

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL WRITING PROGRAM

Co-founded in 1967 by Paul Engle and Hualing Nieh Engle, the University of Iowa's International Writing Program has upheld the vitality of the world's literary traditions and championed a central role for artists in creating international understanding. The IWP's annual residency has hosted more than 1100 writers, often among the most talented of their generation, providing them the time, space and tools necessary for producing new work. In turn, American and especially Midwestern audiences have been given direct access to the international authors through classes, readings, publications, lectures, translation workshops, and social gatherings.

Throughout its history, the IWP has been a force for cultural diplomacy, offering sometimes a safe haven for writers from repressive states, and always an opportunity to understand the United States from close up. Through the years of the Cold War, the US Information Agency was a major sponsor of the program. Since 1990, the IWP has worked with the U.S. Department of State, the arts councils and cultural agencies of other countries' governments, with private arts organizations and with the University of Iowa to support a diverse roster of participants.

Recently, through grants from the DOS Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the IWP has broadened its programming overseas. In 2006, the program began the New Symposium in Paros, Greece, which each spring brings together fifteen writers from the U.S., Greece, and around the world to discuss a topic of shared interest. In 2007, the IWP took a delegation of four U.S. writers to the Middle East for a series of readings and lectures. And in summer 2008 will begin *Between the Lines*, a pilot program co-directed by the IWP and the University of Iowa's Young Writers Studio, which will host twelve promising young Arabic-language writers for two weeks of writing seminars, workshops, and cultural events here in Iowa City.

