

4A_Lab: Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026/2029

Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Berlin)

Application deadline: Mar 10, 2026

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4A_Lab: Art Histories, Archaeologies, Anthropologies, Aesthetics Fellowships 2026/2029
Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows (M/F/D)

The Berlin-based research, fellowship, and mentoring program 4A_Lab invites excellent early career and mid-career scholars to apply for up to three predoctoral and three postdoctoral residential fellowships (6 to 36 months for predoctoral and 6 to 24 months for postdoctoral fellows).

4A_Lab: Art Histories, Archaeologies, Anthropologies, Aesthetics is a joint program of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (www.khi.fi.it), and the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de), in collaboration with further partners in Berlin. The Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz is an internationally outstanding cultural and scientific institution with unique museums, archives, libraries, research institutes and facilities. The Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz is a highly connected Max Planck Institute for art historical research, in dialogue with other disciplines, dedicated to the history of art and architecture in transcultural and global perspectives. A prime concern of the Institute's agenda is to combine historical research with critical engagement in current debates and challenges, such as ecology, heritage, urbanization, migration and diversity, aesthetic and artistic practices, media and material cultures, artificial intelligence, the digital transformation, and the future of museums.

4A_Lab connects disciplines, collections and institutions. It attempts to foster dialogue and exchanges between disciplines, and promotes methodological inquiries in relation to the ecologies of objects, artifacts and practices, collections, and archives, in particular of those kept in the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz. These include Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung (Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection), Alte Nationalgalerie, Antikensammlung (Museum of Classical Antiquities), Ethnologisches Museum (Museum of Ethnology), Gemäldegalerie (Picture Gallery), Gipsformerei (Plaster Cast Workshop), Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart (Museum of Contemporary Art), Institut für Museumsforschung (Institute for Museum Research), Kunstbibliothek (Art Library) and Museum für Fotografie (Museum of Photography), Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Arts), Kupferstichkabinett (Cabinet of Prints and Drawings), Münzkabinett (Numismatic Collection), Museum Europäischer Kulturen (Museum of European Cultures), Museum für Asiatische Kunst (Museum of Asian Art), Museum für Islamische Kunst (Museum of Islamic Art), Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte (Museum of Prehistory and Early History), Musikinstrumentenmuseum and Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung (State Institute for Musicology), Neue Nationalgalerie, Rathgen Forschungslabor, Skulpturensammlung und

Museum für Byzantinische Kunst (Museum for Sculpture and Byzantine Art), Vorderasiatisches Museum (Museum of the Ancient Near East), Zentralarchiv (Central Archive), as well as Forschungscampus Dahlem, Geheimes Staatsarchiv (Prussian Secret State Archives), Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (Ibero-American Institute), and Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

The 4A_Lab invites researchers to study aesthetic practices and ecologies, materialities, medialities, mobilities, temporalities, as well as discourses of scale. It focuses on objects, practices, environments, and narratives (OPEN) in their historical, social and historiographical dimensions, including histories of collecting, display, or dispossession, in a conversation that transcends geographical and chronological boundaries. For the 2026-2029 period, the program will run without a specific focus theme. It aims to create a space for dialogue for university and museum scholars, as well as other participants, in order to strengthen transdisciplinary collaborations, to challenge the borders of the 4A disciplines, to combine skills and to foster a conversation between more conceptual and more empirical approaches, including new forms of outreach. The program aspires to promote transversal networking and critical reflections on historical and contemporary challenges and concerns.

For more detailed information, please visit www.khi.fi.it/4A-Lab.

Candidates

Applicants should have obtained their master's degree or their doctorate/PhD (within the last seven years prior to their application) in one of the relevant disciplines. Applications are welcome from all regions, with various disciplinary formations, such as Art History, Aesthetics, Archaeology, Anthropology/Ethnology, History and neighboring fields dealing with artifacts, artistic production, material culture, and aesthetic practices relating to objects, images, languages, architectures, heritage and nature/culture discourses. A clear reference in the proposed research project to the collections of the above-mentioned institutions of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation or their histories is strongly encouraged. Applicants should be interested in engaging in reflexive research, while pursuing their individual projects within a transdisciplinary and transregional context. They are expected to participate in the program activities, such as regular seminars, site-specific workshops, and conferences. In the overall context of the 4A_Lab program and the framework of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the fellows will be part of a creative, intellectually stimulating and discursive environment.

The Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut is an equal opportunity employer. It is committed to standards of good scientific practice, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, and a respectful work environment.

Fellowships

Fellowships start in September/October 2026 or May 2027 with a duration of 6 to 36 months for predoctoral and 6 to 24 months for postdoctoral fellows. The fellowships follow the guidelines of the Max Planck Society (doctoral funding contract based on the Collective Wage Agreement for the Civil Service; postdoctoral contract: TVöD Bund E13).

Organizational support regarding visas, insurance, housing, etc. will be provided. Successful applicants become 4A_Lab Fellows at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (www.khi.fi.it) and at the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (www.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de)

and are expected to take up residence in Berlin.

The working language is English.

Application

To apply, please submit the following documents as PDF files via the KHI application portal:

- Motivation letter (max. 500 words, in English)
- Curriculum vitae (in English)
- Project description (no longer than four pages, max. 1600 words, in English)
- Sample of scholarly work (an article, conference paper or book/dissertation chapter)
- Names and contact information of two referees (including their email addresses)
- Indication of preferred host institution/s (SPK)

Please submit the complete application by 10 March 2026 (CET) via the KHI's application portal:

<https://apply.khi.fi.it/>

The application portal will open on 31 January 2026. Successful candidates will be notified in May 2026.

Contact

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