

## 1. ABOUT EMPAC

The Curtis R. Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center is a world-class facility bringing together scientific discovery, technological and artistic innovation, in order to move into, and support, new domains of inquiry, research and learning. Located in upstate New York, on the campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, EMPAC hosts artists and researchers year-round to create and present work.

EMPAC supports residencies in all areas of inter, multi and single media; fixed media; performance; and interactive practice. Their work is focused on time-based arts, with an emphasis on integrating technology as artistic means and an integral part of the content-based development of a project.

An EMPAC residency can take many forms. Most often, the major contribution is time and space. In this scenario, the residency primarily supports the development of a project in a focused environment with feedback from the curatorial staff. EMPAC's residency program provides an environment that supports the realisation of complex works at any stage from inception to completion. Along with a state-of-the-art facility, it offers residents the support of a staff of experts in audio, video, interactive interfaces, and stage technologies.

### **Australia Council residency at EMPAC**

EMPAC's major contribution to this residency is time and space, to support the development of a project in a focused environment with feedback from the curatorial staff, if desired.

## 2. STUDIO – ACCOMMODATION

EMPAC's 220,000 square-foot building is a signature work of architecture that brings together four main venues (a 400 seat theatre, a 1200 seat concert hall, and two flexible black-box studios), as well as many smaller studios and lab spaces, under one roof. All can be used independently and simultaneously, allowing the centre to present events, host student gatherings, and dedicate space to research and residencies – all at the one time.

More about the amazing architecture of the building:

<http://www.arcspace.com/features/grimshaw-architects/empac/>

Residents receive accommodation in an apartment near the EMPAC campus.



### **Amenities Provided**

Bed linens, towels, hand soap, first aid kit, pots and pans, Tupperware, plates, bowls, silverware, cooking utensils, wine glasses, coffee cups, other cups, salt & pepper, coffee maker, tea kettle, coffee filters, laundry detergent.

### **Not provided**

Food, toiletries (due to potential allergies to these products of residents).

### **Internet**

There is a wireless internet connection throughout EMPAC. Details on how to access this are provided by EMPAC upon arrival.

### **Families and guests**

Collaborators are provided the same facilities as artists-in-residence and may receive their own residency letters. The artist must notify EMPAC ahead of time if they intend to have family or guests stay with them in RPI housing; this is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Accessibility**

EMPAC is committed to access and diversity in all areas of operation, including service delivery, communication and publicity, staffing, and governance. Access needs for living quarters during a residency can be accommodated upon request.

## **3. STUDIO – WORKSPACE & FACILITIES**

### **Research, Production, and Performance Venues**

All four of the venues are designed to be extraordinarily quiet (a maximum noise floor of 15dB) and are structurally decoupled from each other. The spaces have reverberation times ranging from 2.8 seconds in the Concert Hall to 0.5 in Studio 1. Both studios and the Concert Hall have adjustable, acoustically absorptive banners to tune the reverberation time.

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**EMPAC RESIDENCY INFORMATION PACKAGE** – This information package was prepared October 2018, based on material that was as accurate as possible at the time of publication. We will amend this package as new information becomes available.

Each venue has its own control and machine room. There is a dedicated audio and video network throughout the building. All venues can be connected to a centralised audio and video production suite, each other, and many other locations within the building. The audio matrix (LAWO) can accommodate more than 5000 x 5000 channels. The video matrix (Harris) handles up to 162 inputs x 190 outputs video channels of raw video stream.

Use of the larger venues can either be part of a residency that spans inception to completion or can be for a residency needing the venue for the whole duration. This will be considered when discussing the residency.

### **Concert Hall**

1,165 fixed seats (some removable seating) and 108 loose seats; a 50' x 30' projection screen with digital cinema projector (Stereoscopic 30K lumen, 2048 x 1080); and 60 chain hoist positions in the ceiling for hanging trusses, screens, etc. The theatrical lighting package includes 373 sine wave dimmers, follow spot booth, multichannel audio and video infrastructure, and adjustable acoustical banners.

### **Theatre**

400 fixed seats; 40' x 80' stage; resilient flooring; 60' flytower; and computer controlled rigging: 18 movable line sets, eight spotline winches, and an orchestra pit. The theatrical lighting package includes 468 sine wave dimmers, a digital cinema projector (Stereoscopic 30k lumen, 2048 x 1080), 50' x 30' projection screen, and multichannel audio and video infrastructure.

### **Studio 1**

No permanent seating or staging; 66'x51' floor area; resilient flooring; walkable grid at 32.9'; eight spotline winches with additional chain hoists possible; 192 sine wave dimmers; multichannel audio and video infrastructure; computer controlled rigging with performer flying capability; and adjustable acoustical banners.

### **Studio 2**

No permanent seating or staging; 44' x 55' floor area; resilient flooring; walkable grid at 18'; 12 chain hoists; 192 sine wave dimmers; multichannel audio and video infrastructure; and adjustable acoustical banners.

## **Production and Research Support Spaces**

### **Audio and Video Production Rooms**

While the audio and video systems each run on a matrix-based fibre-optic network, there is both an audio and video production room that is ideal for all manner of production, post-production, and even broadcast.

### **Residency Studios**

There are three dedicated, isolated spaces for a particular artist, researcher, or group while in residence. These are ideal as a study, office, workspace, or for

contained work using computers for audio or video. They may be used for developing work, programming, editing, thinking etc.

Each studio's infrastructure is specifically configured to each residency and has an equipment closet to house loud electronics.

### **Equipment: Audio, Video, and Theater Technologies**

EMPAC has high-end audio and video equipment available, including HD video cameras, projectors, an array of small and large projectors and screens, an extensive collection of microphones, a large pool of loudspeakers, and many other pieces of production equipment. In addition, there are two digital projection 2K projectors with 30,000 ANSI lumens, and a Sony 4K projector with 10,000 ANSI lumens available.

There are woodshop and welding capacities on the premises, as well as other possibilities for fabrication; however there is not a large, permanent scene shop or fabrication space. Spanning all venues, there is an extensive lighting inventory. Additionally, there are two upright and four grand pianos, each with different characters (Fazioli, Bosendorfer, Hamburg Steinway, and Yamaha Disklavier Pro).

### **Staff**

EMPAC has a full staff of experts to support projects: audio and video engineers, lighting specialists, rigger/carpenter, curatorial team, information technology specialists, and research engineers. Residents are encouraged to bring their own teams of experts in addition to utilising EMPAC support staff.

## **4. LOCAL AREA**

### **General information**

EMPAC is located two and a half hours north of New York City via train, up the Hudson River, an easy day trip from the Berkshires or Saratoga Springs, and across the river and just north of Albany, NY. The institute is also just under three hours by car from Boston or Montreal.

Located on the campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the nation's oldest technological research university, EMPAC overlooks Troy, a city that played a central role in the Industrial Revolution and that still preserves some of the 19th century's best architecture.

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute occupies a 275 acre hilltop campus, located in the heart of New York's Capital Region, putting a world of cultural and recreational opportunities within reach. This area offers both a relaxed lifestyle and easy access to the high-energy metropolitan centres of the Northeast.

Additional information about the region can be found at <http://bit.ly/RPIregion>

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**When in New York City, remember that:**

**Tippling is customary and expected** – around 15% in bars, restaurants and taxis. A sales tax of around 8.87% is added at the cash register for goods and services – this is not indicated on the displayed price. There is no tax on clothing and footwear under \$110 in New York.

**Public transport** is quick and reliable with extensive bus and subway systems. It is not advisable to use the subway after peak hour in the evenings. Subway maps are available free from most subway stations. Bus maps and other tourist information are available from the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau at 2 Columbus Circle (West 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway), and at City Hall Park.

**Banks** are open from 9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. An account can be opened for the duration of the residency. The Commonwealth Bank works in conjunction with the Bank of New York so you should contact them before you leave Australia.

**ATMs** are readily available and accept most credit cards and bank transaction cards linked with Cirrus or NYCE. Some banks allow withdrawal of cash over the counter using a debit card, but you must present your passport as ID. No fee is charged. ATMs charge a minimum fee of \$3 for withdrawals using a US debit card. Travel cards (debit cards that work like a credit card but are pre-loaded with your funds) are accepted. They can be used in ATMs or at businesses, and often incur the same withdrawal fee as a regular credit card. All money over \$1 becomes paper—check notes carefully as all denominations are green and of the same size.

**The electricity voltage** is 110 or 120V. Appliances of different voltage require a transformer or travel plug.

**Weather**

Winters in New York can be very cold, around 30F/0C, however buildings are generally well heated. Summers, particularly July and August, are usually very hot and humid.

**5. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

**2020/2021**

<b>1 January</b>	New Year's Day
<b>20 January</b>	Martin Luther King Day
<b>17 February</b>	President's Day
<b>25 May</b>	Memorial Day
<b>4 July</b>	Independence Day
<b>7 September</b>	Labor Day
<b>12 October</b>	Columbus Day
<b>26 November</b>	Thanksgiving Day
<b>25 December</b>	Christmas Day

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## 6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Australia Council leases the work/live studio and covers the costs of rent and outgoings, such as heating and electricity. EMPAC manages and administers the studio, which includes purchasing necessary items, organising repairs and arranging for bills, such as electricity and municipal council tax to be paid.

Artists are responsible for supplying their own food and personal requirements during the period of the residency, as well as any costs associated with the production of artwork.

## 7. INSURANCE

Artists are responsible for organising and paying for their own travel insurance for their residency, including health insurance that is required by their country of residence. Proof of cover should be provided to Australia Council prior to commencing the residency.

Please note that neither Australia Council nor EMPAC will be held responsible for loss, damage or accidents occurring within or relative to the residential studio. Artists are responsible for any damage caused to the building or inventory (beyond normal wear and tear) and must report this to EMPAC immediately.

## 8. OVERSEAS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

You make your own travel arrangements, at your own expense, after notification of your successful application for the studio/payment of your grant.

The residency can only occur within the time period nominated by the Australia Council in your agreement. In exceptional circumstances, it is sometimes possible to amend your arrival and departure dates by a reasonable period. If you wish to change your dates, please contact the Australia Council at least four weeks before travelling.

**Before finalising your travel arrangements you should contact Ian Hamelin at EMPAC**, by phone or email, to let him know your plans and ensure that access can be arranged for your intended day of arrival. **You will need to plan your arrival during EMPAC office opening hours** (10am – 5pm, Monday to Friday).

Please inform the Australia Council of your itinerary before travelling.

## 9. VISA REQUIREMENTS

The Australia Council does not advise or provide information on visas. For up-to-date entry visa requirements, you must check with the appropriate embassy or consulate and arrange your visa requirements well in advance of your departure date.

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All Australian travellers are strongly encouraged to check the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs website [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) prior to travel.

## **10. PARTICIPATION**

The Australia Council works in partnership with residency providers to ensure that residents maximise their residency experience by engaging with the international arts community.

We encourage residents to maintain contact with their hosts throughout their residency and to participate in the social and networking activities offered as part of the residency program.

While you may conduct short trips away from the residency, it is expected that you are not absent for an extended period of time.

## **11. CONSIDERATION**

While you are on your residency, you'll be sharing facilities with a diversity of artists from around the world. We expect that you approach your fellow residents with respect, tolerance and consideration of their different backgrounds, cultures and orientations.

Please keep in mind that your studio will be passed on to another of your peers. Your consideration in leaving the space reasonably clean and tidy is appreciated. Please report any missing or damaged facilities to the residency provider and/or your Australia Council contact.

## **12. GETTING TO EMPAC**

**The main building entrance and box office are located on the EAST (campus) side of the building and accessible from the College avenue parking garage.**

### **Driving Directions**

From the North: Take I-87, the Adirondack Northway, South to Exit 7 East. Get on Route 7 headed Eastbound. Follow directions to campus (below).

From the South: Take I-87, the New York State Thruway, North to Exit 23. At Exit 23, get on I-787 North to Route 7 East. Follow directions to campus (below).

From the East: From I-90 (Massachusetts Turnpike, Berkshire Spur of the New York Thruway), take Exit B1. Continue West (13.5 miles) to the exit for I-787. Take I-787 North to Route 7 East. Follow directions to campus (below).

From the West: Take I-90, the New York State Thruway, to Exit 24. From Exit 24, continue onto I-90 East. Exit onto I-787 North. Take I-787 North to Route 7 East.

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Follow directions to campus (below).

Directions to Campus: From Route 7 East, get in the right lane, make a right at the FOURTH light onto Fifteenth Street. Follow 15th Street about 1 mile through two lights. You will pass under the Rensselaer footbridge. At the third light, turn right onto College Avenue. The parking garage will be one block down on your right. EMPAC is located ~200 meters further West on the right.

**Transportation:**

**Albany-Rensselaer Amtrak Station**

555 East St  
Rensselaer, NY 12144  
518.462.5763  
[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

**Albany International Airport**

737 Albany-Shaker Road  
<http://www.albanyairport.com/>