Planetary Transitions: Potsdam Artist Residency

4th Call for Applications

The Potsdam Memorandum of 2007 called on science and society to tap into all sources of ingenuity and cooperation in an effort to tackle the great planetary challenges of our time. The arts are one of those sources. They can provide insights beyond the scope of scientific analysis and policy development, challenge our views and open new avenues to work together towards alternative futures, while fostering dialogue across cultures, ontologies, and territories.

The **DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program**, the **City of Potsdam**, and the **Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS) at GFZ** are issuing a joint call for applications for international artists who wish to develop work that explores the intersection between art and sustainability during a fellowship in Potsdam, Germany. The programme seeks to foster exchange between the arts, academia, politics, and civil society. We encourage the participation of artists with critical voices and perspectives that are absent in German and Western European discussions on sustainability.

We especially welcome applications from candidates whose interests dovetail with our research activities in the areas of: air quality, climate change, consumption, democracy, digitalization, energy, just transition, mindsets, mobility, rights of nature, risks and hazards, citizens' engagement, and/or sustainability challenges faced in (but not limited to) the Arctic, European cities and regions (e.g., Brandenburg/Berlin), Latin America (particularly the Amazon region), Southern (in particular the Himalaya region) and Eastern Asia, or the Oceans.

The successful applicant will join the RIFS Fellow Programme, which frequently hosts artists alongside scientists and practitioners from business and civil society. The residency spans a period of at least four and ideally up to six months, starting in the middle of 2027. The monthly stipend will be 2,500 Euro, plus a lump sum for travelling to Potsdam and return based on your current country of residence, and up to 5,000 Euros for housing support if you decide to stay in Potsdam. In addition, we provide support on legal requirements such as visa applications.

This call for applications is open to artists active in any field – from the visual arts to filmmaking, the performing arts, literature, music, and beyond. While we value artistic experience, we recognize that exceptional talent and creativity can often transcend traditional benchmarks. We encourage individuals with a passion for their craft and a strong portfolio to apply. We welcome joint applications by artistic collectives, but our financial resources (see above) are limited. Some proficiency in the English language, as well as interest in research on sustainability, climate justice and/or planetary futures, are preconditions for a successful residency.

The artist will share how their work develops during the residency in a format of their choosing, such as a zine, performance, installation, video, exhibition, event, or artist talk. While the residency prioritizes the process over the outcome, we would welcome some form of publicly accessible presentation and will explore the options together with the artist.

We strongly encourage applicants to limit the use of AI, especially for the project proposal (see below). Instead, we encourage applicants to use their own creativity and experience to develop an exciting idea. We reserve the right to reject applications when it appears that AI-tools have been used for more than just language editing and corrections.

To apply, please provide us with the following documents and information:

1. **Summary sheet:** A 1-page overview of your project. The **official template** must be used.

2. **Letter of motivation (max. 2 pages):** Please explain your motivation to apply for this fellowship. In particular, please outline how your project would benefit from a collaboration with one of the RIFS research groups. Please indicate which RIFS research group would be your preferred cooperation partner.
3. **CV (max. 2 pages):** Please outline the key steps in your career.
4. **Portfolio (max. 20 pages):** Please provide us with your portfolio or links to websites hosting your work.
5. **Proposal (max. 10 pages):** Please outline your intended project during your fellowship, paying special attention to how it would relate to sustainability and be implemented at RIFS, in the Potsdam/Berlin area and/or the German art world. Please make explicit, what work spaces, materials or other resources you require to implement your project.

All documents must be submitted as **separate PDF files** in **English** by **7 February 2027** via our **online application portal**. **The maximum size per file is 25MB**.

Please check also our FAQ section. In case of any further queries, please contact Achim Maas, Head of the RIFS Fellow Programme, either via email at **achim.maas@rifs-potsdam.de** or phone +49 (0)331-6264-22-355.

Successful applicants will be selected by representatives from the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program, the City of Potsdam, the RIFS and independent external jury members from academia and the arts. Before a final decision is made, the top candidate(s) will be invited to an interview. This will enable us to clarify the conditions for implementing projects, discuss the support we can provide before fellowships begin, and help fellows establish contacts in the Potsdam/Berlin area as early as possible.

We expect to reach our decision in March/April 2027.

As part of the fellowship, we expect that the successful applicant(s) present their work to the public. This does not necessarily mean completed art pieces, but more broadly their topics, approach and perspective on planetary transitions.

The Research Institute for Sustainability at GFZ actively promote diversity and equal opportunities. We explicitly welcome applications from all qualified individuals, regardless of ethnic and social origin, nationality, gender, sexual orientation and identity, religion/belief, age, and physical or neurodiverse abilities.

Diversity and equal opportunities are integral components of our human resources policy. We explicitly welcome applications from all qualified individuals, regardless of their ethnic or social origins, nationality, gender, sexual orientation and identity, religion/belief, age or physical characteristics. In the event of equal suitability and qualification, persons with a registered severe disability status (whether in Germany or abroad) will be given preferential consideration in accordance with the provisions of the German Social Code IX. If you have any questions, please contact our Representative for Disabled Persons at sbv@gfz.de, who will be happy to assist you in the further application process. In case of further queries regarding gender equality, please do not hesitate to contact our Equal Opportunities Officer at gba@gfz.de.

Applications from single parents with young children or small families are welcomed. Please contact solange.lingnau@rathaus.potsdam.de to inquire about family-friendly accommodation.

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Data protection information for applicants.