

Open Call—Werner Fenz Grant for Art in Public Space 2026

The City of Graz and steirischer herbst are delighted to invite applications for the Werner Fenz Grant for Art in Public Space 2026. Endowed with 17,000 euros, the grant aims to assess the status of art in public space, with an international jury selecting a temporary project every two years.

Initiated in 2020 in honor of late art historian and curator Werner Fenz (1944–2016), the call is open for national and international artists that address the cultural and political context of Graz, Austria, in their submitted projects.

As an internationally renowned curator, theorist, and educator, Werner Fenz founded the Institute for Art in Public Space Styria and combined theory and practice in an uncompromising and exemplary manner, continuously raising the profile of art in public space—in and outside of Graz. He was closely associated with steirischer herbst and curated countless projects at the festival.

Goals and criteria

The grant promotes art that gives a critical impetus to public space and social change, art that “assumes social responsibility” (Werner Fenz) and seeks to engage citizens.

Projects can deal with economic, political, social, ecological, architectural, or urban development issues. They should contribute to the discourse on current forms of art in public space and address the sociopolitical context of the city of Graz and the province of Styria.

The focus lies on temporary projects that infiltrate everyday life and latch onto existing public structures.

Endowment and award procedure

The grant is awarded biennially by the City of Graz and steirischer herbst. It is endowed with 17,000 euros, of which 12,000 are dedicated to the realization of the artwork and 5,000 to the artist’s fee.

The call is open to artists from all countries.

An international jury selects one of the proposals. It consists of five members, one of whom belongs to the grant initiators’ committee. Additionally, the jury contains two people nominated by steirischer herbst and two nominated by the city’s cultural affairs department. The winning project is selected by January 2026. The grantee is publicly announced in spring and their work presented as part of steirischer herbst ’26 (September/October 2026).

Production

The project is produced under the auspices of steirischer herbst and can draw on the festival’s resources and considerable experience with art in public space. On-site research as well as travel and accommodation of the artist(s) during production in Graz are covered in addition to the 17,000-euro endowment as part of the grant.

Submission

- submission form
- project description (max. two A4 pages): content and technical aspects, visualization/sketch, information on duration and location, etc.
- budget
- portfolio with sample work (in public space), visual material, texts, etc., if not available online (website)
- language of submission: German or English
- all materials to be submitted as **one PDF**

The deadline for submissions is **12 August 2025**.

Documentation

The project is documented in the context of steirischer herbst as well as on the Werner Fenz website.

Collection of the Werner Fenz Grant at steirischer herbst

In 2024, steirischer herbst started the collection of the Werner Fenz Grant at steirischer herbst and purchased originals from ten selected artists who applied for the grant. This collection grows in tandem with the biennial grant and includes preparatory material relating to their application such as drafts or sketches.

In 2026, steirischer herbst aims to acquire material by ten additional artists for the collection.

Previous grantees

The Werner Fenz Grant 2021 was awarded to Hannes Zebedin for the project *Die Brücke* (The Bridge), realized in 2022. In 2023, it was awarded to Clara Ianni's project *Resurrection*, realized in 2024.