

inquiline

art and cultivation



Parks + Art: Iris Film Collective at Falaise Fieldhouse, Vancouver

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In Vancouver Canada, I'm researching the innovative and unique Artist Studio Residency Programme in parks and park facilities as part of my WCMT Travel Fellowship (<http://www.wcmt.org.uk/fellows/news/150-fellowships-awarded-2016>) looking at innovation in participation in public urban green space (<https://inquilines.com/wcmt-fellowship-research-blog/>).

Evolving from a pilot project in 2011, the Vancouver Park Board artist studio residencies program now includes over 50 artists (solo or part of collectives) that work out of field houses, park facilities, marinas, and community centres. The program provides work-only studios for artists in exchange for community arts-based engagement.



My first meeting on this two week stay in the city is with Lisa G (<http://lisagertrud.com/>) of the Iris Film Collective (<http://www.irisfilmcollective.com/>) who have been in residence at the Falaise Fieldhouse in East Vancouver since 2015.

Iris Film Collective is a Vancouver-based group of independent artists creating, exhibiting and touring film-based works—single channel, expanded, sculptural, installation—with the goal of increasing the visibility and accessibility of experimental media art. Their particular interest is in ciné film—actual celluloid—at a time when this

medium is shifting to a post-industry model. IFC's Alex MacKenzie's Blinding Light (<http://www.blindinglight.com/>) cinema (now archived) was an inspiration model.

Currently Lisa G is working as part of the Our World (<http://www.ourworldlanguage.com/p/about-our-world.html>) team which visits remote First Nations communities to provide access to media arts training as a means of artistic & cultural expression, and integrating First Nations language into films as part of revitalization efforts.

Iris Film Collective have a 3 year residency at Falaise Park Fieldhouse with a total of 8 members who use the park house as a studio to make and produce work, sometimes individually, sometimes collectively. Needing cheap, consistent and good quality studio space is essential for the group, and affordable studio space is particularly hard to come by in Vancouver.



In exchange for the free studio space at Falaise Park, Iris give 350 hours per year back to the community and neighbourhood

through participatory and social arts activity. This can manifest as workshops, open studios, film screenings or other events: go to the [Iris Collective Fieldhouse blog \(http://irisfieldhouse.tumblr.com/\)](http://irisfieldhouse.tumblr.com/) to see what they do at Falaise.

One of the great intentions of this residency programme is that it directly support artists in making and creating new work. It also enables art to be made on site, directly celebrating working artists. IFC use the studio to make their own films (including turning some of the Fieldhouse into a dark room for film processing), to share their work publicly on site and to create activities for the neighbourhood.



One of the challenges of the programme is of course in meeting with and connecting with the people local to the site. The Fieldhouse is located at the top of Falaise Park, and tucked back beside the playground – it's not a particularly obvious place to connect or visit. Lisa talks about being especially interested in furthering their localised activity over the remainder of their residency. Some of the IFC members are more confident than others; artists inevitably have different skills in social participation and in working

with people from non-arts contexts. What is positive about the Fieldhouse Residency programme is that it gives artists room to learn about how they can connect with a specific place and its surrounding neighbourhood, and that takes time, thought and patience, which is why at least 3 years are allowed for the residency. Through its events programme, IFC also attract artists from other parts of Vancouver to visit Falaise which is part of the wider circulation in the city.

Iris have run screenings in the park, on the grass – the flickering film in the dark draws people passing by – as well as showing films in the studio itself. Iris host a monthly screening of 'work in progress' where members of the collective show and discuss new work.

On October 1st, Iris are part of the [Big Draw 2016 \(http://www.drawvancouver.com/\)](http://www.drawvancouver.com/), a city-wide Festival, with a free draw-on-film workshop and screening, with an outdoor film loop installation in the park.

As a collective they are into creating a welcoming place, providing food alongside hosted events. And IFC are enjoying the residency – *"we don't want it to end!"*