

Tiny Circus Summer Participant Information
June 15 – July 15, 2012
Grinnell, Iowa

Thanks for your interest in Tiny Circus! The information below will help you to prepare for your time under the big top.

If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please feel free to contact Tiny Circus at tinycircus@gmail.com.

What is Tiny Circus?

Tiny Circus travels to host stop-motion animation workshops for all ages at schools and universities, art and film festivals, museums and galleries. A core group of Circus members facilitates each workshop, and the participants become members of the circus – we now number over 1000!

Tiny Circus was born out of a desire to create art collaboratively and a commitment to making that art an interactive and community-based endeavor.

Tiny Circus collaborates with community partners to facilitate the creation of their own stop-motion animation. The short films are alternate “histories” of objects, occurrences, and ideas – like popcorn, war, or adaptation. The new animation is then presented as part of our show "The Other Histories of the World" as a finale to the workshop. Thus, our audiences can see animations created by their own community members in the context of animations created elsewhere.

The summer 2012 session will be dedicated to expanding our repertoire of animation methods and techniques. There will be anywhere from 4-20 people in residence at any one time. While some projects may involve the entire group, smaller collaborative teams will also form with the goal of developing a specific animation idea. The summer is a blank slate! If you can imagine it, we can animate it together. Come prepared to think-out-loud, negotiate, collaborate, build, work, play. No experience is necessary.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Grinnell, Iowa

Grinnell is a small college town in an idyllic part of Iowa. It is safe, easy to bike around, has a great coffee shop, a locally owned grocery store, and a supportive local community. There are parks for hiking, a 20 mile bike path, a brand new swimming pool and a lake for swimming.

A Circus Summer

Being a part of Tiny Circus means that you will have a fantastic and unique summer, unlike any other! You will be part of a close-knit group of creative people that is united in a goal to make creativity available to all. A summer in Grinnell means lots of exhilarating hard work on animations, community workshops, and renovation on the tiny circus house; and it all pays off with fantastic food, bonfires, popcorn, swimming, bike riding, and dance parties. We work hard and play hard.

Calendar

The Tiny Circus Summer Session runs from June 15th to July 15th. Please fill out the attached application in order to let us know when you are available to come work with us. We recommend a stay of 7 days or more, but any time period will work. You might plan to come for a week and then end of staying all summer.

Participation Fee

Tiny Circus operates on a low budget – a \$10-a-day contribution from each participant covers food and living expenses.

A deposit of 50% of your total contribution is required as a deposit four weeks in advance of your arrival. The balance is due when you arrive at the Circus.

Volunteer Orientation

When you arrive at Tiny Circus Headquarters you'll meet the current Circus and will fit yourself into the House, Grounds, and Current Projects.

Housing

Tiny Circus House is a big (3000 square feet) "prairie colonial" house right next to downtown Grinnell. It is currently in a state of renovation (work will be ongoing this summer). It has eight bedrooms, two baths, and large

common rooms for collaboration. A new studio will provide animating and workspace this summer.

Tiny Circus is a rotating cast of participants and it will be more and less crowded at different points in the summer. Please note you will probably not have private sleeping spaces but will make every effort to make sure you are comfortable given our limitations! Bring your own bedding, sheets, blankets, sleeping bag, pillow, whatever will make you comfortable. Please bring your own tent if you wish to sleep outside. We have mattresses.

Tiny Circus has a washer and dryer on site.

Tiny Circus house is about a block from Grinnell's brand-new library, and four blocks from downtown (a great coffee shop, local grocery, a favorite pub). In the other direction, a soft-serve stand is four blocks away.

Food

Tiny Circus eats three meals per day. Breakfast is continental and self-serve. Lunch and Dinner are family style. Your role as a participant will involve some cooking and cleaning for meals.

Our meals are varied and eclectic and serve both meat eaters and vegetarians. Bring snacks or fresh produce to share with the circus if you can! Your \$10 per day contribution pays for these meals.

Weather

Iowa is usually pleasant and mild during the summer. June can bring thunderstorms and occasionally severe weather. Bring rain gear. Our housing is not air-conditioned.

Labor

Circus participants will share in daily chores. These include but are not limited to: preparing and cooking dinner, shopping, gardening, laundry, cleaning, taking photos, blogging, yard work...

In addition to these daily chores, Tiny Circus will dedicate one day a week to light construction/renovation work on the Tiny Circus House. This might entail anything from putting up drywall to landscaping, painting and sanding.

Participants who are unable to complete the required weekly workday due to time restrictions, family, or physical restrictions, may pay an additional \$10 per day to offset the housing costs.

Communal Living

Tiny Circus life is communal - meaning we share close living and work spaces. In general, this means you will need to think about others as you go about your daily routine – you might not have a private bedroom! On the positive side, you'll make great new friends and get to participate in a workplace that is free of hierarchy. The Circus works together.

Daily Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled as needed for discussions between participants. There is usually a meeting right after breakfast and another after dinner - though more may occur as necessary. We talk as a group often to discuss ideas and plan.

Workshops

While summer 2012 will be dedicated to collaboration within our Circus group, we may host an animation workshop or two for local community groups.

Generally speaking, each workshop results in an evening show featuring the new community-made animation on the final day of the workshop.

Tiny Circus Shows

This summer, Tiny Circus will present shows in different venues, varying from parking lots to pedestrian malls. Sometimes we will travel and camp overnight (in Iowa City, for example). Housing away from home is often camping-style.

Getting to Tiny Circus

If you are driving, you can contact us so that we might pair you with another participant from your area. Alternatively, you might visit Craigslislist.org to find travel partners to share costs. While in Grinnell, bicycles are a great way to travel. Bring yours if you can, we have a few around if you can't. If you are flying, the nearest airport to Grinnell is Des Moines International. For the price of gas to and from Grinnell (\$25 each way), we can arrange to have a Circus Member pick you up.

A Typical Tiny Circus Day:

What follows is a typical schedule - but every day at Tiny Circus is different. Unexpected things happen often.

7.30am-8:45am: Wake up and breakfast:

>>breakfast and lunch are self serve in the common kitchen area.

9.00am: Daily Meeting

>>Discuss tasks for the day, and break into smaller task groups to work.

>> Common tasks include: brainstorming, designing, making, animating, building and tearing apart, sound, editing... in general, building our show.

1:00pm: Lunch, then afternoon break until 3:00 p.m.

>>Nap, swim, exercise, personal errands...

3:00pm: Resume worki on daily tasks.

6:30pm-7:00pm: End of the Work Day:

>>Finish work, clean up work areas.

>>Prepare dinner.

>>Daily chores (cleaning, gardening...)

7:30pm: Dinner

>>Two or three Circus members prepare dinner in our kitchen for the group, most often we eat outside at picnic tables in the backyard.

Evenings: Return to work if needed.

>>often a short wrap-up meeting occurs right after dinner.

>>or... sit by a campfire in the backyard with beers, or go out dancing, ride bikes to the ice cream store, karaoke at a local bar, or general fun.

Saturdays: Housework day.

>>painting, landscaping, earth-moving, cleaning, light carpentry. Don't worry if you don't have skills, Circus House will find a job for you.

Sundays: Day off – no scheduled meals, feast on leftovers.