



## *Sonoran Desert Inn and Conference Center*

### **Sonoran Arts Residency 2018: Overview and Frequently Asked Questions**

*We bet that Ajo is like no place you've been before. It's a small town in the middle of the magnificent Sonoran Desert, two+ hours from the nearest cities (Phoenix and Tucson) and forty miles from the Mexican border. There is no movie theater, pho joint, or microbrewery; no Walmart, Starbucks, or Courtyard Marriott. Instead, there is beautiful Spanish Colonial architecture, a rich history, spectacular scenery, and a vibrant tri-cultural community of artists, families, desert rats and retirees.*

*We like to call Ajo "somewhere in the middle of nowhere", and that sums up why it's ideal for a residency: it's a place to be inspired and energized, awed and opened up, far from your daily routines and realities. It's quiet, but the howls of coyotes fill the air. It's calm, but the landscape is brimming with saguaro and ocotillo and organ pipe. It's dark at night, but look up and you'll see the brightest night sky imaginable. It feels like a sleepy little town, but hidden here are creatives of all types: artists, entrepreneurs, makers, builders.*

*Come join them.*

#### **LOGISTICS**

##### **What is the duration of the residency?**

*Each residency is a two-week period between September 15 to October 10, 2018. Applicants are welcome to choose a two-week period within this timeline. You'll have the option of providing a second choice of dates within this window in the application.*

##### **Who may apply?**

*We are welcoming artists at all stages of their career, with preference given to Native and Latinx artists to reflect the often underrepresented historic population of this region. Writers and visual, performing, culinary, and healing artists are all invited to apply. You may come to launch new work, make progress on an existing project, or finish up something you've been working on for many years.*

##### **What is the submission deadline?**

*June 15, 2018. Expect notification by July 15.*

##### **How many artists are accepted for each residency?**

*We will be accepting up to two visiting artists at a time in 2018. This may change as the residency grows and develops over time.*



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### **What does my living/work space look like?**

The Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center (SDCC) is a converted elementary school that opened in 1948, closed in the mid-1990s, and was lovingly renovated in the 2010s. It re-opened as a non-profit inn and event space in 2015 and is rapidly becoming a destination for artists, travelers, conferences, retreats and workshops. Please explore [our website](#) and visit our social media pages for reviews, photos and updates.

You will be housed at the SDCC in a kitchenette room with 1 king or 2 queen beds, private bath, seating area, desk, and a small kitchen with refrigerator, microwave and stovetop. While there will be other guests coming and going throughout your stay, the property is fairly quiet during early fall.

You will also be granted a large classroom as your studio space. Classrooms are approximately 800 square feet with counter space, artist's sink and large windows providing lots of natural light. Alternative work spaces may be available for artists working in clay, wood, performing arts, or that prefer outdoor workspace (keeping in mind that it is hot in Ajo in early fall). We also welcome culinary artists - we have a well-equipped commercial kitchen!

All rooms are on the ground level and one of those available for the residency is ADA-friendly. They face a central courtyard with an urban farm managed by the [Ajo Center for Sustainable Agriculture](#). The SDCC shares a large, historic school campus with the [Curley School Artisan Apartments](#), a permanent residence for artists owned by the same "parent non-profit" as the SDCC, [the International Sonoran Desert Alliance \(ISDA\)](#). ISDA is a member of the [Alliance of Artist Communities](#).

### **What are my financial obligations?**

Visiting artists will pay for their travel, most meals, and shipping of materials. Your kitchenette guest room, studio space, and a collection of "community perks" come at no cost to you.

### **Who is funding this residency?**

For this initial pilot, guest rooms and studio spaces are being donated by the Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center. The Ajo community (individuals, businesses, and fellow non-profits) is donating a number of "community perks", like use of a private pool, a bicycle, a golf cart, free yoga classes, and local products. We plan to seek funding in the future to allow us to support an ongoing, sustainable residency program.

### **Other obligations?**

You will be asked in your application to design a community contribution as a way to leave your mark on Ajo and inspire the community and fellow artists. This might take the shape of a talk, gallery show, demonstration, workshop, or a piece of artwork that stays behind. It will be developed and scheduled in consultation with the SDCC's Co-Directors.



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*As a pilot program, we will be seeking feedback and input from visiting artists to refine the program. This will likely include an exit interview and written survey upon conclusion of your residency.*

### **What are the general rules of the residency?**

*This residency is designed to allow focused, productive work time for individual artists. With this in mind, we do not allow pets, companions/spouses, children, or drug use. Smoking is allowed only in designated outdoor areas.*

### **What is the application process?**

*Complete the application, upload the required attachments (resume/CV and work samples) and submit by the stated deadline. There is no application fee.*

### **What is the review process?**

*A diverse selection committee composed of Ajo artists and community leaders will review the applications and make decisions. SDCC staff may contact you with follow-up questions or a request for a phone interview.*

### **How soon after the application deadline will I receive a response?**

*Applicants for the fall 2018 residency can expect a response by July 15th.*

## **MORE ABOUT AJO**

*Ajo is a hidden gem, a lovely town (population: 3,300) in the middle of the Sonoran Desert, 40 miles north of the US-Mexico border. It was a copper mining company town for most of the 20th century. When the mine closed in the 1980s, the town was devastated economically and the population dropped precipitously.*

*However, the mine company left behind beautiful buildings, a stunning town square, charming bungalows, and a core of devoted, multigenerational families who decided to stay put. Combine that with beautiful weather, a low cost of living, and an enormous desert backyard, and you have a wonderful setting for artists, artisans, and creatives of all types. It's a diverse community as well, with Anglo, Tohono O'odham and Mexican residents, and many winter visitors from all over the US and Canada who call Ajo home for ~6 months of the year.*

*Ajo is the gateway community to [Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument](#), a jewel of the National Park Service. The entrance is only 15 minutes away and is an amazing place to hike, explore, photograph, and get inspired. It's also only 2 hours from the Gulf of California, just over the Mexican border.*

*As much as locals might like to keep it a secret, Ajo is slowly being discovered by travelers, scholars, artists, and desert enthusiasts. Read more about Ajo [here](#) and [here](#).*



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*All of this being said: Ajo is no Scottsdale, Marfa or Provincetown. If you're looking for a resort, big-name galleries, or lush ocean breezes, this is the wrong place. Ajo is an isolated desert town, down-to-earth, authentic, and proud to be a little rough around the edges. Come here with an open mind, a big heart, and an appetite for adventure.*

### **Where is Ajo and how do I get there? Once I'm there, how do I get around?**

*Ajo is approximately 2 hours south of Phoenix and 2.5 hours west of Tucson. The nearest airport is Phoenix Sky Harbor, about 2 hours from Ajo. Ajo Transportation provides daily shuttle service from central Phoenix to Ajo.*

*Ajo is walkable, bikeable, and golf cartable (those last two will be provided to artists as part of our community perks!). Ajo Transportation provides door-to-door service anywhere in town for 75 cents. If you do bring a car, parking is available.*

### **Will I have any interaction with local artists?**

*Yes, there will be opportunities for potlucks and studio visits with residents at the Curley School Artisan Apartments and other local artists during your time in Ajo. We will also respect those visiting artists' who express a desire for privacy and limited interaction so they can focus on their work.*

### **Can I buy my supplies when I get to Ajo?**

*You will have to bring what you need or have it shipped; there is no art supply store in Ajo.*

### **What kind of services are there in Ajo?**

*The guest rooms at the SDCC do not have phones, so a cell phone is necessary. Verizon is the most reliable carrier here; others can be spotty. You will have hi-speed WiFi in your room and studio.*

*Our full-service supermarket, Olsen's IGA, is open 7 days a week. This is 2 miles away, a short ride or long walk from the SDCC.*

*The historic Ajo Plaza - also owned by ISDA, our parent non-profit - is a 5 minute walk from the SDCC. Here you will find:*

- *Harris & Smith Coffee Company*
- *The local library; visiting artists can apply for a library card*
- *The new ISDA Business Center*
- *The post office and FedEx drop box*
- *Ajo Resale, a second-hand store*
- *Two art galleries, Art Under the Arches and A Space in Time*
- *The Ajo Visitor Center, run by our Chamber of Commerce*
- *Bonzai Studio, a yoga and movement studio*



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- *The Community Market, which sells recently-expired (but entirely edible) packaged foods*
- *Ajo's Artists Alley, which is a collection of murals painted between 2015 and the present*

*Many Plaza businesses will be providing community perks to our visiting artists to sweeten their stay in Ajo and show them all of the wonderful things this town has to offer.*

*Desert Senita Community Health Center, our local clinic, offers basic medical, behavioral health and dental care, and has a full-service pharmacy. It is only open on weekdays. We recommend you bring a supply of all prescriptions.*

*We have a private ambulance company in Ajo. Emergency medical care can be reached in an hour by ambulance.*

*Please note: hours can be limited for Ajo businesses during the quiet early fall.*

### **How do I receive mail/packages?**

*Your name  
c/o Sonoran Desert Inn & Conference Center  
55 South Orilla Ave  
Ajo, AZ 85321*

### **OK, be honest: the desert. How hot is it?**

*We are piloting this residency during early fall because it is a quiet time of year in Ajo, which is conducive to focused work time. It is also the period where we have the flexibility to donate spaces at the SDCC for the residency. That said, the desert is **HOT** in early fall - often over 100 degrees during the day.*

*Your guest room and studio space are air conditioned. The Wood Shop and Clay Studio, for those who may need them, have evaporative coolers and can get hot in the afternoon.*

*Be aware that along with the heat come the big 3: snakes, scorpions and spiders (though you're unlikely to encounter these at the SDCC). The desert is a wild place and it is important to remember that while staying here. You should pack sunscreen, a hat, water bottle, closed-toe shoes, and light weight, long-sleeve shirts and pants. Bring your passport if you plan on a trip to Mexico and the Gulf of California - the beach is even closer than Phoenix!*