

**PolARTS – Arts meet polar science  
Call for Proposals**

***A pilot project from Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Polar Institute***

Deadline for applications: 31 January 2020, 14:00 (Swiss time)

**BACKGROUND**

The interface between art and science opens new frontiers and potentials for both fields, which can contribute to the genesis of inspiring art forms as well as offer innovative perspectives on knowledge production and dissemination. Scientists and artists alike work with ideas and hypotheses reflecting their understanding and various models of the world around them. Even if their methodologies are very different, both disciplines can question existing orders and realities. Yet, art and science cooperation are limited and barriers between these two worlds remain. Transdisciplinary approaches between art and science on a mutual level can help to bridge boundaries, overcome distrust, nurture progress in individual work, and create new insights into shared research interests.

In order to offer a platform for the interplay between art and science, Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, and the Swiss Polar Institute (SPI) have launched a **joint initiative aiming at mediating partnerships between polar scientists and artists** and supporting the exchange between the two communities. The goal of the programme is to enable dialogue and the exchange of ideas between polar science and art practice. The proposed format aims to support the cooperative process between disciplines and to create space for new collaborative and explorative practices.

**PROPOSED FORMATS OF EXCHANGE: POLAR SCIENTIST-ARTIST TANDEM**

The *PolARTS programme* will fund up to three transdisciplinary tandems composed of an artist and a polar scientist over a period of about eight months in order to enable mutual exchanges and facilitate interactions between art and science. The tandems will meet on a regular basis on different sites (laboratories, ateliers, scientific and artistic events and gatherings, etc.) and exchange on their research interest, professional activities, career perspectives, work background, etc.

Each tandem is requested to propose a collaborative process over a period of approximately eight months, defining the format, the aims and the motivation of the participants. The tandem's proposal has to engage with issues and topics linked to polar regions, the Arctic or Antarctic, or in remote high-altitude regions, the so-called "Third pole", such as the Andes or the Himalaya.

The overarching aim of the collaboration is **to inspire each other across disciplinary boundaries and to promote mutual understanding** by perceiving one's own activity through the eyes of the tandem partner. A further aspect of the collaboration is to explore how new creative linkages can be created between the fields/worlds of science and art. This could either be explored by developing a common approach or by working side by side on existing projects, inspiring, challenging and supporting each other.

**TARGET PUBLIC**

A tandem should be composed of 1) a scientist (open to every level of seniority from PhD students onwards) actively working in and on polar regions and affiliated to a Swiss public research institution and 2) an artist meeting the general Pro Helvetia criteria (convincing artistic profile, residence in Switzerland with a national reputation or Swiss abroad anchored in the Swiss art scene).

All scientists working in polar regions and on polar topics are eligible for this programme, this also

includes researchers from fields considered as “non-typical” for polar sciences (eg. engineering, material sciences, medicine, humanities, social sciences, etc.).

Artists from all fields can apply as a tandem partner.

### MEET YOUR PARTNER – SCIENTIST-ARTIST SPEED MEETING EVENT

Artists and Scientists interested in the proposed format of collaboration, who have not found a tandem partner themselves, are invited to join a speed-meeting event organised for this purpose. **The event will be held on 5 December 2019 in Zürich at [Cabaret Voltaire](#).** The speed meeting will be complemented with a presentation of the programme and interventions from experts of science and art collaborations.

Due to the limited number of participants, please register quickly and contact [secretariat.spi@epfl.ch](mailto:secretariat.spi@epfl.ch) or [lthalmann@prohelvetia.ch](mailto:lthalmann@prohelvetia.ch) for further information.

### FIELD EXCURSION/TRIP

In order to complement the exchange initiated by the tandem, **the artist can request support for a fieldtrip to polar regions and remote high-altitude areas.** Such fieldtrip can take place in the framework of the fieldwork of the scientist tandem partner (i.e. the artist would accompany the scientist during already planned fieldwork) or together with another scientific partner suggested by SPI. Undertaking a fieldtrip is optional and not a prerequisite for a tandem to be supported.

In case the artist does not have the opportunity to accompany the scientist into the field, SPI can act as a facilitator within its network in order to offer alternative opportunities, if this is wished.

Support for the artist’s participation in a field excursion can be applied for in a separate proposal (see provided Application form B) and be handed in either together with the tandem proposal (if the planning of the field trip is already at an advanced stage) or at a later stage of the programme in order to allow time for planning (application for the fieldtrip handed in at the latest in October 2020). The proposal for the fieldtrip should **highlight links with the exchange initiated during the tandem.**

### TIMING

The tandems will collaborate between June 2020 and January 2021, in accordance with their proposed schedules. The time window for completing the field excursion is between June 2020 and November 2021.

### ELIGIBLE COSTS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**Eligible costs** in support of the **tandem** include:

- Compensation for the artist in order to support living expenses.  
*Compensation will be paid to the artist for every day dedicated to the activities of the tandem up to 4'000 CHF. The artist can claim this support under the condition that she/he is self-employed while working within the framework of the tandem.*
- 2'300 CHF in support of the operational costs of the tandem  
*This includes the transport costs of the tandem partners or the purchase of consumables needed for scientific or artistic work (scientific experiments, material for creative activities, etc.).*

**Eligible costs** supporting **access to the field** include:

- The artist is entitled to financial support in order to enable access to polar regions.  
*The amount paid to the artist in order to enable a fieldtrip will be paid based on a detailed budget breakdown (flight ticket, lodging, transport, material, justified compensation for living expenses, visa, etc.). The claimed amount cannot exceed 10'000 CHF, however, third party funding could complement it. Funding for the field trip will be granted on the basis of a separate budget (for that purpose, see Application form B), which can be handed in together with the proposal for the tandem (Application form A) or at a later stage if the planning of the field trip is not sufficiently advanced at the time of submission or has not yet started.*

## SUBMISSION

Application must be submitted as a single joint proposal from the artist and the scientist (see provided submission form).

**A complete application file** consists of:

1. Online application form (contact and main information)
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2. Attachments to be uploaded into online form as pdf:
  - 1) Application form A – Tandem application (compulsory – use provided word form)
  - 2) CV of the scientist and publications list (compulsory – free format)
  - 3) Portfolio and biography with artistic practice of the artist (compulsory – free format)
  - 4) Application form B – Field trip (if already possible)

All application documents must be uploaded through the online **application system**. Applications sent by email will not be accepted. **Incomplete proposals will be considered ineligible**. No late applications will be accepted.

Submission information:

The deadline for submission will be 31 January 2020 (14:00, Swiss time). The online submission form will be closed on the deadline date.

Should any problem be encountered in the submission process, contact: [secretariat.spi@epfl.ch](mailto:secretariat.spi@epfl.ch). Please note however that trouble-shooting in the last minutes before the deadline cannot be guaranteed.

## EVALUATION

Eligible proposals submitted before the deadline will be evaluated by an evaluation panel/jury appointed by the SPI and Pro Helvetia.

The proposals will be evaluated based on the **following criteria**:

- 1) Added value for the tandem partners / synergy within the tandem
- 2) Reciprocity of the influence / capacity to overcome disciplinary boundaries
- 3) Originality, quality and potential of the collaboration

The decision taken by the evaluation jury/panel will be transmitted to applicants at the latest 3 months after the application deadline. Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement (contract) signed by SPI and Pro Helvetia specifying the conditions of the grant (reporting, payments, etc.).

For any additional information or clarification, please contact: [secretariat.spi@epfl.ch](mailto:secretariat.spi@epfl.ch).

## REQUIRED CONTRIBUTION

Selected tandems commit to participate in a half day evaluation Workshop held in November 2020 in order to assess the merits of PolARTS. At the end of the sponsored collaboration, each tandem will have to submit a brief report. A template will be provided for this purpose.

In order to follow-up on the long-term benefits of the programme, grantees will be contacted again 2 years after the end of the collaboration.