Artist-in-Residence, Open Call

Reimagining Data is a new Artist-in-Residence opportunity at the Exploratorium in collaboration with Google Arts & Culture Lab. The residency invites an artist to explore and create a new kind of interface for data inquiry.

Exploratorium's Wired Pier dataset offers an initial starting point. For over a decade, the Exploratorium has been home to dozens of environmental sensors which constantly monitor local bay water, weather, and atmospheric conditions. These sensors are connected to scientific observing programs across the Bay Area and Pacific coast, offering a hyper local starting point with the potential for global connection. It is particularly useful in the context of this residency because it is clean, well understood, collected and maintained by us, and can be grounded in visitors' direct experience of the environment around Pier 15. At the same time, its sensors are part of larger networks, providing a pathway for expanding from the local to the regional, national, and international.

A key component of this residency is the opportunity to collaborate with Exploratorium's scientist in residence, Melissa Lunden, whose practice is rooted in air quality and climate research. Melissa's work as an atmospheric scientist has led to experiments in unconventional locations - from Sierra Nevada forests and urban subways to Grand Central Station and commercial buildings.

Of particular interest are artists who are interested in exploring how interfaces might adapt to the ways people naturally wonder, explore, and express themselves through language, drawing, visualization, movement, and action.

This residency will begin with a research phase and conclude with what we hope will be a public interactive prototype, hosted on Google Arts & Culture Lab and installed on the Exploratorium's floor.

Artist in Residence Expectations and Project Timeline

Phase 1: Discovery and Play
In this first phase of the residency, the AIR will be onboarded to the Exploratorium and begin meeting with the Scientist in Residence and Exploratorium staff. The working cohort will be mentored by the Program Director, Artists in Residence with support from the Senior Director, Science Research and Development and the Director, Visitor Research and Evaluation. The AIR will also receive technical mentorship from Google Arts & Culture Lab.

Phase 2: Ideas to Prototypes
During the second phase of this project, the artist, scientist, and an Exploratorium exhibit developer will focus first on the ideas they'd like to explore and move into a rapid prototyping process. The goal of this process, supported by visitor evaluation, will be to narrow in on which prototypes they want to take into a high fidelity prototype.

Phase 3: Functioning Prototypes and Refinement
The third phase of this project will build on the foundation created in phases 1 and 2 and will produce 1-2 prototypes that can be evaluated with visitors on the Exploratorium's floor and hosted as interactive experiments on Google Arts & Culture Lab. In this phase, the Exploratorium will also gather data and observations on visitor interactions with the pieces.

Skills and Experience

Interested artists should have a broad technological knowledge base and skillset as well as a foundation as an artist. Candidates should also expect to spend a significant amount of time at the Exploratorium and be geographically located in the Bay Area.

In addition to a robust creative portfolio, this skillset might include any number of the following:

- A solid understanding of AI/ML concepts and their applications.
- Experience designing with AI and integrating AI into creative processes.
- Interest in and knowledge of creating public-facing, informal learning experiences.
- Familiarity with complex datasets and interest in translating them into meaningful experiences.
- Experience collaborating on interdisciplinary teams and projects.
- Strong conceptual thinking and the ability to articulate and communicate ideas effectively.
- Experience in rapid prototyping processes ranging from screen based applications to physical interventions.

Please note, this residency is appropriate for an artist with technological skills but artists will also be supported by technical and developmental mentorship at the Exploratorium and from Google Arts & Culture Lab.

Compensation: $50,000 over the course of 12 months

This residency is made possible by support from Google Arts and Culture Lab.

Application Questions

1. The Exploratorium values curiosity, research, and experimentation as a part of the art making process. Provide one detailed example that describes how curiosity, experimentation, and research are a part of your practice. **(750 character limit)**

2. What is your experience working with large data sets? Please share a specific example of how you've engaged with, interpreted, or incorporated data into your work. **(750 character limit)**

3. Do you have experience with rapid prototyping? Please share a specific example of how you've used it in your work. **(750 character limit)**

4. Tell us about a time you worked with an interdisciplinary team. What was your role, what did you contribute, and what did you learn from the collaboration? **(750 character limit)**

5. Our aim and intent is for the project central to this residency to emerge as a part of the collaboration with the Exploratorium. That said, if you have a project you'd like to develop while at the Exploratorium, please share it here. **(750 character limit)**