

Information about the MacGown Art Artist in Residence, Starkville, MS



The MacGown Art Retreat and Studio (MARS), established by Joe and Joseph MacGown, offers a rich creative backdrop for visiting artists, writers, musicians, scientists, and others. MARS is located at 211 Sessums Road, Starkville, MS (10 miles from the MSU campus and 15 minutes from the Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge) and rests upon a Cretaceous based Black Belt Prairie remnant.

The MacGowns' art styles are unique, and they have exhibited their artwork in numerous local, regional, national, and international exhibitions. Most recently, the MacGowns have established an artist in residence program. Residencies vary with some artists receiving stipends to others being provided free housing in exchange for work to others paying a small fee to stay. The residency is supported in part by the Del Rendon Foundation, the Mississippi Arts Commission, and private sponsors.

MARS encompasses just over 17 acres, and this rural property includes a mix of forested and open landscapes with trails and 3-acre pond. Several structures are on the property including the primary house where Joe MacGown resides with his wife Jennifer and daughter Emma Claire; an older house, the "art house", with an office, a room for storing and putting prints together, and a couple of bedrooms, bath, kitchen, living room, and washer and dryer; a small wood-working shop (connected to the art house); a studio (600 sq ft) with front and back covered areas; a pavilion and pier next the pond; a rustic guest cabin that we built with two small lofts, kitchen and bath, and washer and dryer (most artists have stayed here); and a building in progress (almost done) that will be used for various workshops and to exhibit art. Everything except our primary house is open to the artists, and our house is too, just let us know you are coming in. Currently neither the art house or cabin has WIFI, but WIFI is available in the studio and typically works at pavilion as well.

Kayaks are available for use on the pond, trails in the woods are well maintained, and a bike is available for use.



Information Needed for Artists to Apply to the Residency

Requirements and Considerations: To apply for the residency, you must be at least 21 years old. Ideally, artists should have their own transportation as we are ten miles from town. For artists flying in from other regions we will provide transportation when needed if the artist is unable to rent a vehicle. This opportunity will only work for artists who have a block of time ranging from one to three weeks (typically two weeks) either in the spring or fall to stay with us at MARS. This is not a couple's or family retreat, rather it is aimed at giving the resident artist time and space to fully devote to their art form. The only time a couple would be considered for the residency would be if each was an artist, especially if the couple worked together to produce their particular art form. Obviously, family, significant others, friends, and collaborators are welcome to visit and/or work with the artist. Artists should be aware that there is purposefully no WIFI in the guest cabin (or old house) where they would be housed, although they are welcome to use WIFI in the studio where I work on occasion. If regular WIFI is required for artists, then this residency will probably not work for you.

The most important thing I need from potential resident artists is a written statement explaining why you would like to be a resident artist at our place. I am looking for artists who I think will be compatible to working with us. I expect applicants to be familiar with our art and hopefully potential artists will research the Black Belt Prairie beforehand. MARS is located in a rural setting down a gravel road, and we are looking for artists who appreciate and love nature and natural history and who will be inspired by our place. I have an agreement that you will need to read and sign, but I need the other info first. We require a report (1-2 pages) to be given to us within two weeks after the residency period is over. We ask that each artist create something permanent that will be left on the property (inside or outside) such as a sculpture, painting mural, written work, movie or music files, etc.

To Apply: We need a bio, photo of the artist, 6-10 examples of your work (or links to your music, videos, written works, or whatever the case may be), links to your social media and websites, a statement as to why you want to be an artist in residence with us including what you hope to get out of it, goals, and possible dates you are interested in either in the fall or spring (at most we can host four artists per year, two in the fall and two in the spring).

Residencies are generally 1-3 weeks depending on many factors. Thanks to the philanthropic Del Rendon Foundation, the Mississippi Arts Commission, and private donors, we have been able to provide stipend for some artists. Stipends vary depending on our funding and length of stay. Stipends are paid by check to the artist in two installments, one at the beginning and the second near the end of the artist's stay. We house artists either in an older house on the property or typically in a small cabin depending on who may be in one or another. The older house is multi-use and less private. Housing is free, but artists should provide their own food, except for occasions when they join us for random meals (especially in the evening) if they wish. The residency is competitive, and we have a list of people who have submitted applications, so it's a good idea to get info to me as soon as possible. Submission of an application is not a guarantee that you will be a residence artist, nor is there a guarantee that if you are considered for a residency that it will be during the calendar year the application was submitted. Factors affecting when an accepted artist may be able to stay are based on our varying the types of artists coming in (2D, 3D, musicians, writers, filmmakers, etc.), mixing up where the artists are from (local, regional, national, or international), and the availability of when I can host the artists vs when they have time to come. For example, if I have an open slot in April of a given year, and I ask an artist if they can come stay for two weeks, but they can't, then someone else will be offered this opportunity. Ideally, for people from this area, I encourage potential artists to come visit with me first to make sure that the place will work.



The primary ideas/goals of the residency are for artists to have a dedicated and intensive period of time to work on their art without the normal day to day distractions, interact with visitors (scheduled or unscheduled), and to possibly collaborate with us. I set up a one night show locally for the artists if they wish, we typically get great coverage with local newspapers and other media, usually a podcast interview with Alan Aldridge of Porchtalk, and we invite people to come visit the artists.

I'd recommend that potential resident artists follow me on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/MacGownArt>) and Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/macgown_art), visit my website at <https://www.joemacgown.com>, and type MacGown Art Retreat and Studio into Google to check out pictures and more of our place.

Potential applicants should send correspondence to Joe MacGown art@joemacgown.com.

Joe MacGown, Director of MARS
211 Sessums Rd
Starkville, MS 39759
art@joemacgown.com
1-662-418-5286.