In the summer of 1992, thirty artists travelled long distances to participate in the first session of what was then called an “artists workshop”, in the luscious countryside of a small village called Omi (pronounced Oh-my), near Ghent, in Columbia County, 2 hours north of New York City.

Art Omi, now one of the best known and most respected artists’ residency programs in the world, was not as structured and multilayered as it is today: the stunning housing complex did not exist, nor the sculpture park or the visitors center. Everything started in and around a beautiful red barn. Now called the Studios Barn, this simple yet fascinating structure continues to be an incubator for many ideas, and emotions, inspiring experimentation and collaboration among the talented artists who embrace the exciting adventure and the incredible opportunity that our program is for its participants.

Art Omi has been a life changing experience for over 700 hundreds artists from 104 countries for past 25 years. The barn is much more than a building: it represents an utopist idea of the world: the United States of Omi.
My connection to Art Omi began late one morning in the offices of the former Arts Magazine on Broadway south of Union Square. It was in the Spring of 1992. I was standing in the office of the publisher Paul Shanley being introduced to Francis Greenburger. The painter Sandi Slone was there along with two or three others. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the idea of an artists’ workshop that would be held for three weeks the following summer in upstate New York near the town of Hudson. The meeting focused on some of the fundamental issues that Francis believed were important, primarily in terms of what to do and what not to do. I was impressed by his clarity, assuredness, and sense of purpose. Before leaving, (prompted by Sandi Slone) he turned and asked: “Would you be interested in becoming our first critic in residence?” I knew he meant it, and responded accordingly. I have never looked back.

Over the years, as a Board Member, I have strongly supported the notion that Art Omi should move in the direction of becoming a truly international artists’ residency. It has not been an easy task, but the results speak for themselves. Art Omi, under the leadership of Francis Greenburger, is now recognized as one of the most important, if not enviable artist residencies on the global map.

At the outset, our challenges were to find reliable sponsors, to find artists we believed would contribute a meaningful presence, to raise money to build accommodations for artists to live on the premises, and to sustain proper maintenance of the facilities. Eventually, Art Omi began to move ahead in developing the Fields Sculpture Park and the Charles B. Benenson Visitors Center and Gallery and in expanding the program offerings in the areas of music, dance, and architecture (in addition to art and writing) and educational programs for school children. Many people connected with Omi over the years have worked diligently to make all of this happen. It has been and continues to become a remarkable arts-related environment.

Returning to Art Omi this year as a Critic Emeritus was a significant and important event. To see what has been achieved over the past twenty-five years was an exhilarating feeling – a feeling that sustains itself as new projects emerge into being and future artists continue to meet with those from earlier periods, many of whom have achieved importance on the global scene. To recognize those who have worked diligently with those currently engaged in retaining the significance and presence of Art Omi is one of the most satisfying and aspects of my career.

Returning to Art Omi After 25 Years

Robert C. Morgan
What more to say to further elucidate the Art Omi’s outstanding reputation amongst the international residential art programs without repeating the already acknowledged highest standard of the selection procedure bringing together 30 exceptional artists from around the globe, the dedicated staff, or overall comfort of living, working and fine dining?

**CRITIC IN RESIDENCE**

From my point of an art critic/curator, besides meeting excellent artists who are also great individuals, participation in the program enabled me for the first time in my long professional career to experience development of the art projects daily, step by step, from the concept to their realization discussing it all along with the artist. Bringing together artists, critic-in-residence and visiting curators/critics from the world over makes Art Omi a perfect platform for the cultural dialogue a meeting point of the diverse cultural systems practices and experiences. Furthermore, this month long art emersion process takes place in the lush and unique surrounding of the Upstate New York.

To the outsider’s eye this area north of New York City certainly presents the best the U.S.A. has to offer to the global culture. Not only that within approximately one hour long journey from Art Omi and its sculpture park, one can visit some of the best art institutions, such as the Storm King Sculpture Park, DIA Beacon, the Hessel Museum of Art at Bard, the MASS MoCA, to name but a few; this refined approach in presenting the art blends and spills over into the specific way of nurturing and cultivating nature itself.

Living and working in such environment was, by all means, a privilege.

**Croatia**

**Branko Franceschi**
The Monotype Project is a collaborative workshop with Tamarind Master Printer, Melissa Braggins and Master Printer Ted Braggins of Pondside Press, Rhinebeck, NY. The workshop was started in 1992, the first year of Art Omi, by Director Linda Cross. The artists from the residency participating in the workshops have had the opportunity to explore the monotype medium and to work collaboratively to create original hand printed impressions. During the last quarter century numerous artists have completed monotype projects. They have worked in a variety of methods and techniques to create unique works of art.
ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Carlos Aires Spain Fellowship for Artistic Excellence
Roeya Amigh Iran/USA
Ifeoma Anyaeji Nigeria/Canada Antrev Habland Award
Miki Baird United States Charlotte Street Foundation Fellowship
Camille Chedda Jamaica
Lucas Davidson Australia Art Omi Australia Committee
Daniel Djamo Romania Unlimit Art Fellowship
Jaime Franco Colombia
Nicholas Fraser United Kingdom/United States
Chiara Fumai Italy Dena Foundation for Contemporary Art Fellowship

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Michelle Kuen Suet Fung Hong Kong/Canada Cecily Brown Fellowship
Liang Hao China
Gunnhildur Hauksdottir Iceland
Carl Hazlewood Guyana/United States The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Fellowship
Daniel Horowitz United States
Fransix Tenda Lomba Democratic Republic of the Congo American Dream Fellowship
Linda Molenaar The Netherlands
Shepherd Ndudzo Zimbabwe/Botswana
Yuna Park South Korea
Pablo Rasgado Mexico
Leonardo Remor Brazil
Naomi Safran-Hon Israel/United States Greenburger Fellowship for Mitigating Ethnic & Religious Conflict
Maria Verónica San Martín Chile
Lee Young Sim South Korea/United States
Miriam Simun United States
Pinkie Strother United States
Lara Tabet Lebanon Arte East Fellowship
Elize Vossgatter South Africa
Chin Chih Yang Taiwan/USA
Bassem Yousri Egypt Arte East Fellowship
Carlos Aires
Spain
Fellowship for Artistic Excellence
Omi promoted an innovative atmosphere and exchange of ideas. I had moments of inspiration and moments of frustration. My time at OMI was designed to facilitate a balance between work and social interaction. I interacted with a gifted and diverse group of artists and visiting artists who have demonstrated a commitment to art making and inquiry. My studio visits helped me to move forward on my project as well as coming up with new ideas for my next projects.
Ifeoma Anyaeji
Nigeria / Canada
Antrev Habland Award
After four weeks of immersion at Omi It is hard to quantify with the right words how the experience influences me at this time but I do know that hindsight will tell me much. With weeks after residency under my arm I can describe the time as pure freedom to work, the opportunity to engage with visitors (both professional and a very interested public on Open Studios Day), to know and watch the incredible giving staff Omi is gifted with and especially to be placed in the midst of a rich mix of global culture. I have always thought of myself as open and informed but a month at Omi was truly a humbling experience as I listened and learned from artists who live elsewhere and travel the world—an education for sure, one that I value immensely. I will be reaching for the heart of my Omi observational platform for a long time.
Being at Art Omi was a renewing experience. Getting to use a large studio space where I could explore new ideas and approaches in the countryside, with the hum drum of everyday life removed, was refreshing and energizing. My interactions with other artists, critics and visitors allowed me to expand my thinking about possibilities for my work and career. And our gallery visits to Dia Becon, MassMoca and Jack Shainman The School also provided fuel for my works. It was also great to just relax and meet new people who share similar drives and motivations.

Camille Chedda
Jamaica
Lucas Davidson
Australia
Art Omi Australia Committee Fellowship
Arriving in the USA was an experience that is hard to put in words, since it made me think about the early 20th century arrivals on Ellis Island. Also, I felt like an alien that was trying to get rid of certain stereotypes that grew within him about a certain culture. I wanted to evade from/avoid the “Americanism” fortress that was being erected before my eyes in the months during which I prepared my residency. As an outsider, I desired from all of my heart to see America for what it truly was, and I did my best to demolish every cliché that was crafted in my mind, but unfortunately after my confrontation with the “Land of Freedom” and with some of its citizens, several clichés were strengthened. Most I managed to destroy or at least cover. For example, the idea that art must be done “in order to put a smile on people’s faces and to make the world a better place”. This idea, liberated from the mouth of /(elaborated by) a young American curator made me feel uncomfortable. I was also questioned: “why do you do art?” and “why should I like your art?”. I found these questions to be incredibly deep, full of meaning and intuitive strength. This moment represented a breaking point between my world and America. This month cryogenized a meeting that I will never forget, without any doubt. A sort of Sergio Leone confrontation between the intelligent-balanced Good Westerner and the Bad Eastern European (tick), in the crossroads of art. Art has to be Good and has to be done in order to change The World, to make The World A Better Place Vs. art is what it is and you should never be so vain as to think that you are so good that you’ll make a visible difference (let everything develop itself organically - and don’t put yourself in the center of The World). Thanks to Omi I discovered and confronted a real American (curator). Overall, I am deeply thankful to Claudia, Dylan, Julia, Salvatore and Sam. They worked as hard as they could in order to make sure that everyone was happy.”
DONT REPEAT THE USUAL LITANY OF INANE Cliches

United Kingdom/United States

Nicholas Fraser
Thank you for the great experience of being part of an international art community surrounded by nature, it was very important and inspiring for me.
when we spent time at the hard shell of almond
we are at ghent
we are at omi
pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast
to feel for ever its soft fall and swell
when the summer gone
the next summer will be coming
tough night will come again
but the time purify her soft
Condensed into a running slit
blown your button
which tightly locked
we meet early morning
and wake up with the weed
as a stream
and so live ever
The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Fellowship

Guyana/United States

Carl Hazlewood
Omi était un labyrinthe qui m’a permis de visites les différences culturelle, malgré ma faiblesse linguistique. On put communiquer avec le langage universelle de l’émotion. Merci a toute équipe de Art Omi et a tout les artistes
"Na lela bino trop" Je vous aime beaucoup.

Democratic Republic of the Congo
American Dream Fellowship
Fransix Tenda Lomba
In Art Omi I raised above my own expectations thanks to the amazing fellow participants, unbeatable Branko, the confronting visitors, the helpful staff and organizers. What a well put together glorious magnet is was! Happy and tired from hard work and with a satisfied soul I return home with a warm heart which embraces good memories and great company.
Yuna Park
South Korea
Time was expanded in my experience at OMI. I was surprised by how so many things could happen in less than a month. I was strongly reminded that art is relational. For me, more significant than all the time and space we had to create and materialize ideas, was the thinking and sharing I was able to have with the other people. These exchanges are still reverberating here and there.
Art Omi is a unique place as it is able to combine all aspect of our lives as artists into a three weeks’ program. It is such an empowering experience to be able to create alongside 30 artists from 27 countries; taking me out of my isolated studio practice, to be able to work side by side with these artists. While at the same time providing the opportunity to meet and have studio visits with leading professionals in the field.

Working in the printshop with Pondside Press was an incredible experience. Art Omi allowed me to expand my painting vocabulary and create meaningful new work and new relationships.
María Verónica San Martín

Chiloé
The Omi Art experience has been both transcending and compelling. The energy surrounding so many artists from so many different countries has lifted me to a holistic awareness of where my art fits on the world Art stage. The global invitation has been extended.

Thank you Art Omi!
Arte East Fellowship

Lara Tabet

Lebanon
ArtOmi is like a social experiment to see what happens to artists’ work when they are totally nurtured. We are fed-intellectually, physically and visually- This allows you total freedom to do what needs to be done. I chose to doubt myself into a corner, because to fight my way out of that corner has been really valuable and has made me answer many self-posed questions which needed my attention. It made me reevaluate so much of my work production that has become so comfortable and habitual. To have the freedom to extend my painting vocabulary through playing with paint again. Despite this, the most valuable gift that Omi gave me was the opportunity to make so many new friends and to find harmony between such a diverse group so seamlessly.
Taiwan/United States
Chin Chih Yang
Arte East Fellowship

To my right, ladies and gentlemen, these generic abstract paintings were developed for your visual pleasure!

In this example, ladies and gentlemen, we see how the artist transformed found objects into art by simply placing them inside a frame.

Egypt
Bassem Yousri
Elaine Angelopouls, Artist, Director Ronald Feldman Gallery
Nathalie Angles, Director/Founder, Residency Unlimited (RU)
Anne Barlow, Director, Art in General
Katie Block, Private Curator, Art Advisor & Member of Curatorial Committee for Decordova Museum
Kalia Brooks, Independent Curator, Gracie Mansion
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Bill Carroll, Director, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Studios
Vince Contarino, Artist & Curator, Present Company
Sasha Dees, Film Producer & Independent Curator
Margaret Evangeline, Artist, Board Member, Art Omi
Asya Geisberg, Owner/Director, Asya Geisbert Gallery
Kate Gilbert, Director, Now + Then
Sofia Hernandez Chong Guy, Curator, Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC)
Zeljka Himbele, Director, Christian Duvernois Gallery
Warren James, Director, Architecture Omi
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Hanne Tierney, Founder/Director, Five Myles
Helen Toomer, Director, PULSE Art Fair
Lilly Wei, Critic, Board Member, Art Omi
Dexter Wimberly, Independent Curator

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Charlotte Street Foundation / Fellowship for an artist living and working in Kansas City
Dena Foundation for Contemporary Art / Fellowship for an artist living and working in Italy
Francis Greenburger / Fellowship for an artist whose work deals with ethnic and religious conflict
Golden Rule Foundation / Fellowship for an artist who has never been to the United States
The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation / Fellowship for a painter living and working in the United States
Unlimit Art Committee / Fellowship for an artist with disabilities

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