

Postdoc Researcher, University of Fribourg

Fribourg, Switzerland, Sep 1, 2024–Aug 31, 2026

Application deadline: May 24, 2024

Anna Stoll Knecht

Call for a Postdoctoral researcher (2 years, 100%) at the Music Department of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

The successful Postdoctoral researcher will conduct research within the Starting Grant project 'The musical world of fairgrounds in Switzerland, 19th-21st c.' funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and headed by Prof. Anna Stoll Knecht (PI).

Fairgrounds, such as the Basler Herbstmesse or the Knabenschiessen in Zurich, constitute a fundamental aspect of the history of popular culture in Switzerland and are to be valued and preserved, being recognized as living traditions belonging to our national cultural heritage by the Federal Office for Culture. Music has always been an integral part of the fairground experience, whether as live performances, or, since the 1830s, through the medium of mechanical instruments. This indissociable sonic aspect, which accompanies most forms of performances, attractions and fairground rides, is nearly completely overlooked in scholarly attempts to write the histories of fairground and showpeople culture. Yet musical instruments appear as one of its most endangered features, since old rides and instruments tend to be discarded to make space for new materials, because fairgrounds constantly evolve to fit new popular trends.

The proposed project addresses the urgency of this state-of-affairs, aiming at reconstructing musical practices in Swiss fairgrounds between 1830 and 1950. This aim will be reached in two phases: first, exploring musical practices and their social contexts, including a focus on mechanical instruments as material objects in their sonic, visual and technological dimensions; second, situate these practices into the historical context of popular theater in Switzerland by selecting specific fairgrounds as case studies, finally leading to an incursion into the impact of the world of fairgrounds on the arts in the 19th- and 20th- centuries, particularly in music and cinema.

Tasks

The Postdoctoral researcher with expertise in art history (100% for 2 years), with a specialization in decorative or popular arts, will work on fairground arts in Switzerland, including the decorative aspect of musical instruments. It is expected that the Postdoctoral researcher will deliver several conference papers during the two years of the position, as well as 2 publications.

The Postdoctoral researcher will participate in regular research meetings at the University of Fribourg.

Requirements

- PhD in art history or related field

- Research experience in decorative or popular arts
- Strong interest for the world of fairgrounds and for contributing to the development of the field of research in fairground arts
- Proficiency in English and in German
- Organizational skills, ability to participate in administrative tasks in the framework of the project (organization of study days, workshops, colloquia)
- For the duration of the contract, the Postdoctoral researcher must be resident in Fribourg or another place in Switzerland; weekly presence at the Department is expected.

Applications should be in English or in French and include a motivation letter, CV, degree certificate, contact detail of two references, and a sample writing (in English or French), by 24 May 2024, at anna.stoll-knecht@unifr.ch

Starting date: 01.09.2024 or as soon as possible thereafter

Deadline for submission of applications: 24 May 2024

Interviews will be held preferably in presence (online if necessary) between 11-14 June 2024.

Contact: Prof. Anna Stoll Knecht, anna.stoll-knecht@unifr.ch

Reference:

JOB: Postdoc Researcher, University of Fribourg. In: Arthist.net, Apr 23, 2024 (accessed Dec 22, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/41719>>.