

## **OPEN CALL**

### **ART MEETS SCIENCE**

#### **CIRCULAR BIOENGINEERING AND SUSTAINABILITY IN DIALOGUE**

A collaboration between the

**A...cademy of Fine Arts Vienna**  
**Research Cluster | Sustainability in the Arts**

with the

**BOKU University**  
**Exzellenzcluster Circular Bioengineering**

#### **A] INTRO**

This call is aimed at students of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna who are interested in exploring the intersection between art and science. As part of a collaboration between the [Research Cluster | Sustainability in the Arts](#) at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the [Exzellenzcluster Circular Bioengineering](#) led by the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), we invite you to take part in an interdisciplinary exchange and to develop an artistic work that makes research in the field of Circular Bioengineering accessible to a broader public in an inspiring way.

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#### **B] WHAT IS IT ABOUT?**

The Excellence Cluster Circular Bioengineering is dedicated to researching circular, environmentally friendly bioprocesses and developing innovative materials from renewable raw resources. Its goal is to reduce resource consumption, promote the transition from petroleum-based to renewable energy sources, and decouple economic growth from resource use.

The research is structured around four key programs that address the challenges of a sustainable circular economy:

1. **Green Cycles of Renewable Materials:** The recycling of materials is often technically challenging and inefficient. This program focuses on researching materials made from renewable resources—such as wood—that are designed from the outset for efficient recycling. Complex natural materials are reversibly modified and structured using enzymatic, chemical, and physical processes to optimize their functionality.

2. **Self-Sustainable Microbial Systems:** Microorganisms have long been used for the production of chemicals, food, and pharmaceuticals. This program introduces new approaches to broaden the range of producible compounds and to explore alternative nutrient sources for microorganisms. By utilizing carbon from CO<sub>2</sub> instead of sugar, or nitrogen from N<sub>2</sub> instead of nitrate, components of the air and waste streams can in the future be harnessed for environmentally friendly production.
3. **Biocatalytic Processes for Sustainable Synthesis:** This program is dedicated to the sustainable production of pharmaceuticals and chemicals using enzymes. Through innovative synthesis methods that employ light or electricity instead of traditional reagents, and through targeted enzyme engineering, the use of solvents, waste generation, and energy consumption can be significantly reduced. This research lays the foundation for new forms of chemical transformation processes.
4. **Circular Prospects:** This program examines the ecological, economic, and social impacts of using renewable raw materials. Increased reliance on biological resources—much like the use of fossil fuels—can have profound consequences for ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture, and our way of life. The goal is to critically analyze the potential risks and opportunities of a bio-based circular economy.

You can find more information about the four research programs at:

<https://www.circularbioengineering.at/programs>

We invite you to engage with one of these thematic areas and interpret it through your artistic practice.

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## C] WHAT TO EXPECT

- **A day in the lab:** You will gain insights into the research of one of the four programs within the Excellence Cluster Circular Bioengineering and have the opportunity to speak with scientists about their work and its societal relevance.
- **Artistic challenge:** Based on your impressions, you will develop an independent artwork that creatively and thoughtfully interprets the research and its relevance to the public.
- **Presentation of your work:** The resulting artworks will be presented during the evening event of the **BOKU Future Conference** on May 20, 2026 – the public kick-off event of the Circular Bioengineering project.

## D] WHAT YOU RECEIVE

- **Scholarship:** The four selected projects will each be supported with a monthly scholarship of **€ 500** for a period of four months (January to April 2026) to assist in the development of the artistic work.
  - **Presentation platform:** The completed works will be presented to a broad audience during the **BOKU Future Conference** at the **Art and Culture Center Semmelweisklinik**. This open and inspiring venue actively fosters networking with artists, cultural practitioners, and organizations at the local, national, and international levels.
  - **Interdisciplinary experience:** You will gain deep insights into the world of science and have the opportunity to collaborate with researchers, developing new perspectives for your artistic practice and enriching the dialogue between art and research.
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## E] HOW TO APPLY

Interested students are invited to submit their application by **December 15, 2025**, via email to [sustainability.arts@akbild.ac.at](mailto:sustainability.arts@akbild.ac.at) zu senden. The application should include the following documents:

1. **A short curriculum vitae** (maximum of three A4 pages).
2. **A concept and clear description of your proposed art project.** Describe how you intend to artistically interpret one of the four research themes and make it accessible to the public.  
Text: maximum 2,500 characters including spaces + up to 3 A4 pages of visual material or sketches.
3. **A portfolio of your artistic practice as a PDF** (maximum 10 MB) or a link to your website or social media account, including your contact details.
4. **A brief statement describing your interest in the topics of sustainability and circular bioengineering** and your personal understanding of what circular bioengineering means. Maximum 1,000 characters including spaces.

## F] TIMELINE AND DEADLINES

- **Application deadline:** December 15, 2025
  - **Project selection:** By December 31, 2025, a jury will select four projects to receive funding.
  - **Working phase:** The selected students will work on their projects from January to April 2026. During this period, each participant will receive a monthly scholarship of **€ 500**.
  - **Presentation:** The completed works will be presented to a broad audience during the evening event of the **BOKU Future Conference on May 20, 2026**, at the **Art and Culture Center Semmelweisklinik**, in the presence of the artists.
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## G] ELIGIBILITY

All students of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna are eligible to apply.

With this call, we aim to build a bridge between art and science and to explore new ways of communication and engagement together. We look forward to your ideas and your creative contribution!

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## H] CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions or additional information, please contact:

**Univ.-Lekt. Mag.art. Rainer Prohaska**

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