

**Volume 3  
Case Studies**

**CHAPTER 2**

**Opening Our  
Minds: Including  
Incoming Artists in  
the Communities  
and Cultural  
Sector of the USA**



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On the Move regularly commissions researchers to investigate different themes closely related to the network's activities and the work carried out by its members. Reflecting on transversal concerns and key areas of artistic and cultural mobility, the network tries to establish a clearer picture of the current movements and trends while formulating policy recommendations.

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# CHAPTER 2

## Opening Our Minds: Including Incoming Artists in the Communities and Cultural Sector of the USA

by Mary Ann DeVlieg

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This text highlights some key issues critical to supporting displaced and relocated artists in the USA. While there are many differences in infrastructures, policy frameworks and professional environments between the USA and Europe, support for all artists, anywhere remain similar: education and training; professional integration into the arts sector, networks and networking; access to the resources necessary for creation, production and diffusion through supportive organisations; and access to existing and potential publics.

This article focuses on how artists are supported to integrate into the USA's professional arts environment in terms of training, language support, networks and artistic/professional development. It explores the objectives of hosting organisations and how obstacles are overcome. In the currently unstable USA, especially with regards to immigration policy, how is funding for residency programmes and artists negotiated? What is considered good practice, and what more could be done if resources were available?

## Methodology

This is a synthesis of only the most frequently cited practices and issues. Interviews were undertaken with 12 key organisations across the continental USA. Five have what is termed here as 'dedicated' programmes to host or relocate at-risk and persecuted artists, including two — [Artistic Freedom Initiative](#) (AFI) and [Tamizdat](#) — that additionally offer pro bono legal services. The others are [City of Asylum, Pittsburgh](#), the [Artist Protection Fund](#) (APF) and the [Artists at Risk Connection](#) (ARC) that runs several programmes supporting at-risk artists internationally. One interviewee, [CEC ArtsLink](#), is dedicated to artists' international exchange with the USA; four host international artists in what is here termed 'general' artists' residency

programmes ([Kala Art Institute](#) in Berkeley California, [Grand Central Art Center](#) in Santa Ana California, [Unlisted Projects](#) in Austin, Texas and [Hyde Park Art Center](#)) in Chicago, Illinois. A funder (the Trust for Mutual Understanding), and a network ([ONWARDS](#), Opportunity Network for At-Risk Writers, Artists, Rights Defenders and Scholars) were also interviewed. Given the time and space restrictions, the limited list of interviewees was subjective, based on recommendations by On the Move members, and is indicative rather than comprehensive. Responses, nevertheless, provide critical insights. The list of interviewees and short organisational profiles are recorded in the Annexes.

# Geographical scope

In the current context of uncertainty regarding visas for incomers into the USA, cooperation and collaboration between the USA and Europe might become crucial<sup>1</sup>. USA-based organisations such as the Artistic Freedom Initiative and the Artists at Risk Connection have already opened European branches. Artists may prefer coming to Europe for residencies and exchanges to avoid potential problems with the USA immigration authorities. Artists' residencies determined as 'exchanges' often use visa type J-1 for temporary visits, but even these visas are currently on hold<sup>2</sup>. The European arts sector still favours a public-subsidy model while in the USA, artists and arts

organisations rely more on commercial earnings and philanthropic donors. As donors become less interested in supporting international arts, this support is at risk<sup>3</sup>. However, in Europe there is also increasing pushback against immigration and continuing stress on culture budgets. Thus, there are lessons to be shared across the Atlantic regarding how best the arts sector can support displaced artists to develop their work and expand their communities once they have left their countries temporarily or permanently. And, as many repeated in interviews, 'It is very urgent: we need to collaborate and exchange now more than ever; we need alternative models and blueprints'.

# Initial observations

Clearly, there are experienced and capable actors and hosting initiatives highly motivated to support the immediate as well as ongoing development of artists who have been displaced from home countries and are in the USA. This relatively new sector is maturing and would benefit from more peer-exchanges, together with artists, and exploration of the deeper values and differences that underlie 'hospitality'. Although this study is primarily focused on Europe, it must be strongly repeated that all of this work takes place in an interdependent world and our discussions are for naught if they do not reflect and include actors from all parts of the globe. Thus, a first, key, observation is the need to collaborate on a further study that includes the global majority.

A second observation is to address the labelling of 'at-risk and displaced' artists: when does an

artist cease to be 'displaced'? Artists themselves must be central to this discussion. Although the terminology provides a useful argumentation for specialised public and private support, does it become a stigma?

A third remark concerns the universal citing of 'collaboration and synergies' by interviewees. This raises the questions: might more 'general' residencies be prepared to host (and support and network with) displaced artists? Might these 'general' residencies work more closely with local refugee centres (as described by at least one general residency, Unlisted Projects)?

Finally, it might be time to create or galvanise a funders affinity group, or an international advocacy initiative around this theme<sup>4</sup>. Most interviewees are especially concerned about the increasing

1 On the Move's [Cultural Mobility Funding Guide for the United States of America](#) was published in 2015. It was partially updated on the occasion of the publication of the [Cultural Mobility Funding Guide for the Caribbean](#) in 2024. Since then, and most recently (June 2025), the US State Department that issues visas and manages several fellowship and exchange programmes, has issued a pause in issuing visas while it considers initiating more advanced vetting procedures for candidates, including reviewing social media histories. See Tamizdat's webpage '[FAQs for travelling to the US now](#)', 26 March 2025.

2 See [here](#) descriptions of the student and exchange visas available in the USA.

3 Dwyer, K., '[Who Pays for the Arts?](#)' in *Esquire* (30 September 2024). Also, Lanciers, B., '[Philanthropy Has the Power to Combat Isolationism](#)', in *Alliance Magazine* (20 September 2023). And Shaw, H. (2025), '[The Show Can't Go On](#)', *The New Yorker* (24 April 2025).

4 See, for example, a list of affinity groups at The Grantmanship Center, '[Grantmaker Affinity Groups](#)'.

isolationism of countries, the withdrawal of funding support for international exchange, the authoritarian drift and the known response of authoritarians to suppress artistic freedom, and while funders are also under pressure, a number of them do support at-risk artists, artistic freedom, and artists seen as human and cultural rights defenders.

Deeper discussions of values and practices between the USA and Europe could bear fruit. Europe is viewed as still having certain values (like corporate responsibility) that the USA does not have.

## Objectives and motivations

**Mutual enrichment.** Artists' residencies exist, after all, primarily to help artists develop artistically. Cultivating ideas, impacting social change by fostering international connections, protecting as well as welcoming diverse voices, approaches, perspectives and artistic techniques into local communities of artists and publics—all this is critical to arts organisations' missions. It was dramatically highlighted during the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdowns when artists from elsewhere were not able to be in residence; opening to others helps to 'challenge fixed echo chambers and open thinking to contemporary issues... [without which] we become smaller.' (Kala Art Institute).

**Protecting voices and sustainability.** Two organisations offering pro bono legal services, Artistic Freedom Initiative and Tamizdat, were founded by experienced immigration lawyers. Both soon developed further programmes to host artists and support their integration into the wider arts scene, to help break resettled artists' isolation while sharing information and knowledge of how to sustain their lives as artists. Sustainability was frequently mentioned, especially by the City of Asylum, Pittsburgh, whose sanctuary programme's goal is the long-term career of the hosted writers, beginning with the immediate goal of selecting a work that can be translated and brought to public attention.

**Artistic empowerment and community integration.** Artists' agency is built by connecting to local, national and international

networks of artists, curators, academics, arts administrators, educators, practitioners, and researchers considered as peers. Hyde Park Art Center Residency envisions this as the beginning of a relationship that will expand over years. Organisations serving local, diverse populations ensure that programmes linking artists and publics are free, accessible and fill the gaps in other service provision that may be too costly or unsuited to specific groups' (such as full-time caregivers) constraints. Two interviewees mentioned the success of 'twenty-four-hour residencies' for artists unable to take time off.

**Advocacy** is a natural evolution, whether providing media stories or encouraging funders to support artists forced to migrate. Tamizdat uses data to influence USA arts and immigration policies; others like Artists at Risk Connection liaise with migrant or human rights agencies to ensure artists' inclusion. Tamizdat also provides educational sessions at international professional events such as [SXSW](#) music/media/film festival in Texas, the [Edinburgh Fringe](#) or [WOMEX](#); it provides educational webinars, Q&As, and sessions for arts organisations. Artists at Risk Connection raises awareness of artistic freedom issues around the world through research, publications, podcasts, events, policy papers, and social media campaigns. Artistic Freedom Initiative's [publications](#) on artistic freedom in Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and reports on Afghan and Iranian artists are examples of their global advocacy.

**Collaboration.** Cross-sector organisations collaborating to address resettlement and professional development led to the creation of ONWARDS<sup>5</sup>, a collaborative initiative of USA civil society groups to help with fellowships, sponsorships, residencies, or other short-term arrangements after temporary placements end. While ONWARDS is limited by a lack of core funding, its members contribute to resources on the website and participate in a joint call every six weeks.

**Peer-exchange and new models.** More peer training and experience sharing for hosts would be useful. ‘Practical models, blueprints or methodologies are more important now than ever’ (CEC ArtsLink). Due to the hostile environment for incomers, alternative ideas could be discussed, such as more online residencies, bringing the artists not to the USA but to Canada or neighbouring countries, or creating exchanges for USA based artists to go abroad.

## Support and services offered to artists

**Legal aid.** The two legal assistance organisations, Tamizdat and Artistic Freedom Initiative, alongside resettlement and advocacy, offer pro bono attorneys to assist with talent-based, performance or cultural exchange visas, asylum petitions, refugee status and work authorisations. Groups and established artists can usually pay for work and performance visas. Cases requesting pro bono assistance are first assessed regarding potential success. Current USA visa instability incurs more work and time from the lawyers and fewer resolutions for the cases.

However, with increased support, legal teams could be increased, whether by external pro bono or in-house lawyers, as well as covering the many legal costs artists need to pay, such as filing fees, translation and live interpretation, and travel and living costs if they are waiting in a third country. A more fully networked system of specialised legal assistance across the USA would be useful.

**Residencies and fellowships.** City of Asylum, Pittsburgh, hosts six to seven writers at any given time and provides threatened writers and

artists with a home, a stipend, legal counsel, medical benefits, and access to professional development opportunities. The immediate focus is on developing a work that can be the link to the public and professionals and serve to establish a new identity and community for the writer. As mentioned by City of Asylum, Pittsburgh, ‘Language is the identity of a writer; the loss is very deep—identity, audience, homeland—who are you then?’ City of Asylum, Pittsburgh, organises festivals, publications and creative placemaking to place the arts and artists at the centre of community.

ARC provides Resilience Fellowships, offering six months of financial and professional support to artists in exile. Through tailored training, mentorship, and peer exchange, the programme helps artists rebuild their careers and continue their creative work in safety.

Organisations may collaborate to provide necessary elements such as housing, studios, mentors, resettlement and financial assistance, professional development and networking.

5 ONWARDS arose from the US Protection Group for Cultural Rights and Human Rights Defenders. Members include the [Artistic Freedom Initiative](#), [Artists at Risk Connection](#), [ArtLords](#), [Black Mountain Institute](#), [Cartoonists Rights](#), [Cheuse Center](#), [City of Asylum Detroit](#), [City of Asylum Pittsburgh](#), [Cornell University](#), [IIE-Artist Protection Fund](#), [IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund](#), [Freedom House](#), [Harvard Scholars at Risk](#), [Ithaca City of Asylum](#), [Logan Nonfiction Center](#), [Open Society University Network](#), [Penn Cultural Heritage Center](#), [Scholars at Risk](#), [University of Iowa International Writing Program](#), and the [Urgent Action Fund](#).



**SHIM: NYC** (Safe Haven Incubator for Musicians) is a coalition that includes Tamizdat, the Artistic Freedom Initiative, and [Joe's Pub at The Public Theater](#) and it is part of the larger [The New York City Artist Safe Haven Residency Program](#) (NYCASHRP). IIE Artist Protection Fund offers fellowships at partner/host institutions that include academic institutions, arts organisations, or consortia of arts organisations able to collectively provide all the elements necessary for a successful residency.

**Networking** can involve socially engaged artists who work with the 'local community', whether that is an artists' community around the centre (Kala Art Institute), or people with diverse, migrant or other backgrounds living in proximity (Grand Central Art Center, Hyde Park Art Center, Unlisted Projects). The general residencies' staff work closely with resident artists, tailoring their temporary visits to best engage and expand their research projects. This might include personal meetings with curators and galleries, interviews with a community group, attending classes of other local artists, or shared dinners with artists.

**Training and other support.** Language training, medical, psychosocial care, and digital safety are often indirectly available via referral. Universities may provide social and medical services to resident artists. Pittsburgh however, prioritises translation, interpretation and language training as personally and professionally essential. Artists at Risk Connection offers safety training and capacity-building workshops for artists globally, based on Artists at Risk Connection's [A Safety Guide For Artists](#), available in 5 languages and prepared in collaboration with their regional representatives in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

ONWARDS offers free online [workshops and meetups](#), [resource lists](#), [videos](#) and [opportunities to connect](#) with other people in similar situations. Some webinars provide an introduction to the USA's systems and processes.

**Financial assistance and accommodation.** Artists at Risk Connection, and some human rights

NGOs, provide immediate emergency grants for artists facing imminent threats, covering essential needs like legal aid, relocation, and housing. Most residencies offer a stipend, accommodation and material costs. Some residencies help artists develop financial sustainability by offering opportunities to sell work and facilitating commissions (Kala Art Institute). Some offer low-cost rent to students at affiliated universities while others focus on providing an accessible residential experience for local artists who would like to develop their artistic skills but can't afford university fees (Hyde Park Art Center). Unlisted Projects offers free studio space and paid stipends to programme participants (regardless of institutional affiliation) with a focus on artists who face financial, time or other barriers to access. Some have found legal workarounds to bridge the financial gap when a migrant artist is in between visa types. Most help artists with grant writing and making contacts that may lead to other work. Several hosts expressed the desire to be able to pay artists, and with more funding they could do that. In five to ten years Hyde Park Art Center would like to be 'wage certified' and able to offer wages to artists.

**Promotion** is a key aspect of artists' residencies and general artists' residencies have a lot of experience at this. These residencies might be large arts centres with public programmes, galleries, performance spaces and events, or residencies with apartments and studios spaces. These spaces can host temporary exchanges, or have specified residencies for specific artists, such as parents, senior artists or new graduates. CEC ArtsLink, for example, supports follow-up activities with USA based artists, arts organisations and communities. Opportunities offered by general as well as dedicated residencies include public exhibitions, publications, open studios, concerts and art auctions, and community and youth programmes.

**Approach.** A number of interviewees specified that they had gone beyond a product/producing output model and were instead offering a more open-ended place and time for experimentation



and individual artistic research. The SHIM: NYC residency is not a producing opportunity but rather an ‘incubator’ to facilitate connections between the resident artists and individuals, groups and organisations key to the artists’ professional development. CEC ArtsLink’s residencies include a long online period preceding the actual physical residency, to build trust and ensure a joint understanding of the experience.

**The ethics of care within hospitality.** Residencies would like to offer more wraparound services, such as childcare, more opportunities for low-income artists, and ‘ways to demonstrate that we care for one another’ (Unlisted Projects). Another residency would like to offer food or a dedicated chef as a nurturing element. One organisation would appreciate funding for mentors for the artists.

## Selection processes and considerations

**Matchmaking.** All residencies spoke of the importance of matchmaking, ensuring the artists’ specificities were matched to the hosts’ and that ‘what this residency can offer and what the artists needs or seeks’ complement each other (Hyde Park Art Centre).

**Selection processes** differ. General residencies consider the mission, location and values of the host, interest in local communities, commitment to community building and the types of artists’ studios available. Excellence may not be a first priority and an aim may be for a balanced cohort of artists. Rather than an open call, some residencies are curated, or specific artists are invited. Juries can include alumni of the residency programme, curators and staff. CEC ArtsLink, as an example, gives attention to artists and arts leaders displaced from their homes or forced into exile, regardless of where they are now living.

**Danger vs quality.** Dedicated at-risk residencies usually balance the immediate persecution or danger the artist is in with the quality and type of artwork they produce. Some residencies focus on specific countries. Artistic Freedom Initiative prioritises an in-house risk and legal assessment

of the artist’s case and their potential to settle and work in the USA. APF looks for artists committed to progressive social change and fundamental human rights, prioritising artists still living in, or recently having fled from, their home country.

**Funding.** Unlike the European public subsidy model, the USA combines a mix of large foundations such as Mellon and Ford (although these are both changing or have changed their priorities now), small private foundations, individual donors, and some local or state grants<sup>6</sup>. In some cases a building is given by the city for a symbolic fee, allowing the arts organisation to earn money through space and apartment rentals. Some combine city and state grants (City of Berkeley, California Arts Council, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Texas Commission on the Arts) with additional university partnerships. A partnership may provide matching in-kind resources, such as housing, studio space, materials/supplies, mentoring, access to programming or classes, or immediate direct costs of the artists such as travel, stipends and other costs. Rather than institutionally sponsored, City of Asylum, Pittsburgh, is a grassroots organisation supported by individuals and private foundations, although some support is given by the Ford

6 Artistic Freedom Initiative cites the following: the SDK Foundation for Human Dignity, the [New York State Council on the Arts](#) with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts (previously), the [Mellon Foundation](#), the [American Muslim Fund](#), the Ford Foundation, the [David Rockefeller Fund](#), the [Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts](#), the [MOSAIC Network and Fund](#), and individual and family foundations and donors.

Foundation and Mid Atlantic Arts. The ONWARDS network is coordinated part-time by [Ithaca City of Asylum](#), which in turn is a project of the nonprofit [Center for Transformative Action](#), and is supported by Cornell University's [Scholars Under Threat Initiative](#), part of [Global Cornell](#).

There may be some European funding available to organisations such as CEC ArtsLink, that operate on an international scale<sup>7</sup>. It must be said that several of these grants are of limited duration and possibly under threat due to the current government's policies.

## Challenges

### **Visas and a hostile environment for migrants.**

The USA government's hostile environment for migrants creates a challenging context for lawyers, due to travel bans and visa issuance obstacles. Previously approved visa applications and appointments have been cancelled, creating a climate of fear and intimidation for artists. The State Department has paused issuing USA visas globally while implementing enhanced vetting systems on social media accounts, impacting USA arts organisations' planning and flexibility. Universities have faced cuts and threats, hindering their ability to speak out.

Depending on the type of visa issued, students completing studies may have a year to look for employment opportunities and build a case with immigration authorities that they are talented enough to live in the USA. Some of the residencies support them by advising on letters and recommendations. But some visas allow artists to only work in their artistic field, which is a hardship given that many artists survive with part-time jobs in other fields.

## Funding instability

Arts funding is increasingly restricted and there are fewer opportunities, with private philanthropists not stepping up to fill the gaps. There is a rush towards philanthropy but foundations and philanthropists are also being called upon to support the diminishing funds to universities or political parties. Some key funders had stopped funding the arts post-Covid-19 Pandemic. Funders' trustees are also seen to be keeping a low profile driven by the fear of reprisals during the current government's hostile climate.

Several of the residencies have been shaken by changes and cuts at the National Endowment for

the Arts. President Biden-era confirmed grants have been cancelled and several interviewees will not re-apply, to avoid compromising their communities due to the USA government's prohibition of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies and LGBTQIA+ policies.

**Competitive environment.** Some interviewees felt that funders 'funding fewer better' has resulted in a more competitive environment as there is so much to lose or gain. The USA's model of funding tends to exacerbate competition also between funders in terms of the donor's branding.

<sup>7</sup> CEC ArtsLink is a partnership of CEC International Partners, the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) (previously), the [Soros Centers for the Contemporary Arts](#), and the [Trust for Mutual Understanding](#). Apart from some American family foundations and individual donors, past funders have included the [European Cultural Foundation](#), [EUNIC – European Union National Institutes for Culture](#), [Fonds Podiumkunsten](#), [Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council](#) and some national arts institutes in the Nordic region.

**Political inattention.** The Trust for Mutual Understanding (TMU), whose mission focuses precisely on international exchange in the arts and environment sectors, reports that there remains relatively little funding for such direct exchanges, particularly among people in [their geographic focus](#) of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, the Baltic States, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Mongolia. What little support there is—mainly governmental—is often restricted by political considerations.

### **Housing and spaces: unaffordable cities.**

Housing is problematic everywhere, especially in expensive cities with little affordable housing. Accommodation is crucial for residents' peace of mind and stability, especially if they're at-risk or their future is unknown. Universities and some residencies have accommodation available, while others resort to renting apartments, an additional cost. With additional funding, living, working and presentation spaces could be made available to hosts and residencies unable to offer them. Some residencies would also like to have more funds for the artists' materials.

## Success factors

Collaboration and cohorts are evidenced in the coming together of artists as well as the organisations supporting them. Addressing relocated artists' isolation, in Spring 2025, Artistic Freedom Initiative initiated the [Artists' Community Network](#), an artist-led initiative to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, mentoring, professional development, partnership building, and artistic and networking events for the artists within Artistic Freedom Initiative's NYC-based community. The selected artists for this one-year placement receive legal aid, a stipend, and a mentor and they are connected to a professional organisation in their artistic field. All interviewees mentioned the importance of networking, peer-to-peer, or artists-led actions as fundamental in integrating an artist in the community and society of their new host country. However the initiatives that exist rely somewhat on a funder supporting the organisation that is hosting the action.

Building solidarity between artists who left a conflict zone and those who stayed is important, as there can be resentment toward those who, tending to be already more internationally networked and successful, have left. However, there is a growing sense of collaboration and mutual support which has been observed, for example, by CEC ArtsLink recently in Ukraine.

**Team capacity.** A liaison person for the artists is a key role and deserves its own support system. A liaison is a neutral position between artist and host who can 'chat to them about day-to-day issues, the very human stuff' (Tamizdat, Artistic Freedom Initiative). This is a person who notices contexts, for example if the artist's home country is in crisis or if it is flu season and the artist or their family is ill. Attempting to provide emotional, logistical and professional support to vulnerable artists can lead to burn-out in both staff and artists. Although some residencies support staff through frequent internal staff meetings, for any residencies hosting at-risk and potentially traumatised artists professional support and staff training would be necessary. In this sense, artist-to-artist peers who have lived similar experiences can provide critical support.

**Strengths of the models.** APF's variety of potential hosts are a strength, mixing universities, arts organisations, and consortia of both or either, both small and large. Working with small arts organisations can mean more work to ensure all the required elements of the residency are covered but it avoids the bureaucracy and isolation that academia may present.

Pittsburgh's City of Asylum model prioritises developing the artists' ability to be self-sustaining,

creating products that can be visible, discussed, presented, published, and performed, and which can attract public and community attention and respect (via book launches) as well as collaborations between the writers themselves. The Pittsburgh model ensures writers are part of community life. This not only fosters a new community and identity for the writers, but builds a sense of belonging for the community, the writers are recognised as neighbours. ‘Making your programme important to your community is the best guarantee of long-term and increasing support and becoming public is important in order to develop multiple sources of funding’ (City of Asylum, Pittsburgh).

**Artist-led initiatives.** Artist-led organisations excel at understanding artists’ needs, being flexible and ensuring that the artists are quickly acclimated. Incubators or experimental or research-based residencies eschew traditional residency approaches that have set dates,

expectations of concrete outcomes, and limitations that often impede the creative process. Hyde Park Art Center’s approach, for example, is a legacy of the residency programme’s inception by a group of artists who prioritised a network-building approach intended to ‘create a career-defining moment’ for both artists and those with whom they interact.

**Collaboration is a strategy** as funding pressures rise, and arts and human rights organisations realise synergies can provide more support. Resources are brought together; artists are co-hosted, co-produced, or co-presented. ONWARDS exemplifies this with a concrete collaborative project (online training and information) that catalysed the group, although the precarity and lack of funding for coordination severely limits both the activity and ambition of the initiative. With more financial support, network coordination could be enhanced.

## Points for vigilance

**Flexibility.** Several interviews emphasised the need for flexibility in the face of constant change, whether in the political and economic environment of the USA, the availability of hosts, or in the unique journeys of each artist.

**Balancing expectations.** Residencies stressed the importance of discussing candidly, and balancing, expectations. It is necessary to be open with residents while recognising some may be suffering from trauma. The life of an artist is hard and often consists of finding other paying jobs that still allow time to create, while some

process-based residencies are too flexible for artists who have expectations of producing work. Clarity is required about what the residency can or cannot do, what resources are available, and what resources artists need to seek themselves. For residencies that begin with an online period, success means starting well in advance with online, then in-person, orientation. Sensitivities and cultural differences should be discussed. For example, race is seen differently in the USA as in some other countries or regions, and sensitivities may vary according to situations faced by the artist.

To fully appreciate the breadth of the research on The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals, please do consider reading the [other chapters](#) gathered in this third report, as well as the first two reports available for download: [Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition – Volume 1 Scoping Review](#) and [Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments, and Patchwork Solutions – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis](#).

## About the Author

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She founded the EU working group, Arts-Rights-Justice, and was a co-founder of the Arts-Rights-Justice Academy, University of Hildesheim. With a focus on the SWANA region since 1993, she has evaluated international cultural collaboration projects, policies and programmes for the European Commission's culture, research, and international development programmes, the EESC and private foundations.

A former Secretary General of IETM (1994-2013), an international network for contemporary performing arts, she founded/co-founded On the Move and the Roberto Cimetta Fund for Mobility in the Mediterranean, and is currently a member of the Boards of Ettijahat – Independent Culture and SH|FT Safe Havens Freedom Talks.

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 Julie Trébault – ARC, Artists at Risk Connection (United States of America)  
 Laëtitia Manach – On the Move France (Turkey)  
 Lara Bourdin – independent expert (Canada)  
 Lina Allia – Phd candidate On the Move France, Radio Grenouille / Euphonia, Lyon University (France)  
 Liudmyla Kozhekina – Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (Ukraine)  
 Olga Yurkova – Ukrainian Institute (Ukraine)  
 Ouafa Belgacem – Culture Funding Watch (Tunisia)  
 Outi Elena Valanto – TGR, The Green Room (Germany)  
 Simon Dove – CEC ArtsLink (United States of America)  
 Yelyzaveta Sidelnykova – Ukrainian Institute (Ukraine)

# Annex 1: Organisation profiles

## Artistic Freedom Initiative (AFI):

AFI facilitates pro bono legal and resettlement services for international artists at risk. They directly assist artists who have experienced persecution, censorship, or restrictions on their freedom of expression, and support those who have committed to advancing progressive social change and fundamental human rights.

AFI has created the one-year pilot, Artists' Community Network, split into two discipline-specific 'pods' of three artists each. The cohort artists are supported for one year with a monthly living stipend and continued pro bono immigration and resettlement support from AFI.

<https://artisticfreedominitiative.org>

## Artists at Risk Connection (ARC):

ARC defends artistic freedom and provides practical resources for artists and cultural professionals. ARC offers immediate emergency grants for artists facing imminent threats, covering essential needs like legal aid, relocation, and housing. They also help at-risk artists connect with resources and opportunities for assistance through their extensive network. ARC provides safety training and capacity-building workshops to foster connections between at-risk artists and global cultural communities.

ARC raises awareness of artistic freedom issues and the challenges faced by artists and cultural workers worldwide. They partner with academic institutions, local art organisations, and international organisations to produce research on critical issues. ARC builds coalitions with international and regional partners to elevate the voices of at-risk artists and advance policies that protect artistic freedom.

<https://artistsatriskconnection.org>

## Artist Protection Fund (APF):

APF offers fellowship grants to threatened artists from any field of practice and places them at host institutions in safe countries where they can continue their work and plan for their futures. Founded in 2015, the APF draws upon the 100-year commitment of the Institute of International Education (IIE) to protect voices and ideas globally. APF prioritises individuals still living in their home country or who have recently fled, and typically does not consider applications from individuals displaced or in exile for more than two years, or who hold citizenship or other permanent status in a second country.

The host institution provides professional and personal support to the APF Fellow during the Fellowship, including matching the APF financial support with in-kind resources like housing, studio space, materials, and access to programming and networking opportunities. Hosts vary over time, with half of the current hosts having already committed and half being new.

<https://www.iie.org/programs/artist-protection-fund/>

## CEC ArtsLink:

CEC ArtsLink advocates and supports transnational cultural mobility and collaboration, empowering artists and arts leaders to engage communities in dialogue and creative projects for a more equitable, compassionate, and sustainable world. It supports individual encounters, public events, transnational networks, and virtual platforms. Founded in 1962 to promote exchange between the Soviet Union and the USA during the Cold War, its geographical scope now encompasses Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Georgia,



Hungary, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Palestine, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

ArtsLink International Fellowships offer multi-year residencies in the USA and follow-up projects to support transnational artists, curators, and arts leaders in developing community-engaged practices and creative relationships with USA-based artists, organisations, and communities. The fellowship includes an online research residency hosted by leading USA arts organisations, including those in Puerto Rico, followed by an in-person immersive residency in the USA with the potential for a follow-up project in the artists' home countries. Priority is given to artists and arts leaders whose work expands awareness, understanding, and active participation in environmental and/or social justice issues. Artists and arts leaders displaced from their homes or forced into exile are also supported.

<https://www.cecartslink.org>

### **City of Asylum, Pittsburgh:**

In 1993, in response to growing attacks on writers, particularly writer assassinations in Algeria, a group of writers formed the International Parliament of Writers. Governments in several European cities agreed to provide support for endangered writers in exile, known as 'Cities of Asylum'. These cities aimed to protect freedom of speech, publication, and physical safety for writers. In 1997, Salman Rushdie briefly mentioned the Cities of Asylum network in Europe during his re-emergence into public life. Diane Samuels and Henry Reese were in the audience and were drawn to this mission, working with others to expand the network in the USA.

The City of Asylum Exiled Writer and Artist Residency Program provides a long-term home, stipend, legal counsel, medical benefits, and

professional development opportunities to literary writers and artists in exile facing persecution for their work. This sanctuary enables them to continue creating while transitioning to a stable, independent life. Each writer/artist in residence has created a full-length work and continues to create. Unlike emergency relief, City of Asylum, Pittsburgh aims to help writers build a new home and life within a community. As a member of ICORN, City of Asylum, Pittsburgh responded to the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by launching a Fellowship for Ukrainian writers displaced by war, enabling them to research, write, and publish despite the ongoing conflict.

<https://cityofasylum.org>

### **Grand Central Art Center (GCAC):**

GCAC, founded by locals, aims to create free public programming that includes all parts of Santa Ana, California. It hosts exhibitions, a resident theatre company, public events, performances, and artists' apartments for students in Cal State Fullerton's College of the Arts graduate programmes. Unlike traditional residencies with set dates and expectations, GCAC residencies focus on explorations driven by questions, supporting artists' creative processes, without set timelines. There are no open calls, but rather artists are identified and invited. Artist-in-residencies engage communities with projects that have relevance through personal connections.

<http://www.grandcentralartcenter.com>

### **Hyde Park Art Center (HPAC):**

HPAC is a Chicago hub for contemporary arts, providing a space for artists and the community to cultivate ideas, impact social change, and connect with new networks, and work. Its unique model offers pathways for artists to progress in their artistic practices and careers, filling gaps in



traditional models for growth and development. Exhibitions, publications, education, and training develop artists' skills, experience, and networks, enabling them to advance their practices outside traditional and often cost-prohibitive MFA programmes in Chicago.

The Jackman Goldwasser Residency at HPAC hosts 10 to 15 artists annually, fostering deep connections between their practice and the vibrant local community. The eight-week residencies emphasise cross-cultural exchange and authentic dialogue about international contemporary art practices.

<https://www.hydeparkart.org>

### **Kala Art Institute:**

Founded in 1974, Kala is an international workshop rooted in the local community and it is a forum for ideas. Its mission is to help artists sustain their creative work through its Artist-in-Residence and Fellowship programmes. Kala supports artists and engages the community through exhibitions, public programmes, and education. It offers professional facilities for printmaking, digital media, photography, installation, sound, and performance. Education, training, community and youth programmes, studio spaces, and a public gallery are available.

Kala hosts a large-scale residency with places for over 170 artists annually. Various types of residencies, including new graduates, senior or parent artists, and local, national, and international fellowships, are available. Each residency or fellowship has different contractual conditions; some are paid while some have stipends and costs covered. Kala hosts a CEC ArtsLink resident every three or four years, providing an intense interaction with Kala and its staff. Artists can interact with the public, exhibit their work in the public gallery, and participate in artist talks or pairings with local artists.

<https://www.kala.org>

### **Tamizdat:**

Tamizdat is a non-profit organisation that promotes international artist mobility and cultural exchange. Their work includes legal aid, assistance, and a residency for at-risk musicians. Tamizdat believes that international cultural exchange is crucial for a healthy society and aims to help the international performing arts community address issues related to international borders and USA visa policies.

Tamizdat's lawyers and law students identify problems with USA government policies and procedures and create data-based recommendations for improvement. Their work provides the clearest picture of the impact of USA policies on the arts and is used by both the immigration law and performing arts communities to inform policy and advocacy.

Tamizdat offers pro bono legal assistance to international performing artists facing issues with the USA visa and immigration systems. Launched in 2017 with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, TamizdatAVAIL was made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts in 2023-2024.

Tamizdat provides educational sessions at international events and conferences, including webinars, Q&As, and sessions for arts organisations. They cover topics such as USA artist mobility, cultural exchange, diversity, and mobility advocacy. Tamizdat also hosts an email-based forum where international cultural mobility stakeholders share news, best practices, and experiences.

<https://tamizdat.org>

### **Safe Haven Incubator for Musicians (SHIM): NYC:**

SHIM: NYC is a creative and professional residency and mentorship programme for international musicians who face persecution, censorship, threats, displacement, or dangerous situations due to their political, religious,

ethnic, sexual orientation, or gender identity. It provides legal aid, resettlement assistance, professional development, financial assistance, and other services.

The one-year residency programme is a collaboration between Artistic Freedom Initiative, Joe's Pub at The Public Theatre, and Tamizdat. SHIM: NYC is part of the larger The New York City Artist Safe Haven Residency Program (NYCASHRP), which includes Residency Unlimited and previously, Westbeth Artists Housing.

<https://tamizdat.org/shim-nyc/>

## **The Trust for Mutual Understanding (TMU):**

Established in 1984 by Sandra Ferry Rockefeller, TMU promotes improved communication, cooperation, and respect between the USA, the Soviet Union, and Central and Eastern European countries. TMU supports exchanges in the arts and environment between professionals from the USA and 28 countries in the region: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. TMU believes that direct, international contact and professional collaboration in the arts and environment can foster global harmony.

TMU remains committed to supporting exchanges that enable creative and talented people from different countries to freely share ideas, foster creative expression, and engage in environmental stewardship in a nonpolitical context. Grantees work in the Arts, Environment, and Arts+Environment.

In the arts, TMU supports exchanges between professional artists and designers, art managers and curators, particularly in the visual and performing arts. The grantees include choreographers, composers, directors, performers, playwrights, artists, designers, and

administrators/managers in various mediums. They also include archivists, curators, historians, researchers, and those working on cultural and language documentation. Common supported exchanges include creative collaborations, curatorial research, performances with lectures/demonstrations/workshops, historic preservation, arts management programmes, cultural documentation, and exchanges for nongovernmental arts organisations seeking capacity and stability, and network-building.

<https://www.tmuny.org>

## **ONWARDS (Opportunity Network for At-Risk Writers, Artists, Rights Defenders, and Scholars):**

Created in autumn 2023, ONWARDS is a collaborative initiative of USA civil society groups to help people with fellowships, sponsorships, residencies, or other short-term arrangements find stability after their temporary placements end. It grew out of the US Protection Group for Cultural Rights Defenders (CRDs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), an informal network of organisations and institutions supporting at-risk scholars, artists, writers, journalists, and activists. ONWARDS focuses on career development for its target groups after they leave residency, fellowship, or universities stop employing them. It offers free online [workshops, meetups, resource lists, videos](#), and [opportunities to connect](#) with others in similar situations. Interested parties can [subscribe to the ONWARDS email list](#), follow on [LinkedIn](#), or join a [private LinkedIn group](#). The webinars are interactive and not archived for privacy concerns. They introduce the USA, its system, and processes. Initially concerned with career development, they now extend to migrants' rights.

<https://onwardsproject.org>

## Unlisted Projects:

Unlisted Projects, an arts and culture residency programme in Austin, Texas, supports local, national, and international artists in their practice and community, fostering connections between visiting artists and the Austin arts ecosystem. The programme aims to improve artists' socio-economic conditions, build healthy communities, and create positive international relationships with Texans.

Since 2014, Unlisted Projects has hosted international artists and leaders at the [Museum of Human Achievement](#) (MoHA). Visiting artists live and work alongside an intentional local community of 35 artists and 17 organisations. The programme provides studio/living space, a working stipend, and a public presentation. Residents attend and participate in programming, workshops, and events at MoHA. They self-select their support and the programme adapts to their needs by leveraging a strong social network. New artists receive an open arms welcome as 'the resident artist' due to the existing community's relationship to the programme and the lasting international relationships that have resulted.

Funders include the City of Austin Economic Development Department, the Texas Commission on the Arts, private foundations, and donors. MoHA provides resources and support, including assistance with funding applications.

<https://www.unlistedprojects.com>

## Annex 2: Additional organisations of interest

### **The Center on Forced Displacement (CFD) at Boston University:**

CFD fosters interdisciplinary research and engagement with the global challenge of forced displacement. They bring together multidisciplinary teams of researchers, practitioners, and artists from across schools and colleges at Boston University, around the country, and around the world.

One of their research pillars is Arts, Expression and Identities. CFD's work in this area focuses on art by and about displaced people, the expressive modes developed in displacement, the translation and circulation of narratives of displacement, and the identities and communities built by displaced people.

<https://www.bu.edu/cfd/>

### **City of Asylum at Black Mountain Institute, Las Vegas:**

City of Asylum Las Vegas was founded in 2001, the first programme of its kind in the USA. The idea of asylum cities follows calls from Salman Rushdie and Black Mountain Institute's friend and advisor Wole Soyinka for cities around the world to take in imperilled writers. A City of Asylum is a free space, unfettered by censorship or political repression, in which writers who have undergone such hardship may safely practice their craft.

City of Asylum fellows are hosted by a city or region for a period of one to two years, and receive a stipend, housing, dedicated office space, legal support, and more.

<https://blackmountaininstitute.org/city-of-asylum/>

### **New York Fund for the Arts (NYFA) Immigrant Artists Mentoring Program:**

NYFA's Immigrant Artist Mentoring Program provides foreign-born emerging artists with one-on-one career support, community, and exposure for their work. The programme has built a strong network of more than 525 immigrant artists from 76 countries and regions since it was founded.

Historically, NYFA has brought the programme to Denver, Detroit, Newark, New York City, Oakland, and San Antonio, serving artists in Visual/Multidisciplinary Art, Performing and Literary Arts, and Social Practice disciplines. This competitive programme is provided free of charge to accepted applicants.

NYFA hosts the Immigrant Artist Resources, a web page hub where immigrant artists can access resources, exchange ideas, collaborate, and amplify their voices in the American cultural landscape.

<https://www.nyfa.org/professional-development/immigrant-artist-mentoring-program/>

### **Scholars at Risk:**

Scholars at Risk is a global network dedicated to protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom. It offers temporary academic positions to scholars facing severe threats, ensuring their ideas are preserved and they can continue their work until it is safe to return home. The organisation also provides advisory services, campaigns for scholars who are imprisoned or silenced in their home countries, monitors attacks on higher education, and leads efforts to promote academic freedom and uphold university values worldwide.

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org>

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