only thing I'd add and I guess that Karen just mentioned something like this. Like try not to work. You have the kind of job where I could I and maybe unfortunately or maybe fortunately have the kind of jobs where I can do it a little bit at the residency so I actually had to a little bit at mineral school. I want my online jobs is online tutoring for Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth so that's just it's students essays. So at least it's not like it's a job where you gonna be in touch with people and emailing people and you know you're it's self kind of directed because the students are just turning in pieces and then you just respond to their pieces pretty much so. But yeah ideally ideally if it's a week or two then you would you would be able to just carve everything out and put everything aside and be able to do it for a week or two. That's why these really short ones are nice. These these these three day ones or five day ones or one week ones probably anything more than two weeks I honestly probably could not afford to not work at at this particular point. So I'd have to have a nice cushy college teaching job again to be able to go for a month somewhere. I've got cats too actually so that that I mean they're not children but it is someone has to come in every day it gets expensive it's more expensive and children maybe even if you if you if you have a partner and children the partner can take care of them. So I've got to think about the cats and and probably not the only one who has animals to think about.

[01:31:52] You know that just reminded me it might be worth noting that for that very reason it can be a little harder to get into residences in the summer because that is when teachers have off and some other folks have off.

[01:32:02] So if you can apply another time you might have better luck as it's going to add one more thing about that is tell your community you're a writer. I don't know how to put this sometimes our friends and I I'll call you writing that's so nice. No no no no. When you decide you want to go on to residencies and fellowships and this is not a hobby and you're into it let your friends and close people close to you know say hey this writing is taking a turn and I really am embracing this and it's serious to me. I'm thinking about applying to a couple of residencies where I might need some help while I'm gone. And you would be amazed how many people would really. Well what. Well what do you need. I didn't even know there was such a thing. Well what is the residency and what does it. So sometimes people just don't realize the caliber or where you are in your writing life and if you put that out there sometimes people are ready and willing to help in any way. I'll watch your animals out of your plants. I'll do this for you or ask you what do you need. What do you need to do to help make this happen. Because this is really exciting and I didn't even know what it was

[01:33:52] Yeah I. I got accepted to a residency that was in May I found out in November and I called up my mother and said You know I'm not gonna be able to afford coming home for Christmas this year. And she was understanding of that. I don't know that everybody has that luck but you know I think that letting people know that if you're serious about it this is something you're willing to make sacrifices for. It makes a big difference. And we have time for one last question.

[01:34:20] Anybody. I have one thing I'm burning to add. Yeah. Good good.

[01:34:29] Final thought is like some of these resonances are new and I think you should be a big star by them in your mind because that's another way I've had luck getting into residencies is really paying attention to the brand new ones. I think I was actually the first resident Apolo Del reserve like the first person who had to apply and get sort of Jared in because as soon as I heard they were gonna have a new residency I thought brand new right there won't be as many applicants.

[01:34:55] So that's just another helpful.

[01:34:59] I just wanted to thank you guys all for coming out today. I this morning was sort of struggling thinking about you know everything that's happening in our country everything that's happening around the world. Struggling a lot with where my writing fits into that. The importance of writing it's really encouraging to see all of you here. You know there's a lot going on today that started last night at the airport. So knowing that there are people who are still invested in the arts and are you know I think that I think that words are our most important ways of communicating. I was on the phone the friend today and she said that in her darkest times books have been the thing that have stopped her from hurting herself. So I just think that it's really important to commit to that. Thank you for coming.

[01:35:59] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.