



May 3, 2021

AIC-IAC  
Musée Ariana  
10 Avenue de la Paix  
1202 Geneva – Switzerland

To whom this concerns:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this application on behalf of the Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts in Maine, USA for an Affiliated Membership. Below is an overview of Watershed's history and programming.

### **Mission**

The mission of Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts is to provide artists time and space to explore ideas with clay in a community environment. Our rural setting - 54 acres in mid-coast Maine surrounded by farms and forests - is a source of inspiration for artists. Watershed's residencies, workshops, educational initiatives, kiln facilities, artist talks and public events, serve the local, national and international clay communities.

### **Organizational History/Background**

Founded in 1986, Watershed's internationally recognized residency model prioritizes the development of creative community. Nestled in a coastal Maine valley, the Watershed campus provides artists with time and space free from obligations and distractions. In the summer and fall, small groups of artists from across the US and abroad come to the Center for two to four-week sessions. Artists work alongside one another in an open-concept studio, collaborate on kiln firings, share meals, and forge lasting personal and professional connections. Many artists work with indigenous marine clay, a vestige of Watershed's origins as a brick-making factory.

Each residency is anchored by a group of four to eight artists who develop a session theme a year in advance. Up to twelve additional artists then join the group, drawn by an interest in the work of the anchoring artists and/or the session theme. Residency themes include a wide range of technical, critical, cultural, and ideological focuses.

Annually, over 2,000 adults and youth are impacted by Watershed's community programs. Guest artist workshops bring contemporary leaders in ceramics to Maine for hands-on learning experiences. For young and aspiring artists, Watershed's educational program

connects teaching artists with schools and community centers and offers popular professional development workshops for K-12 art educators.

Watershed's extensive atmospheric wood and gas kiln facilities consistently draw artists from the region. Potters and artists from the Northeast regularly trek to Watershed to fire kilns not available elsewhere.

In Maine and around the country, Watershed showcases the work of ceramic masters and emerging artists through exhibitions and presentations. Watershed's gallery features work by artists produced during or inspired by their Watershed experiences. The gallery is located in a stunning renovated Victorian home that also provides a space for year-round artist talks and community events.

Attached is a brief sample of Watershed programs over the past few years.

Our Annual Reports are available to easily view on our website here:

<https://www.watershedceramics.org/support/annual-report/>

Our reports include photographs and more detailed descriptions of our program accomplishments!

## **The Watershed NOW Capital Campaign**

In 2017, Watershed created a master plan for campus improvements with a vision that offers fully accessible, sustainable, and cost-efficient facilities. Through the **Watershed NOW** capital campaign, we are enhancing the on-campus experience by providing inspiring spaces where artists can connect and create year-round. We have already made significant progress toward our **Watershed NOW** campaign goals including:

- **A new gallery, public event space, outdoor exhibition area, campus shop, and year-round administrative offices**

In 2018, Watershed had the unexpected opportunity to purchase a large Victorian house on 22 acres of land adjacent to our campus. The property provided a cost-effective way to meet a number of facility needs. Renovation of The Joan Pearson Watkins House was completed in spring 2019.

- **A new Studio Annex**

The 1,280 sq ft annex adds flexible space for programming, storage, and facility maintenance activities. Completed in summer 2020, this cost-efficient, fully weatherized building provides adjunct space adjacent to our studio.

- **A New Studio**

Watershed is currently completing construction of a new studio that will enable us to offer hands-on programming throughout the year in a safe, healthy and ADA compliant building. With campus programs on hold due to COVID-19 in 2020,

Watershed's leadership saw an opportunity to pursue building the new state-of-the-art studio while the campus was quiet. Although we did not plan to start construction until fall 2021, we decided to make the most of this unprecedented time to fast-track construction plans and began building this necessary space a year ahead of schedule.

The design for the state-of-the-art 7,500 sq ft studio includes:

- Single-level floor plan with easy access to clay and glaze materials and Watershed's outdoor kiln pad. An important goal of the studio design is to enable artists to safely and efficiently move work, including large sculptures, from the studio to the kilns;
- Glaze room, plaster room, and spray booth;
- Full accessibility and ADA compliance;
- Energy efficient temperature regulation in all seasons;
- Comprehensive air filtration, ventilation, and waste management systems; and
- 4,800 square feet of open-concept studio space.

Floor plans and architectural drawings of the exterior of the building are attached, along with a recent news article about the project.

### **Watershed's Future Plans**

With the new studio, we will extend our program season and engage a larger, more diverse population. This year-round facility will allow us to:

- Expand and Enrich Programs for Artists
  - Provide new workshops and longer term and specialized residencies during the colder months, while continuing our signature summer residency programs.
  - Create more programming opportunities in partnership with Maine and regional organizations that support BIPOC artists, as well as national and international organizations.
  - Build on the legacy of our program for people living with HIV/AIDS (1992 to 2004) to provide therapeutic retreats for populations who can benefit from clay-centric creative practice.
  - Increase and diversify offerings for local artists, such as studio rentals and guided kiln firing workshops.
- Contribute to Maine's Cultural Economy

In recent years, interest in the ceramic arts is growing. Artists who work in clay are gaining greater exposure in major galleries and museums around the country. Local

clay studios are enjoying an increase in student enrollment and leaders in the local food movement have fueled an interest in handmade tableware. Watershed is a unique Maine organization that connects with all of these interests. We aim to provide more opportunities for people to experience and enjoy the ceramic arts.

- Engage the Next Generation of Artists
  - Welcome clay guilds, colleges, and youth programs for retreats and workshops.
  - Explore new partnerships with college art programs (i.e. January term programs) to extend learning beyond facilities and equipment available on campuses, engage more students in the residency experience and be a resource for more specialized experimentation.
  - Expand professional development opportunities for K-12 art educators throughout the school year.
  - Offer special programs for high school groups, such as one-day Raku firings.

I hope this overview and the attached materials provide adequate evidence of Watershed's professional activities. I would be pleased to answer any questions or provide additional information as necessary.

Thank you for consideration of this application.

Sincerely,



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