



BACKYARD RESIDENCIES!

New Program of Artists' Residences in South-East Europe

// Vector Association, Iasi, RO
// Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Centre, Istanbul, TR
// new media center_kuda.org, Novi Sad – Belgrade, SCG

supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

WHY "BACKYARD RESIDENCES"? (**back yard** *n.* 1. a yard at the back of a house, etc. 2. **in one's own back yard.** a. close at hand. b. involving or implicating one.)

What do we know about our own backyard? The Balkans or the "South East Europe" have recently become the object of interest in the West and this has caused many local controversies about the way how this "Balkan" has been imagined. But do we really know how do we want to "imagine" the region where we live? What kind of facts and fictions may influence our own perception of this geographical and cultural territory? As "neighbours", what do we really know about each other? Do we want to travel through our region, do we want to explore how similar and how different our experience of the region might be, do we want to know more about what is going on just across the other side of the border? How to carry out a relevant research project in our own neighbourhood, and try to do "our own stuff" around here?

This program aims at stressing the artistic cooperation in the SEE "backyard" and to amend the most common type of available artists' residencies in our region as the way of communication between the East and the West, in which the "north-western" approach is often simply exoticist and the "south-eastern" one is often just opportunistic. Recently there has been considerable focus and interest in the countries of the Balkans, but this development has reiterated the notion of the "cultural divide" and has not been very much beneficial locally. On the other hand there is a considerable lack of dialogue and co-operation among the artistic scenes in the region. Because of the usual donor-driven logic, artists in the SEE rather looked at residency opportunities in the West than at models of co-operation and artistic research in the region itself. The term "backyard" may also imply the clichéd notion of this region as the inferior "backyard" of Europe, and by re-appropriating this term to describe a certain condition we may play around this self-deprecating yet empowering connotation.

With the generous support of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the "Backyard Residencies" aim at re-connecting artists and local art scenes in the countries of SEE with the primary objective to activate interest for artistic research which may be beneficial for understanding and learning more about each other.

WHAT DOES THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM OFFER? Twelve selected artists will be offered **twelve six-week to eight-week residencies** at the three prestigious independent art institutions in **Iasi (Romania), Istanbul (Turkey) and Novi Sad / Belgrade (Serbia and Montenegro).**

The residencies will be available from **June 2006 to June 2007.**

All residencies include accommodation, per diems, working facilities and equipment, library and artist archive, internet access, etc. Artists will be provided with necessary contacts and assisted in their research as well as in discussions and joint activities with local artists and art professionals, in organizing events and the realization of the final project. Each artist will be also reimbursed for the "tour-retour" travel expenses (train or bus) to the place of residence.

WHO CAN APPLY? The project is conceived as a residency program for visual artists from the SEE region who wish to accomplish projects within the region. The project is based upon the need to open up regional co-operation which will focus on artistic research and practice, reflections and actions regarding the very conditions of living and working here. The residencies are meant for active artists, without any age limit, who are living in the region and who may conceive projects which would be both beneficial for them and their careers and for localities where they would conduct their research. The program is open for applicants from the following countries: **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey.**

HOW TO APPLY? Before applying, artists are suggested to explore which one of the offered places of residency and institutions is most suitable for their own work and which place offers a clear research potential for them. In their applications artists will be asked to show a focused research interest and to briefly explain why they have chosen a particular place of residence. **In order to apply, artists are asked to complete the attached application form, which has to include the statement about the particular research interest, as well as a CV.** Applicants may also include any relevant publications on their previous work as well as any visual material they find important for this application. **The completed form (in English language) has to be sent before May 5, 2006, either by electronic mail or by regular post, directly to the institution of choice.** Alternatively, the form may be sent to the Program Coordinator, Branislav Dimitrijevic.

FOCUS AND SELECTION CRITERIA? The program is focused on the priority to support **relevant and ambitious artistic projects** based upon the research conducted during the residency period in one of the proposed locations. The general focus of the whole program is to raise awareness on cultural and artistic issues in the SEE region, to strengthen the ties between independent art institutions and producers, and to create a new platform for projects which will be of some importance locally. Applications will be reviewed and selection of artists will be made by a selection panel consisted of representatives of host institutions and other art professionals. Apart from evaluating the artistic relevance of the applicant's draft of the project, the selection panel will pay attention to the applicant's **clearly stated research interest**, her or his experience in the field of artistic research and practice, and the awareness of regional issues. It is important for applicants to explain interest in the preferred place of the residence and in the host institution.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAM? For any further information and details on the **Backyard Residency Program** please contact the Program Coordinator, **Branislav Dimitrijevic**: branko@bgdmail.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOST INSTITUTIONS – PLEASE CONTACT: **Vector Association**
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Please see short profiles of each institution attached separately to this call for application