

SOMMERAKADEMIE PAUL KLEE

Sommerakademie Paul Klee 2021/22

Call for applications to a 16-month program hosted by the Bern University of the Arts HKB

Up to nine residents are invited to join the Sommerakademie Paul Klee (SPK) program, curated by artist Dora García, and beginning 2 August 2021. Over the course of 2021 & 2022, the SPK features public lectures, closed-door seminars, and access to state-of-the-art infrastructure and technical support at the Bern University of the Arts (HKB) – but also teaching opportunities in the form of workshops at the HKB. In response to ongoing practical and political contingencies, this call is addressed to applicants residing within an approx. 1000 km radius of Bern. For the same reason, we are newly introducing the option of digital SPK residencies, from further afar.

The Curatorial Program

The SPK 2021/22 wishes to echo, in this new two-year program under Dora García, a major change of paradigm that has swept the world (and the art world) over the last five to ten years: the feminization of politics. This by introducing an inclusive feminist perspective that has shaped a different way of relating to the world in economic, cultural, sociological, and aesthetic terms. We are in a time of transition; an in-between. We need to respond to this phase with resilience, intelligence, and generosity. Seemingly unmovable concepts in economy, culture, sociology and aesthetics, are very movable now. The SPK proposes to explore this new world with as little prejudice as possible, leaning on each other's specificities, working towards a radical new idea of what it means for art practice and authorship. Hence also the intention to develop a substantial part of the 2021/22 program in close collaboration with the residents themselves.

“Is the new type of work that feminist and queer feminist curating performs today, and which I conceive of to be co-dependent much rather than independent, crucial to an ongoing process of **transformation from contemporary art into a not-yet-named art?**”(Elke Krasny, *Curatorial Materialism. A Feminist Perspective on Independent and Co-Dependent Curating*, 2016)

The Timeline

subject to change on account of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

- The first session, **2 – 8 August 2021**, to be held entirely online.
- Meetings in Bern are planned for **February 2022 & July/August 2022**.
- February & August 2022, for periods of up to five additional days each, residents have access to HKB infrastructure and technical support.
- December 2021 and 2022, residents conduct workshops with HKB students, remunerated at going local rates.
- Additional meetings and workshops may materialize as the program evolves.

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On-Site Residencies in Bern

Travel, accommodation, visa expenses and a per diem of CHF 50 are covered. Residents using production facilities are entitled to a modest production stipend of CHF 500.

Building on longtime efforts to devise a residency that is ecologically, intellectually and economically sustainable, the SPK will now focus on a pool of applicants residing within 1000km of Bern. Like any rule, ours is a semi-arbitrary premise. But it is a first shot at making artworld travel less excessive. And at fostering an investment in place and location that is more accountable for the knowledge produced. Never has criticism of our extractive logic of one-place-after-another been louder. And rarely has the valorization of local material context been as promising. These are among the few upsides to an otherwise devastating pandemic, and the SPK would be wise to make a virtue out of necessity, here and now.

It bears mentioning that the jury will place a doubled emphasis on Europe-based applicants with an international/migrant background. Any such candidates are all the more loudly encouraged to apply.

Digital Residencies

Applicants residing over 1000km from Bern are invited to take part in the residency digitally. In order to both maintain the global scope of the conversation at SPK, and to further develop the online modes of engagement which are becoming increasingly important by the year, we are introducing a second mode of residency, one that is purely virtual in nature. From a distance, Digital Residents will enjoy the very same perks as residents on location in Switzerland: access to all SPK lectures and seminars, teaching opportunities at the HKB, a CHF 500 production stipend, a per diem, and tutorials with the SPK curator.

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University infrastructure at the disposal of residents on-site:

- print workshops
- wood, plastics, metal & textile facilities
- high-tech sound studio
- audiovisual media lab for film, video & photography
- conservation & restoration facilities
- specialized libraries

The SPK

In 2006, the *Sommerakademie im Zentrum Paul Klee* introduced a landmark educational template – a tightly curated retreat for international artists – a format which was quickly established throughout Europe. This template was revisited by the newly restructured SPK in 2017, which combined rigorous collective inquiry with the perks of production-oriented residencies. The aim, more recently, has been to transcend brief bursts of topical intensity, to the benefit of more longstanding intellectual commitments.

The SPK caters to practitioners working at a postgraduate level, whether or not they have an official certificate saying so. Professional experience and intellectual appetite are the necessary requirements here. Though artists may be prioritized, other practitioners are very much encouraged to apply. Application deadline is **5 May 2021 (7 AM CET)**; successful candidates will be contacted **25 May 2021**.

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Curatorial framework 2021/22:

POSITION VOICE MUNDO: The urgent need for feminization.

“Position voice mundo” are the words written by Chicana feminist author Gloria Anzaldúa to define a way-of-being in a world in turmoil: determine your position, make your voice heard, understand and shape the world.

We are all aware of being in a period of transition, an in-between (“Nepantla”, in Anzaldúa's Nahuatl vocabulary). Before the pandemic, it was already a world hard to take, with the massive rise of patriarchal authoritarian figures (Trump, Orbán, Duterte ...), the refusal to acknowledge the urgency of climate change, the erosion of democracy and equality. In the face of this, there was only a true transnational movement able to confront, resist, and move forward: feminism, the women's march, “the squad” in US congress, the ecofeminism movement, #NiUnaMenos, #MeToo, and very importantly, Third-world feminism, a terminology vindicated by a young, combative new generation of women.

All these different feminist agents have demanded a **feminization of politics**. But what do we mean by “feminization of politics” (understanding politics as the art of living together)? We mean by that to interact with the world not as extractive predators, but as free citizens aware of the limits of a planet and the need to take sides with life.

How have feminisms come to occupy the political space of necessary and fundamental change? By understanding that the liberation of women can only happen with a total change of paradigm, a complete subversion of values, opening to an inclusive way of being in the world, leaving no one behind.

The feminization of politics means, in the area of government and urbanism, *municipalism, decentralization, interdependence*. In the area of literature and the arts, feminization means to boldly question seemingly “eternal” notions of quality and the canon, and to raise awareness of the possibility of different art circuits that do not reproduce privilege. It also means to subvert the notions of center and periphery, insiders and outsiders, market value and symbolic value.

SPK 2021/22 will take place in Bern, national capital of Switzerland, the most extensive model of direct democracy currently available. Switzerland is also the last European jurisdiction to grant women the right to vote, in the Swiss canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden, in 1991. Same-sex marriage, full joint adoption and IVF access remain unavailable in Switzerland for the LGBTI community as of 2020. Switzerland is ranked 20th by the World Economic Forum as to gender equality. Abortion was only legalized by popular vote in 2002.

“‘But what do they want?’ was the question since the first Feminist Conference in June 2018, held in Lausanne, and its call for a Women's / Feminist strike to be held a year later. On 14 June 2019, exactly 28 years after the first-ever women's strike in Switzerland, more than half a million women and supportive men took part in mobilizations all over the country.” (t.ly/njCJ)

The SPK program will seek continuity with the preceding editions, emphasizing education as a powerful political tool. It will as well rethink such educational processes, with an emphasis on materialist situations of art production.

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Requirements

- application file to be submitted digitally by **5 May 2021, 7 AM CET**, via www.sommerakademie-paul-klee.ch/call-for-applications-2021/
- application needs to include:
 1. Statement including primary place of residence, and explaining reasons for applying, and/or a proposal as to how you intend to engage with the program and/or the facilities (1000 words max).
 2. CV, phone number & brief bio
!Please upload documents 1 and 2 in a single PDF!
 3. Optionally, please send complementary material or documentation of the work you pursue. Be this an artist portfolio, or a link to an ongoing activity. Individual files (PDFs, videos) should not exceed 10 MB each; please do not embed videos in a PDF
 4. Zoom installed on your computer/mobile device
- availability for a short Zoom interview **21 May 2021**; second round candidates will be contacted on the evening of 20 May 2021, at the latest, in order to schedule the interviews – subsequent jury decisions will be finalized by 25 May 2021
- a firm commitment over the entire span of the program – the minimal period of engagement amounts to a total of 5 weeks, over three separate sessions (Summer 2021, February 2022, Summer 2022), not counting optional time windows for production and teaching.

For more info:

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www.sommerakademie-paul-klee.ch