

## **ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE HANDBOOK**

### **Westerly Library & Wilcox Park**

Thank you for joining us! We hope you enjoy your time here and are moved by our mission to strengthen community and enrich lives by stimulating intellect and sparking imagination through access to literature, information, technology, nature, and the arts. Please read the following as it contains important information. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Marketing and Outreach Manager:

awagner@westerlylibrary.org  
401-596-2877 x342

### **THE TOWN OF WESTERLY**

Westerly is a small town along the coastline in southwestern Rhode Island. Founded in 1669 with a population of roughly 30 families, it now boasts a healthy population of 23,359 which nearly doubles in the summertime thanks to its beach communities.

While the Pawtucket rivers separates Westerly, RI from Stonington, CT its downtown is a unified place full of restaurants, shops, a thriving arts scene, and at its center, Westerly Library and Wilcox Park.

For local information including restaurants, businesses, amenities, and general information visit:

<https://seewesterly.com/>

<https://www.oceanchamber.org/>

<https://westerlyri.gov/101/Visitors>

<https://www.westerlynonprofits.org/home>

### **WESTERLY LIBRARY & WILCOX PARK**

Westerly Library and Wilcox Park is a private non-profit owned and operated by the Memorial and Library Association. The Association was established in 1892 to commemorate the volunteer soldiers and sailors who fought in the Civil War. Designed by Longstaff & Hurd, architects from Bridgeport, Connecticut, Westerly Library opened its doors in 1894 through the initiative of local industrialist-inventor, Stephen Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox donated the land on which the library is situated, as well as \$25,000 to be matched by citizens of the community.

Originally the library included a bowling alley, gymnasium, art gallery, museum, and meeting space for the Grand Army of the Republic. On opening day, August 15, 1894, Westerly Library had a collection of 5,000 volumes, and the building was open 24 hours each week. Additions were constructed in 1902, 1928 and 1992. The final addition, which won the 1994 Historic Preservation Award from the Rhode Island Preservation Commission, nearly doubled the size of the building.

The library is open 60 hours each week, and the collection includes books, audiobooks, magazines, CDs, DVDs, and more totaling over 287,000 items. There are computers for public use throughout the building. The library, a participant in a statewide-automated network, offers access to online databases, e-books, and over four million items from library collections across the state of Rhode Island.

The original parcel of land for Wilcox Park was donated in 1898 by Harriet Wilcox in memory of her husband, Stephen Wilcox. Harriet envisioned the area as a walking park to be enjoyed by the hard-working citizens of Westerly and Pawcatuck. Wilcox Park is considered a Medallion Park by the ASLA and has been a nationally significant listing on the National Register of Historical Places since 2004.

The park was designed by Warren H. Manning, a former associate of Frederick Law Olmsted and founding father of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). Manning incorporated much of the existing flora into his design, creating an oasis in the heart of downtown Westerly. The most important feature of the park was the center, an open meadow. The meadow was to have a few fine trees planted to not restrict their growth so they might become the dominant features in the landscape. As of January 2023, the RI Tree Council lists Wilcox Park home to 8 Champion Trees; showing grand stewardship of its plantings.

Several smaller parcels of land were added through the years but the next large land acquisition in 1905 was the Hannah B. W. Brown estate (nine acres) which significantly increased the size of the park. This acquisition was designed by Landscape Architect, Frank Hamilton, who extended Manning's concept and achieved the Manning vision by defining the park boundaries with topographical features including the pond and varied terrain.

Also notable for contributions to the park is Landscape Architect, Arthur A. Shurcliff. He designed the existing formal terrace or "Esplanade" adjacent to the library and its granite balustrade and staircase in 1929. In 1930, he designed the octagonal granite basin and the bluestone paving pattern that surrounds the Wilcox Memorial Fountain. Once again, in 1937, Shurcliff left his mark with the design of the World War Memorial, which includes a circular granite balustrade, granite monument and bluestone paving.

### **Art and the Association**

In July 1898, the Westerly Sun reported the awarding of a contract for an addition to the Memorial Building, to be known as the art gallery. "For some time past, Mrs. Wilcox, the widow of Stephen Wilcox, who gave so liberally for the erection of this building, has been considering the advisability of adding an art gallery to the many attractions already offered to the public in this building."

This early gallery was located in the northwest corner of the original building in the area with the glass floor where the fiction collection is currently shelved.

Although the addition was completed in 1901, the official opening was held in February of 1902. The Westerly Sun described it in lovely detail. "The art room itself is 40 feet by 26 feet. The

floor is of hard wood, highly polished and waxed. The walls of the room are covered with velvet velour, which forms a background for the pictures. In the daytime, the room is lit by means of overhead skylights, and in the evening 100 incandescent lights, with a large reflector." Here was displayed the Wilcox's sizeable collection of 19th-century American and European landscape paintings, including works by Jasper Cropsey, Arthur Fitzwilliam Fair and Leon Perrault.

William D. Hoxie, nephew of Harriet Hoxie Wilcox, commissioned the plans for another addition in 1928. The building program was designed to add a children's room, and once again, space was dedicated to an art gallery. The Westerly Sun reported, "In the new building is the children's library. This is on the first floor. On the second floor is the new art gallery. The former art gallery has been made over into a stack room which doubles the capacity of the library in this respect..."

The gallery remains as it was designed: a 16-foot vaulted, back-lit ceiling, Spanish cork floor covering 1500 square feet, and oak wainscoting. The old plaster walls are covered in a flocked material resulting in a charming ambience that is unique in a world full of industrial shoebox exhibit spaces. Originally, the gallery featured the Wilcox art collection first housed in the 1901 addition.

In recent history, area artists have brightened the gallery with their talent. We provide the space, and the artists provide a new exhibit every month complete with publicity, opening receptions, and an increase in unique visitors.

## **The Cottage**

The cottage located in the northwest corner of Wilcox Park once sat several yards away from its current location. Believed to have been built circa 1850, over the years the cottage has housed the park's caretakers, library director, and library staff.

Most recently, thanks to two very generous donors, the cottage is being renovated and restored to have efficient heating and cooling, an accessible first floor, and space to house an artist or accommodate private rental space for intimate gatherings.

This charming 1000 sq. ft. cottage is minimally furnished with linens, wireless internet, a fully equipped kitchen, and washer and dryer. Having a car is extremely helpful although not necessary. Restaurants, entertainment, a grocery store, and train line are all within walking distance.

## **AIR PROGRAM**

### **Vision**

Westerly is a growing arts community. There are already a number of anchors in Westerly to support the arts including the United, Knickerbocker, the Artists' Cooperative Gallery of Westerly, the Chorus of Westerly, the Hoxie Gallery at Westerly Library, Colonial Theatre, Granite Theatre, and increasing awareness and appreciation of the arts.

In the heart of downtown Westerly and part the arts community, Westerly Library and Wilcox Park believes the Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program further nurtures our arts community through cooperative support and education; it will provide artists an opportunity to work on and share their art, and encourage creativity and artistry in all community members and visitors.

## **Purpose**

Westerly Library & Wilcox Park's AIR program is designed to encourage the creative, intellectual and personal growth of emerging and established artists. It is expected that artists have sufficient skills and experience to work independently in their studio area. The residency is designed to allow artists to take risks and pursue new projects and ideas, free from everyday pressures.

It is expected that each resident at The Cottage use this gift of time and space to actively pursue artistic research through rigorous studio practice.

The Artist-in-Residence (AIR) also expands Westerly Library and Wilcox Park's impact on local art and culture, offers public engagement, promotes community connections, and provides creative and educational opportunities for the community while supporting cultural and artistic exchange.

## **Outcomes**

Each artist is expected to:

- Hold scheduled studio hours in the cottage when possible and/or
- Present their work during a public talk and/or an onsite open studio event towards the end of the residency and/or
- Hold at least one class during the residency period for the public
  - Classes can range from hands-on instruction to general information about the art form and can be geared toward a specific age range or open to all

## **Guidelines**

- Friends and family of participating artists are welcome to visit but are not permitted to stay overnight. Pets are not allowed. Service dogs are welcome.
- Residents are expected to adhere to all safety signage posted.
- No alterations, painting or changes can be made to the rooms and nothing can be hung on the walls aside from the picture rail.
- Please be considerate of our neighbors by keeping noise to a minimum, in accordance with the town's Noise Ordinance, set forth in Chapter 171 of Town Code.
- In compliance with Association policy, smoking is not permitted on the property including the Cottage.
- Illegal activities are prohibited anywhere on the premises.
- There is a \$25 fee to replace a lost key. There is a \$45 fee to replace a lost parking pass.

- The Association is not responsible for lost or stolen items from the Cottage.
- Projects that plan for outdoor installations or projects that may negatively impact Westerly Library and Wilcox Park's natural and cultural resources will not be considered. Westerly Library and Wilcox Park does not allow any temporary or permanent installations on-site that would impact the historic landscape.
- The use of toxic chemicals or hazardous materials is prohibited. Prohibited items include chemicals identified as hazardous in the Safety Data Sheets Database <https://chemicalsafety.com/sds-search/>, combustible materials, large quantities of paint thinners, anything containing mercury, and heavy metals (such as lead).
- Working with open flames, welding, grinding of metal, or acid etching is prohibited.
  - Items that produce heat that do not have an automatic shutoff are prohibited.
- Collection of natural materials from Wilcox Park may be permitted with prior permission.
- Selling of artwork is permitted after the completion of the residency. Contact information may be distributed to interested buyers during the residency.
- There is not a kiln and firing is not permitted on the property.
- Spraying, finishing, and sanding may take place in designated areas only.
- Limited access to museum collections (artists may schedule a time with staff to take photographs to use as inspiration for their work but will not be permitted to handle any archives or collections or use them as part of their artistic process during the residency. There are many images and scans of collections and archives that can be shared with artists upon request.)

## Health & Safety

Your health and safety are Westerly Library & Wilcox Park's top priority. We follow guidance released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Participants should be prepared for public health orders to be enacted, amended, or changed as needed at any time to protect public health, which may impact operations of Westerly Library & Wilcox Park. We reserve the right to implement guidelines in excess of the aforementioned to protect our community.

For more information on local and state COVID-19 response and regulations, please visit these links:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- <https://health.ri.gov/>
- <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus>

For the most up-to-date guidelines, please visit [westerlylibrary.org](http://westerlylibrary.org):

Relevant Association Policies

- Code of Conduct

## Supplies

Please bring all of the supplies you will need during your residency. Some basics such as easels, jars for cleaning brushes, etc., will be provided, but artists should expect that they will bring/procure what they need before or at the beginning of their residency. Please only bring supplies and personal hand and power tools that do not need special accommodations for transport or hookup.

Items may also be shipped but cannot be received more than one week in advance of residency. The closest art supply stores are listed below. Abandoned materials and debris found on the property may be used with permission. Please contact us if you have specific questions or needs. Supplies may be mailed in care of:

### **Shipping Supplies**

AIR Program, Your Name  
Westerly Library and Wilcox Park  
44 Broad Street  
Westerly, RI 02891

Supplies and tools available through Westerly Library and Wilcox Park or in cooperation with local partners [can be found here](#). Please note that this list is subject to change.

### **Artist Supplies Nearby**

**Riverhead**  
.4 miles from cottage  
10 Oak Street  
Westerly, RI 02891

**Griswold Textile Print**  
1.7 miles from cottage  
84 White Rock Rd  
Westerly, RI

**Home Depot**  
2.3 miles from cottage  
120 Franklin Street  
Westerly, RI 02891

**Michaels**  
2.6 miles from cottage  
19 Airport Rd  
Westerly, RI 02891

**Staples**  
2.6 miles from cottage

13 Airport Rd  
Westerly, RI 02891

**Walmart**  
4.5 miles from cottage  
258 Post Rd  
Westerly, RI 02891

**Scrapbook Cove**  
4.9 miles from cottage  
213 Elm Street  
Stonington, CT 06355

**Artware Store in the Finer Line Gallery**  
10.4 miles from cottage  
48 W. Main St.  
Mystic, CT 06355

**JOANN Fabric and Crafts**  
21.5 miles from cottage  
117 Salem Turnpike  
Norwich, CT 06360

**de Gerenday's Fine Art Materials and Curiosities**  
29.9 miles from cottage  
84 Lyme St  
Old Lyme, CT 06371

## **End of Residency**

At the end of the residency you will be asked to conduct an off boarding interview so that we can ensure the residency is an outstanding experience for all.

A walk-through will be conducted by Westerly Library & Wilcox Park staff to ensure The Cottage is in the same condition as when you arrived. Should there be avoidable damage, the cost for repairs may be deducted from the remainder of your stipend. An itemized expense list will be provided.

Artists are responsible for handling arrangements to ship their completed artwork home. Artists may coordinate with Westerly Library & Wilcox Park to mail their completed works. Shipping costs will be billed to you following the shipment.