

Doctoral Pos., Practice-Based Artistic Research, ETH Zürich

ETH Zürich, Jun 01, 2026

Application deadline: Mar 30, 2026

Prof Dr. Rosa Barba

The Chair of Art in Space and Time (AISAT) at ETH Zurich invites applications for a doctoral position within a newly funded interdisciplinary research project at the intersection of Art and Physics, centered on light, quantum physics, and observation.

About the project

The four-year fully funded doctoral project is part of a unique research collaboration between Prof. Dr. Rosa Barba (Chair of Art in Space and Time, ETH Zurich) and Prof. Dr. Puneet Murthy (Department of Physics, ETH Zurich). It explores how fundamental phenomena of light and matter—particularly in the quantum physical realm—can be approached through a synthesis of artistic and scientific perspectives.

The transdisciplinary research will specifically combine:

- Artistic inquiry and expanded cinematic / installative practices.
- Setting up of an Art & Science laboratory for exploratory experiments.
- Engagement with concepts and techniques from quantum optics.
- The development of public-facing artistic installations grounded in physical systems.

The study is hence inherently exploratory and research-driven, and it treats Art and Science as equal, complementary, and interwoven modes of inquiry.

The doctoral researcher will essentially be based at the Chair of Art in Space and Time, at the Department of Architecture, and will work closely with the Nanoscale Quantum Optics group at the Department of Physics. This joining provides a singular, experimental and generative ground to foster novel epistemologies from within a distinctive perspective and related methodologies.

Profile

We are looking for an artist and researcher with a strong curiosity about the natural sciences and a desire to work across disciplinary boundaries. More specifically, the candidate should have a body of work that already expresses crucial inquiries in light, matter, perception, and physical phenomena—and is truly experimental. Building on the artist researcher's standing, she/he/they would contribute to the course Understanding Light we are conducting, which is embedded in AISAT; and the doctoral candidate will also be involved in co-shaping the further building of the Art & Science lab.

The selected candidate will hold the first artistic practice-based PhD position at ETH. The posi-

tion assumes both practical and theoretical outcomes.

The ideal candidate:

- Has a background in art, architecture, film, or a related field.
- Demonstrates a deep interest in light, matter, perception, and physical phenomena.
- Is curious about scientific concepts, particularly in physics, and open to engaging with scientific methods and laboratory work.
- Is motivated to work within a research environment, combining conceptual thinking, experimentation, and making.
- Is comfortable navigating uncertainty and exploratory research processes.
- Is interested in long-term, in-depth doctoral research at the art–science interface.

The doctoral researcher will be introduced to the relevant physical concepts and experimental techniques as part of the project, working intimately and experientially with physicists in the laboratory.

We offer

- A fully funded four-year doctoral position at ETH Zurich. The doctoral fellow needs to be based in Switzerland. The standard salary is in accordance with ETH's policy of basic starting salaries for doctoral students.
- A rare opportunity to work at the interface of art and fundamental physics.
- Access to physics laboratories, artistic research spaces, and interdisciplinary networks.
- Close mentorship from both artistic and scientific supervisors.
- An intellectually open environment encouraging experimentation, reflection, and innovation.

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Expected Start Date: June 1, 2026

How to apply

We look forward to receiving your online application, written in English, compiled into a single PDF file with the following documents:

Verification of a Master's degree / Curriculum Vitae (5 pages max.) / Portfolio, including artist statement (20 pages max.) / Research plan outlining the applicant's motivation relevant to the position, research questions, methodological approach, proposed implementation, and a preliminary timeline (5 pages max.) / Two references with contact details (including name, email address, phone number, affiliation).

Excellent written and verbal English is required. Fluency in other languages is an asset. Taught languages are English and German, however a broad base of languages is present in the team, such as German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Hindi, and Spanish.

To submit your application, please contact doctorate-aisat@arch.ethz.ch.

Successful candidates will be enrolled in the program of Art in Space and Time within the Department of Architecture at ETH. For general information on the doctoral program in the Department of Architecture, please refer to its doctoral website.

Art and Space and Time (AISAT) at ETH Zurich is a research hub consisting of a team of artists and researchers from diverse parts of the world. AISAT's multidisciplinary teaching and research operate at the intersection of urban anthropology and artistic practices, including film, sculpture, sound, writing, drawing, digital arts, and performance. Conceived as a meeting space for artistic experimentation and creative dialogue, the Chair is committed to a diversity of sites, media, and sources.

The team is composed of Prof. Dr. Rosa Barba, Dr. Corinne Diserens, Nina Emge, Catherine Face-rias, Heiner Franzen, Sam Ghantous, Martin Hartung, Dr. Nicole L'Huillier, Sara Masüger, Monica Narula, Dr. Eduardo Jorge de Oliveira, Jonathan Pouthier, and Nicolas Rolle.

Chair of Art in Space and Time

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Reference:

JOB: Doctoral Pos., Practice-Based Artistic Research, ETH Zürich. In: ArtHist.net, Feb 14, 2026 (accessed Apr 6, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51742>>.