Predoctoral Position, The Art of AI, KHI, Florence

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Florence, Italy)
Application deadline: Feb 15, 2026

Natalie Arrowsmith

The Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, founded in 1897, has been one of currently 86 institutes of the Max Planck Society, Germany's most successful research organisation for basic research, since 2002. Research focuses on the history of art and architecture from a transcultural perspective.

The project "The Art of AI. Rethinking Notions of Creativity, Aesthetics and Ethics", led by Dr. Hana Gründler and Rafael Brundo Uriarte at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, seeks to appoint a:

Predoctoral position (m/f/d)

The transdisciplinary project explores how artificial intelligence reshapes creativity, aesthetics and cultural practices, and sheds light on the ethical and political implications of these transformations. It combines art history, philosophy, media theory and computer science and engages with questions that range from historical narratives of AI, automata and robots to contemporary challenges such as deepfakes, AI assisted artistic production and shifting definitions of intelligence and creativity.

The deadline for application is February 15th 2026, 12 pm CEST. Interviews will be held virtually at the beginning of March 2026. Candidates should propose a funding period of desired length (max. 36 months) with the earliest possible starting date in May 2026. Motivations for the proposed length of period and starting date should be made clear in the cover letter.

Profile
We are looking for an outstanding and genuinely transdisciplinary candidate engaging with one or more of the following fields:

- Art history or visual culture
- Philosophy, especially aesthetics, ethics or philosophy of mind
- Computer science, artificial intelligence, or digital humanities
- Media studies, literature, cultural studies

Applicants who combine knowledge from several of these fields are especially encouraged to apply. The ideal candidate is curious, research driven and willing to work across disciplinary boundaries. A strong interest in the epistemic, aesthetic, ethical and cultural dimensions of AI is required.

Responsibilities
The doctoral candidate will conduct their own research within the framework of the project. Excellence in research, commitment to pursue new insights through original scholarship, and willingness to become a constructive and committed part of a group of international scholars are essential. They will participate in a wide range of project activities, including:
- develop an original doctoral dissertation directly related to the themes of the project
- regular contributions to the reading group and ongoing project discussions
- co-organization of and participation in three international workshops
- AI based studies of narratives related to artificial intelligence
collaboration with the PIs on the planned art exhibition

Project Environment
The fellow will work at the interface of art history, philosophy and computer science within a highly transdisciplinary environment. The fellow will have access to an intellectually vibrant academic community at the KHI and will benefit from the institute's broad scholarly networks. The project offers close supervision by both principal investigators and continuous exchange with researchers from different disciplines visiting and collaborating with the project in the three years period.

Requirements
This position is intended for a doctoral student enrolled at any university worldwide who is possibly in the advanced stage of their dissertation.

- Master's degree in a relevant field
- Strong interest in the intersection of AI, creativity, aesthetics and ethics
- Capacity to work in a transdisciplinary manner
- Excellent analytical and writing skills
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively
- Excellent English skills; German and Italian are welcome.

What We Offer
- A predoctoral position within a leading international research institute
- Intensive transdisciplinary supervision
- Participation in internal reading groups, workshops and international events
- Integration into a vibrant research community in Florence

Application Documents
- Cover letter outlining your research interests and your motivation
CV
- A research proposal (max 5 pages plus essential bibliography) that outlines your PhD project, and explains how it relates to the overarching research questions of The Art of AI
- One letter of recommendation

The position may not be held concurrently with another major fellowship award; applicants must disclose any supplementary funding and may not take on other obligations during their fellowship period.

The Max Planck Society offers a fixed-term contract of employment. Salary and benefits are deter-

mined according to the German Civil Service Collective Agreement (65% TVöD Bund E 13) or equivalent, depending on individual personal circumstances. Selected candidates enjoy all the privileges of the Institute, including library access, access to the Photothek, and their own carrel or desk.

We encourage individuals with non-conventional academic CVs and from communities that are underrepresented in academia to apply. The Max Planck Society is committed to fostering equal opportunities and diversity and welcomes applicants from all parts of society, regardless of gender, ethnicity, disabilities, or sexual orientation.

Submission
https://apply.khi.fi.it

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Reference:

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