



artscorp..

Award-winning architect Todd Saunders creates stunning new studios for Fogo Island Arts Corporation

A series of artist studios are being built in various locations on Fogo Island as part of the Fogo Island Arts Corporation's new Residency Program, launched in June 2010. Studios will be built in remote settings on Fogo Island, while traditional Newfoundland homes in various communities will be restored in order to become artists' residences. Artists will come from around the world to live and work in the area for up to several months at a time.

The studios were designed in 2008-2009, with construction taking place in 2009-2010. The Long Studio, inaugurated on June 2, 2010 is the first of the studios to open.

This backgrounder offers an up-close look at three of the buildings: the Long Studio, the Tower Studio and the Writing Studio.

All three structures are bold geometric structures built off the grid. They stand in contrast to the harsh, yet beautiful natural environment, while silently complementing it. The main concept behind the layout of each studio is to observe the surrounding environment during its transitions through the various seasons in which the studios will be used: spring, summer and fall.

The studios are all oriented towards the sea and elevated above the ground to provide the resident artist with a feeling of being unobstructed and unbound. This type of construction allows the studios to be placed almost anywhere on the island. In addition, this model allows for the studios to be prefabricated in a local workshop during the winter months, and then placed in the landscape in the spring.

The materials and construction methods chosen reflect that of the local architecture of Fogo Island. The environment will leave its marks on the studios by weathering the structures over time.

One of the goals in designing these buildings is to create structures that respect where we've come from and dignify this landscape that is so fragile, yet so fearsome. The structures are

intended to touch the imagination and help maintain a connection between the past and the future.



The Long Studio – 120^{m2}

The Long Studio is designed in response to the transition from one season to the next. The studio is organized in a linear form that consists of three different spaces. An open but covered area representing spring marks the entrance to the studio, and the beginning of seasonal activity. The central portion is left open and mostly exposed – fully immersed in the light and views offered by the long summer days on Fogo Island. The far end of the studio is fully enclosed, providing an area of solitude and protection from the outside environment, while still offering a connection to the landscape through a strategically framed view of the dramatic surroundings.

The linear structure of the Long Studio maximizes the amount of open wall and floor space. Large windows at either end – and a skylight on the studio's roof – allow as much natural light as possible to flood the space. To avoid any visual distractions inside the space, we have made one of the walls a metre deep, so it can house storage space, toilets and washbasins, with doors that are flush with the wall.

The studio is placed on pillars at the end closest to the sea, while the entrance area has a small concrete foundation for anchoring the building to the landscape.



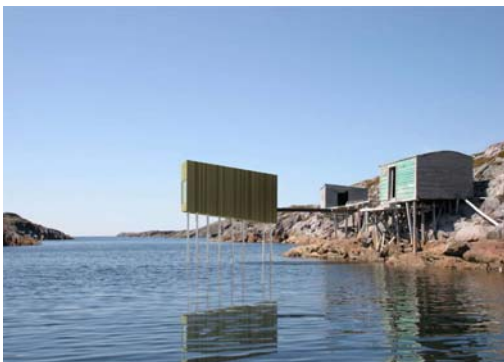
The Tower Studio – 80^{m2}

This studio is a vertical landmark – a 3-storey structure in an otherwise horizontal landscape. Often the best way to accentuate a landscape is to set an object in complete contrast to its surroundings within it.

The general impression the building gives is of an object standing tall and proud in this often-harsh landscape. The form is composed of twisting planes reminiscent of an origami brain-teaser. All four façades are different. The tower will always appear tall – yet it will look different from all directions.

The lower floor is a simple storage area that can also be used as extra studio space. A staircase leads to a room whose height is the equivalent of two storeys. The north side features a large window, and wraps around the western façade. The view is to the north and towards the sea, thus providing the diffused daylight most artists prefer.

A sculptural-looking staircase leads up 6 metres and opens onto the roof terrace – an excellent place for artists to work on warm days, from late spring until early fall. This vantage point allows for spectacular 360-degree views of the dramatic surrounding landscapes.



The Writing Studio - 26^{m2}

This small, one-room studio is a place for contemplation. The studio is a small enclosure with few distractions, allowing one to concentrate on the art of writing. We have decided to disconnect the studio from the land and place it on pilings in the water – thus creating its

own “island.” A long plank walkway stretches over water to the actual studio. The exterior form is a simple box tilted upwards toward the view of the ocean. The interior is divided into two areas. The upper level offers a wide and deep desk situated towards the view of the sea. To the right of the desk are small shelves where writers can keep their immediate materials close at hand.

We have built a small intimate library on the lower level. This is a place where one can retreat from the working space and relax in a comfortable chair – to read, daydream, procrastinate and perhaps even enjoy a glass of whiskey. Here, writers can have their own library, with additional books on Fogo Island and Newfoundland also available.

Contemporary artists and innovators will be invited to spend time here and make these high-quality, innovative studios and unique locations their own. Fogo Island can serve as a reference for their creations – providing meaningful glimpses into what was, what is – and whatever there is to come.

For more information on the Fogo Island Arts Corporation, please contact Elísabet Gunnarsdóttir, Director, Tel. 1 (709) 270 0011 / elisabet@shorefast.org

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