

Germany – Residencies in the Künstlerhäuser Worpswede

Background

At the end of the 19th century, the small town of Worpswede, situated in a rural, marshy region close to Bremen, became famous because some well-known artists and writers moved there. In the following decades, Heinrich Vogeler, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Otto Modersohn, Rainer Maria Rilke and Clara Rilke Westhoff, Manfred Hausmann, Richard Oelze and many others stayed here for longer or shorter periods of their life.

This tradition of an artists' colony has been maintained until today with two residency complexes for guest artists (*Künstlerhäuser*). The very first studio apartments in the Federal Republic of Germany were initiated in 1971 by an association known as *Atelierhaus Worpswede e. V.* under the leadership of Martin Kausche, followed in 1981 by the establishment of the Barkenhoff Foundation, which created studios in the historical estate of Heinrich Vogeler's *Barkenhoff*. Since 1997, the two complexes have a joint artistic management. Events with presentations of the artists in residence, the beautiful town and landscape, numerous galleries and other amenities attract many visitors each year.

Künstlerhäuser Worpswede is sponsored by the association *Atelierhaus Worpswede e. V.* and the Barkenhoff Foundation Worpswede. The Ministry of Science and Culture of the State of Lower Saxony provides the greater part of the funding required for the institution. Additional promoters are the State of Bremen, the district of Osterholz, the municipality of Worpswede, numerous private individuals, companies as well as public and private foundations, including on the federal level.

How it works

Since 1971, over 400 artists from over 35 countries have been guests of *Künstlerhäuser Worpswede*. They are conceived as places for encounters of professional artists from Germany, Europe and the world. Through residential scholarships, artists and writers should experience new impulses and find time to realise projects or to further develop their work.

10 studio apartments, sized between 40 and 115 square meters, are offered at no rental charge to artists and their families. In addition, a monthly subsistence scholarship of 1400 EUR is paid as part of the residential grant, 10% of which are kept to cover service costs (electricity, etc.). A one-off amount of 80 EUR for cleaning costs is paid by residents who also have to cover communication travel, material or transport costs.

The grants at the *Künstlerhäuser Worpswede* are awarded once annually and are valid for a period of either three or six months. Artists from the following sections can apply: Fine arts (painting, sculpture, graphics, design, architecture, photography) Literature (fiction, poetry, drama, film scripts, essays) and Sound art (sound-installation, performance) Professional artists, regardless of their nationality or age, may apply for a grant. Successful applicants are expected to live and work in Worpswede during the scholarship. An adequate command of the German or English language is mandatory; a German language course is available.

An application form is provided by *Künstlerhäuser Worpswede* has to be filled in, with additional information on the applicant to be submitted in the form of catalogues, slides, CDs, books,

manuscripts etc. For applicants from industrial countries, a charge of 20 EUR is made to cover administrative costs.

An independent expert jury (whose composition is not announced before the end of the application period) decides on the award of the grants and on the duration of the period of residency.

Results

Around 1990, debates about the ability of two "competing" organisations – one purely private, the other (Barkenhoff Foundation) under state influence – to run profiled residency programmes in a small town like Worpswede were held. Problems were addressed with the cooperation agreement of 1997.

The *Künstlerhäuser Worpswede* is an example for successful residency programmes run in the form of a public-private partnership on the local and regional level. The international character of the programme has been demonstrated since its early years of existence, bridging East and West even during the times of the "Cold War".

Sources

<http://www.kuensterhaeuser-worpswede.de/en/information/index.html>

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