

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen & the Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux

Open Call for Residency 2026:

'Learning from the more-than human': One month, mid-September/mid-October 2026 — Vijfhuizen, the Netherlands



Kunstfort Vijfhuizen and the Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux invite applications from Finnish and/or Finland-based artists, researchers and creative practitioners for a 4-week residency starting in mid-September 2026, in Vijfhuizen, the Netherlands.

This residency is part of Zoöp Connections, a networked knowledge exchange programme connecting Dutch Zoöps and European cultural institutes. As in 2025, Kunstfort Vijfhuizen's second edition of this residency is realised with EUNIC Netherlands in coordination with DutchCulture, supported by the EUNIC Global Cluster Fund. Taking place within the Zoöp framework developed by the Zoöconomic Institute, the programme creates one-month residencies in 2026 for artists, thinkers and practitioners from across Europe to learn from, live with, and work within living ecosystems. It prioritises process, learning and shared inquiry over predefined outcomes, and is centred on co-creation, care, listening and reciprocity.

What is a Zoöp?

A Zoöp is an organisation in which human and other-than-human life work together to foster a practice of ecological regeneration. In practice, this means appointing an independent 'Speaker for the Living', a spokesperson for the interests of more-than-human life that participates in the organisation's decision making. Zoöp is a practical and actionable learning model to help create a world where all life forms can flourish. The model was developed at het Nieuwe Instituut, which became the first Zoöp in the world in 2022.

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen has been a Zoöp since 2023. As a resident, you will work from within this practice, embedded in a UNESCO-listed heritage fort with a strong focus on its surrounding landscape and communities. You will engage directly with them and facilitate artistic research and presentations with the aim of (un)learning. Learn more about [Kunstfort's 2025 edition of this residency](#) and the [Zoöp model](#).

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen: the residency's home

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen is a UNESCO world heritage fort situated in the Dutch landscape between Amsterdam and Haarlem, home to a contemporary visual art programme with a deep commitment to the landscape that surrounds it. The fort is a living site: biodiversity volunteers, heritage guides, a restaurant, a gin distillery, school groups, and working creatives studios are all part of its everyday fabric. Your ability and willingness to engage in our living, social ecosystem is seen as a central to the success of the residency.

During your residency, you will have access to on-site accommodation and working space, depending on your needs and the spaces available. The residency coincides with the preparation of a new exhibition opening in October, and with a nearby autumn festival on a farm – both potential points of connection and collaboration.

Kunstfort approaches residencies as an open, exploratory process. We are looking for an artist who arrives without a finalised project – the fort, its surroundings, and its community are the starting point for a month of research and development. Kunstfort's director and curator Rabia Benlahbib will be your direct sparring partner. For local ecological knowledge, there is also expertise available. During the residency, a Czech resident will also be in residence at Kunstfort Vijfhuizen. Applicants are encouraged to be open to connecting with them, exchanging ideas, and exploring joint activities or discussions. This is an opportunity to foster dialogue and mutual learning across different cultural and creative backgrounds.

In order for you to get a sense of the location beforehand, we are organising a Zoom conversation on 23 April at 3–5 pm (CET). This will be a familiarisation session, in which potential residents can become acquainted with the arts, heritage & history, as well as the ecology and communities at Kunstfort. We highly recommend participating if you are curious about applying.

Zoomlink for the residency information session can be found here:

Zoop Connections II: introduction to Kunstfort

Time: 23 apr 2026 15:00 Amsterdam

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83018177770>

Meeting ID: 830 1817 7770



Who we are looking for

Residents in Zoop Connections may be creative professionals of many kinds; designers, researchers, educators, writers, technologists or other practitioners. What matters is shared purpose: the ability to work experimentally, collaboratively and reflectively.

- Finnish and/or Finland-based contemporary visual artist, artistic researcher or creative practitioner. This can mean creative professionals of many kinds, including designers, educators, writers, technologists, or even practitioners such as chefs or culinary professionals (aged 18 or older).

- The applicant should be based in the EU, but not in the Netherlands. Applicants based outside the EU or EEA should verify their country's eligibility via the [Creative Europe country list](#).
- Proven ability to create artistic concepts that can make audiences question a current perspective.
- Interest in engaging with the more-than-human — you do not need to be a specialist, but this curiosity should be present in your practice.
- Willingness to travel to the Netherlands by land, with flexibility depending on individual circumstances.
- Professional working level in English.
- Full presence for one month is required.

Selection procedure

To establish your eligibility for this opportunity, we will be assessing your application on the following criteria. Please ensure you have addressed each of these in your application.

- Finnish and/or Finland-based contemporary visual artist, artistic researcher or creative practitioner
- Your practice, recent work, and artistic activity
- Resonance of your practice with Zoöp principles, including more-than-human perspectives, ecological reciprocity, or multispecies thinking
- Your interest in sharing, being open, and engaging in the local communal practices
- Genuine interest in engaging with site, place, and non-human communities as a starting point for artistic work

What we are offering

- **Residency period** (mid-September–mid-October 2026, 4 weeks): A period of work and presence at the fort. Exact dates will be agreed with the selected artist.
- **Resident stipend:** Residents receive a personal artist stipend of **€1,400** for the 28-day residency. This is a gross stipend of **50€/day** — an all-in amount covering daily subsistence including food. We want to be transparent: this is a modest stipend reflecting a process-focused residency centred on immersion and exchange rather than production. Tax obligations are the responsibility of the resident.
- **Travel costs:** International and long-distance travel to and from the residency is reimbursed, with a strong preference for land-based travel wherever possible. Train, bus and multi-day accommodation en route are covered. Local travel during the residency is also covered. There is one bike on the Kunstfort Vijfhuizen premises available to the residents.
- **Accommodation:** On-site accommodation at Kunstfort Vijfhuizen, consisting of a simple room inside of the fort, with a private shower, toilet, and shared kitchen facilities.

- **Accessibility:** Kunstfort and the Genieloods are accessible for wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walkers and prams, when it comes to visitors. The accommodation for residents is less accessible. The fort island has a sloping embankment and access to the accommodation consists of a gravel path. The resident may bring an assistance dog to Kunstfort, provided it is on a leash. If you are interested in the full details of the accessibility of the space, feel free to get in touch with Melodi van Zelst, Kunstfort's volunteers and reception coordinator, at melodi@kunstfort.nl.
- **Work space:** A work space, outdoors and/or indoors, to be selected in close collaboration with you.
- **A key to the workshop:** Access to the caretaker's workshop and its tools, along with on-site technical support from the caretaker, available for advice or assistance, Monday–Thursday, 08:30–16:00. A wide range of hand tools, garden tools, and power tools is available in the workshop (there is no lathe or welding equipment).
- **Network:** access to the fort's network of resources, including Kunstfort Vijfhuizen's curator, caretaker, business coordinator, reception officer, volunteers, gin distiller, Speaker for the Living (the spokesperson for the interests of more-than-human life that participates in the organisation's decision-making), ecology programme maker, and the broader community of residents on site.

What is asked of you

We believe residents should first immerse themselves, being curious, connecting, co-learning, before shaping their own project. The scheduling of activities will be planned in dialogue with you from the start.

- Mutual relevant learning outcomes for the resident, the host organisation, and others involved in the project.
- A welcome moment with you, the Czech resident and members of the team and the Kunstfort community
- Several public events during the residency period, such as a workshop, guided walk, working the land, crafts practices, artist talk or lecture (e.g. around the resident's practice, ideas on the residency, potential findings).
- Documented meeting with the Zoöp's Speaker for the Living, Bonnie Chopard, the spokesperson for the interests of more-than-human life that participates in the organisation's decision-making. Form open, to be shared online.
- A 'trace of care': a site-specific action expressing care for the living world and supporting the life-carrying capacity of the local ecosystem.

How to apply

Applications for the Zoöp Connections residency at Kunstfort Vijfhuizen are submitted via our online application form, available at <https://tally.so/r/2EvXkA>.

Applicants may also upload a 3–5 minute video should they prefer to do so. Applications should be submitted in English.

Your application should include:

- A motivational statement (max. 500 words or a 3–5 minute video)
- A CV
- A portfolio (focus on 3 relevant projects)
- Brief note on any materials or resources you anticipate needing – no formal production plan is expected

The deadline for applications is **23:59 (CET) on 30.4.2026**.

Selection criteria

The selection will be made by a jury consisting of representatives from Kunstfort Vijfhuizen, the Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux, and relevant members of the Kunstfort community. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for a round of online interviews. All applicants will be informed of the outcome within one month of the deadline.

For questions about the open call or application process, please contact Kunstfort's finance and business coordinator Caroline Bakker at caroline@kunstfort.nl.

Accessibility, inclusion & diversity

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen and the Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux are committed to promoting fair practice, good governance, diversity and inclusion, and welcome and encourage applications from practitioners representative of the full diversity of society. We welcome applicants of different ages, genders, linguistic, cultural and other backgrounds. Please feel free to express this in your application if you wish. All information will be treated confidentially.

We are committed to making this residency as accessible as possible. Please note that not all parts of the fort are easily accessible with a wheel chair. The residency does not currently include additional funding for external caretakers or childcare; short self-funded partner visits might be possible. This residency operates under The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux's Safer Spaces principles.

This residency operates under The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux's Safer Spaces principles. Questions or concerns relating to accessibility can be directed to Melodi van Zelst, Kunstfort's volunteers and reception coordinator, at melodi@kunstfort.nl.



Kunstfort Vijfhuizen

Kunstfort Vijfhuizen is a UNESCO world heritage site and contemporary art space located between Amsterdam and Haarlem. The fort combines a rich historical landscape with an active programme of visual art, ecology, and community. With its biodiversity initiatives, artist studios, and deep ties to the surrounding natural environment, Kunstfort operates as a living site of cultural and ecological practice.

www.kunstfort.nl/en/information/about

Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux

The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux creates sustainable connections and work opportunities for culture and art professionals between Finland and the Benelux countries, and promotes the visibility of Finnish culture in the Benelux region.

<https://finncult.be/>

Good luck with your application!