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OPEN CALL SOLAR FUTURES
OPEN CALL DETAILS AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

[1] GENERAL STATEMENT FROM THE CONSORTIUM

The **SOLAR FUTURES** project is happy to announce its first open call for artists!

In a nutshell:

==> Deadline: March 15th, 2026 at 23h59 CET (Brussels Time).
==> 3 artists selected.
==> 3 on site residencies.
==> Online mentoring.
==> Production budget + artist's fee.
==> 4 European presentations.

SOLAR FUTURES is a Creative Europe-supported collaboration bringing together four leading cultural organizations working at the intersection of art, science, and technology: OHME (Belgium) together with Electroni[k] (France), iii (The Netherlands), and LEV Festival (Spain), in partnership with two associated universities, Université Libre de Bruxelles and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

In an increasingly complex social, environmental, and political climate, **SOLAR FUTURES** responds to an urgent need: to foster transnational collaboration that challenges existing narratives and imagines alternative futures. The project establishes a new residency, production, circulation, and peer-learning program supporting artists from diverse disciplines to create works that explore desirable ecological, digital, and societal futures.

This initiative addresses a critical gap in the European cultural landscape while Solarpunk has gained visibility globally, it remains significantly underdeveloped within institutional and artistic contexts at the European level, particularly within the fields of art, science, and technology.

In this context, **SOLAR FUTURES** launches a European open call for artists to explore the topic of Solarpunk through the creation of 3 new works anchored in 3 thematic pathways: Renewable Energy and Circular Resource; Permacomputing and Digital Sobriety; New Imaginaries for Political and Societal Organisation.

*** THE OPEN CALL: 3 ARTISTS, 3 WORKS, 3 FORMATS

This open call is for 3 individual artists to develop new works that explore Solarpunk principles. Each artist will create one work in one of the following categories:

==> 1 physical installation (e.g. multimedia, spatial)

- Renewable Energy and Circular Resources pathway.

==> 1 screen-based experience (e.g. digital, time-based, ...)

- Permacomputing and Digital Sobriety pathway.

==> 1 live performance (audiovisual, sensorial, kinetic, ...)

- New Imaginaries for Political and Societal Organisation pathway.

Each artist will participate in an itinerant residency in 3 phases: in Brussels, a research phase hosted by OHME; in Rennes a contextualisation and mediation phase, hosted by Electroni[k], and in The Hague the production phase, hosted by iii.

Each work will premiere at one of the partner's events: Brussels with OHME, Rennes at Maintenant Festival with Electroni[k], or The Hague within the iii program. The premiere location for each artist will be determined collaboratively based on the nature of the work and curatorial considerations.

Following these individual premieres, all three artworks will be presented together in a collective exhibition at L.E.V. Festival 2027.

Each presentation will include public engagement activities such as workshops, artist talks, or panel discussions.

Furthermore, the consortium will encourage European circulation across festivals, cultural venues, and peripheral regional hubs including fablabs, libraries, universities, and community centers.

*** WHAT IS SOLARPUNK?

At the heart of **SOLAR FUTURES** lies **Solarpunk**, a movement that envisions optimistic, ecologically harmonious, and community-driven futures where humans, technology, and nature coexist sustainably.

"Solarpunk is the first creative movement consciously and positively responding to the Anthropocene. When no place on Earth is free from humanity's hedonism, Solarpunk proposes that humans can learn to live in harmony with the planet once again. Solarpunk is a literary [redacted] movement, a hashtag, a flag, and a statement of intent about the future we hope to create." - Ben Valentine, "Solarpunk wants to save the world"

The Solarpunk Philosophy

Drawing inspiration from renewable energies, prefigurative politics, and do-it-yourself ethics, **Solarpunk** reclaims technology as a tool for empowerment, commoning, and decentralized living. It actively promotes:

- ==> Open-source tools and knowledge sharing.
- ==> Ethical tech solutions that prioritize human and ecological wellbeing.
- ==> Thoughtful design that fosters community and conviviality.
- ==> Equitable futures that center justice and inclusion.

Solarpunk rejects techno-pessimism and climate doomerism. Instead of surrendering to despair or dystopian visions, it imagines and enacts positive alternatives in the face of ecological and social crises.

*** THREE THEMATIC PATHWAYS

SOLAR FUTURES invites artists to explore **Solarpunk** through three interconnected sub-themes, each offering distinct entry points while remaining open to cross-pollination and hybrid approaches:

[1] Renewable Energy and Circular Resources /// FOR INSTALLATION BASED WORKS

This theme reflects the most tangible and symbolic aspects of the Solarpunk imaginary: **energy autonomy**, **decentralized infrastructures**, and **material sustainability**.

Artists working within this theme are invited to engage with, but not limited to:

- ==> Solar, wind, and kinetic power systems.
- ==> Recycled, upcycled, and regenerative materials.
- ==> Bio-based design and living materials.
- ==> Off-grid and decentralized energy solutions.
- ==> Circular economy principles in artistic production.
- ==> Interventions addressing local energy and resource flows.

This pathway particularly resonates with creators interested in **physical installations**, **site-specific interventions**, **bio-based design**, **speculative architecture**, or **material experimentation** that demonstrates how art can embody sustainable principles while maintaining aesthetic and conceptual rigor.

Possible questions that could drive the projects of this thematic (not limited to - Surprise us!): How can artistic practice model regenerative resource use? What does energy autonomy look like in creative contexts? How can installations themselves become generators of renewable energy or demonstrations of circular material flows?

[2] Permacomputing and Digital Sobriety - /// FOR SCREEN-BASED WORKS

Permacomputing refers to an emerging approach to digital creation inspired by permaculture principles: frugality, adaptability, longevity, and long-term thinking. It calls for a conscious, low-impact use of technology, advocating for:

- ==> Energy-efficient code and computational practices.
- ==> Local servers and decentralized networks.
- ==> Open-source tools and platforms.
- ==> Low-tech and appropriate technology.
- ==> Digital minimalism and data sobriety.
- ==> Ethical alternatives to extractive tech models.

This sub-theme is particularly relevant for **digital artists, designers, creative technologists**, and makers working with code, networks, generative art, machine learning, interactive media, or computational systems - and who are interested in rethinking their practice in ecological and ethical terms.

It offers a space for dialogue between digital creators, green tech activists, and critical technologists exploring how creative practice can resist planned obsolescence, data extraction, and the environmental costs of digital culture.

Possible questions that could drive the projects of this thematic (not limited to - Surprise us!): What does sustainable digital art practice look like? How can we create meaningful experiences with minimal computational resources? What are the aesthetic and conceptual possibilities of constraint, efficiency, and digital minimalism? How can open-source culture inform new models of artistic collaboration?

[3] New Imaginaries for Political and Societal Organisation /// FOR PERFORMATIVE WORKS

This thematic area encourages artists to envision **post-capitalist, inclusive, and decentralized futures** - core values of the Solarpunk movement. It welcomes critical and speculative practices exploring:

- ==> Alternative governance models and democratic experimentation.
- ==> Cooperation, mutualism, and commons-based organizing.
- ==> Care economies and feminist economics.
- ==> Community resilience and mutual aid.
- ==> Alternative social infrastructures (housing, food systems, education).
- ==> Decolonial and indigenous perspectives on living systems.
- ==> Prefigurative politics - embodying the change we wish to see.

This focus is particularly relevant for **performance artists, community-based creators, participatory practitioners**, and artists engaged with **activism, social justice, or relational aesthetics**. It supports projects that question existing power structures, center marginalized voices, and propose new ways of being together.

Possible questions that could drive the projects of this thematic (not limited to - Surprise us!): How can art prototype alternative social forms? What role does imagination play in political transformation? How can performance enact the kinds of relationships and structures we want to inhabit? What does solidarity, care, or collective governance look like in practice?

*** [2] SCOPE OF THE RESIDENCIES PROGRAMME

*** A COMPREHENSIVE EUROPEAN RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

SOLAR FUTURES offers an extended, multi-phase residency journey spanning approximately one year, with each phase hosted by a different partner organization and designed around their specific expertise. This structure ensures that artists receive comprehensive support across the full cycle of artistic research, development, production, and distribution.

- * **Phase 1:** Research & Contextualization.
 - _ 2 weeks, Brussels, Belgium.
 - 4 - 18 May 2026.

_ Hosted by OHME in partnership with our associated universities, Université Libre de Bruxelles and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

This initial phase focuses on:

=> Supporting interdisciplinary research across STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) and SSH (Social Sciences and Humanities).

=> Facilitating curated encounters with researchers, local artists, and institutions.

=> Exploring Brussels as a unique European context, connecting artistic research with civic, political, and environmental ecosystems.

=> Creating a collaborative environment between the three residents for peer-learning and cross-pollination.

You will engage with:

=> Scientists and Researchers from the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and the Brussels Institute for Advanced Studies (BrIAS).

=> Local artists, designers and practitioners active on sustainable and experimental practices.

=> Key cultural operators, festival and venues (networking, facility visits, building relationships).

=> Innovative entrepreneurs in ethical manufacturing, open-source design, circular production.

Residents will have access to working space for research, exchange, and early documentation, with time for peer discussions and independent inquiry.

- * **Phase 2:** Development.
 - _ 2 weeks, Rennes, France.
 - 1 June - 15 June 2026.

Hosted by Electroni[k].

This initial phase focuses on:

- ==> Exploring diverse possibilities for engagement within artistic projects.
- ==> Recognizing the diversity of potential audiences (amateurs to professionals; children to seniors; people in situations of exclusion).
- ==> Understanding various forms of interaction: mediation, workshops, training.
- ==> Learning about diverse venues: schools, media libraries, performance spaces, exhibition spaces, public spaces.
- ==> Discovering the French digital creation ecosystem through the [HACNUM](#) professional network.
- ==> Promoting circulation through formats adapted to different contexts.
- ==> Designing workshops around your artwork.

The program includes:

- ==> Immersion periods observing/participating in workshops with diverse audiences.
- ==> Sessions with mediation teams exploring cultural rights, inclusion, and empowerment strategies.
- ==> Peer-to-peer sessions with local artists experienced in adapting formats for diverse publics, low-tech, and ecological practices.
- ==> Visits to local network events or festivals.
- ==> Eventually, practical experience co-facilitating workshops in cultural venues, schools, or media libraries.

Break Period: Following these two initial phases, artists will have several months for reflection and preparation for production, with regular online check-ins with the consortium.

- * **Phase 3:** Production.
 - _ 1 month, The Hague, Netherlands.
 - August 2026 or October 2026 or February 2027.
 - _ Hosted by iii.

Throughout the whole residency period, LEV provides specialized online mentoring focused on professional growth and distribution strategies:

- ==> Shared Access to production facilities including sound studio, metal and wood workshop, 200m² black box theater project space, basic electronic workshop , desk in a shared workspace.
- ==> Technical, coaching, and curatorial support from iii's interdisciplinary team.
- ==> Collaborative input from iii's creative community, you'll be surrounded by other artists and experts from different fields.
- ==> Format-specific support tailored to your project type (screen-based, installation, performance).
- ==> Testing, refinement, and spatial arrangement support.
- ==> Professional video and photo documentation of the artwork.
- ==> Realisation of a complete project description and technical rider.

Collaboration is at the heart of iii's approach: artists are part of a knowledge-sharing community where ideas evolve through collective input.

- * **Phase 4:** Transversal: Mentoring on Distribution (online)

- _ Led by LEV Festival.

- ==> Distribution strategies for media art forms.
 - ==> Beyond exhibition: public programs at cultural spaces.
 - ==> Writing about art and advice on intelligible art discourse.
 - ==> Technical specifications and tech riders.
 - ==> Documentation and re-usability of code, designs or methodologies.

The mentoring program is structured as follows:

- ==> 2 group sessions about general topics: one about distribution, mediation, and strategies, and the other about tech rider writing.
- ==> 2 individual sessions with each selected artist (one mid-term and one at the end of the residency).
- ==> 1 extra meeting optional if needed before the premiere or at LEV Festival.

*** **TIMELINE**

Launch of Open call: January 15th, 2026.

Deadline for Applications: March 15th, 2026, at 23h59 CET (Brussels Time).

Evaluation and Selection: Until March 30th, 2026.

Signature of Grant Agreement and Booking of travels for Phases 1 and 2: April 2026.

Residency - Phase 1 at OHME (Brussels, Belgium): May 4th to May 18th, 2026 (2 weeks).

Residency - Phase 2 at Electroni[k] (Rennes, France): June 1st to June 15th 2026 (2 weeks).

Residency - Phase 3 at iii (The Hague, The Netherlands): Artist 1 in August 2026, Artist 2 in October 2026, Artist 3 in February 2027.

Online mentoring sessions: 10 sessions from May 2026 to February 2027.

Premiere Artist 1: Maintenant Festival, Rennes - 1 - 11 October 2026.

Premiere Artist 2: OHME programme, Brussels - December 2026.

Premiere Artist 3: iii programme, The Hague - Spring 2027.

Exhibition and workshops, 3 Artists, LEV Festival - 2027.

*** **WHAT DO WE OFFER**

The programme structure is designed to provide you with continuous support and guidance throughout the residency, fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and creative development. You will have access to expert mentorship, regular check-ins, and hands-on workshops, ensuring a robust framework.

Concretely, each artist will receive:

=> 9.000€ artist fee (including subsistence).

=> Travel + Accommodation for the 3 onsite residency phases (2 weeks in Brussels, 2 weeks in Rennes, 4 weeks in The Hague).

=> Travel + Accommodation for premiere (1 travel for each artist) and exhibition at LEV Festival in 2027 (for the 3 artists).

=> Up to 6.000€ of Production costs.

=> Documentation: video and pictures for public communication.

=> Guidance and Support from the hosting cultural organisations and partners.

=> Access to the partners' networks.

*** **EXPECTED OUTPUTS FROM THE ARTISTS**

We encourage you to enhance and maximise participation throughout the residency programme. The more you get involved, the more you will get from the programme!

We ask you the following:

=> Provide, at the beginning of the residency, a descriptive abstract of your project, and a picture of you, to be used for public communication.

=> Be available for the different phases of the residency, both onsite and online.

=> Along the whole programme, actively engage in the dissemination and communication efforts of the residency, sharing posts on your social media, website, newsletter and community.

=> Participate in written/audio/video interviews produced by the hosts, when relevant.

=> During the residency, conceive and create a workshop or mediation activity around your project.

=> By the end of the residency, produce a presentable artwork ready for circulation.

=> At the end of the residency, provide a descriptive abstract of your produced artwork, to be used for public communication.

=> Participate in the premiere and exhibition planned.

=> Provide continuous reporting (online forms + check-ins with hosting cultural organisations) to document your artistic process.

*** WHO CAN APPLY - ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This call is for you if you:

=> Are an individual artist.

=> Can justify a professional experience and a certain level of maturity in your practice.

=> Can demonstrate a special interest in the thematic of Solar Punk.

=> Are willing to produce a multi-format work, e.g. an artwork that is modular and can adapt to different distribution formats.

=> Are willing to engage in a transdisciplinary process with the hosting cultural organisations and their local partners.

=> Are willing to participate in workshops and public-engagement methods.

=> Are a permanent resident in one of the 37 countries part of the Creative Europe programme (see eligible countries here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/crea/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_crea_en.pdf). Ukrainian artists are especially welcome to apply.

=> Are available at all dates when the programme will occur (cf. timeline).

=> Can speak and write English fluently.

=> Are able to issue invoices.

=> Are not affiliated with any of the Solar Futures consortium partners (hosting institutions), their affiliated entities, employees and permanent collaborators.

=> Are not under liquidation according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.182, or are not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of either national or EU authority.

The cultural organisations issuing this open call are encouraging diversity, inclusion and gender equality. This means that:

=> We encourage people with specific needs or disabilities to apply. If applying through the online form is not possible for you, please contact us and we will adapt the application process.

=> We encourage people from different cultural backgrounds to apply.

=> We will pay attention to gender equality, and we endorse applications from the LGBTQIA+ community.

*** GRANT & BUDGET

3 projects will be awarded with an artistic fee of 9.000€ each to develop artistic projects that explore topics around Solar Punk. The costs associated with each phase of the residency are not covered by the fee mentioned below, and will be managed by the hosting cultural organisations, as follows:

PHASE	FINANCIAL STRUCTURE
Research & Contextualisation	OHME covers the travel and accommodation of the 3 artists during their 2 weeks in Brussels + way back home.
Development	Electroni[k] covers the travel and accommodation of the artists during their 2 weeks in Rennes + way back home.
Production	iii covers the travel and accommodation of the artists during their 4 weeks in The Hague + way back home. Each artist can receive a maximum of 6 000€ for their production costs, based on their needs and real expenses. The preliminary budget planned for the production costs must be detailed in the application.
Mentoring on distribution	10 sessions will happen online.
Premiers & Exhibition	The travel costs and accommodation for the premiere and the exhibition at LEV Festival are covered by the hosting cultural organisations.
Documentation	The costs associated with the production of pictures and videos are covered by the hosting cultural organisations.

The applications must be made through this online form.

3 documents must be attached to the online form:

1:: An up to date CV.

2:: A portfolio (selection of the 5 more relevant works towards the scope of the open call).

3:: A document with images / drawings / sketches that illustrate your artistic proposal.

4:: A provisional production budget (excluding travel expenses and accommodation, which are provided by the hosting organisations).

Step 1: Read carefully the Open Call and make sure that you fulfill all eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Attend the Info Session that will be held online on Wednesday, **February 4th, from 15h30 to 17h00 CET**. A recording of the info session will be available via the partners websites and/or social media channels.

Step 3: Complete the online form and upload the required documentation.

Step 4: Submit your application before the deadline.

The deadline for application is **March 15th, 2026 at 23h59 CET** (Brussels time).

Note that:

==> If applying through the online form is not possible for you due to a specific need / disability, please contact us and we will adapt the application process.

==> All applications must be submitted in English, as this is the language used within the programme.

==> All mandatory sections of the proposal must be completed. The data provided must be up-to-date, true, complete and should enable the assessment of the proposal.

==> You should always consider the evaluation criteria and the specificities of each theme explored to ensure that your application aligns with the call requirements.

Intellectual Property Rights:

The project presented should be based on your original work or its IPR ownership must be given to you. Going forward, any foreseen developments must be free from third party rights, or those third-party rights must be clearly stated.

Results and intellectual property rights are owned by the Party that generated them. The copyright of the results produced during the Solar Futures residency shall remain with their generators.

Unless agreed otherwise, the ownership and copyright of the artwork developed during the Solar Futures residency shall remain the property of the artist, who has the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, and commercially exploit the generated artwork.

All specifications concerning copyright and IPR shall be discussed during the residency and included in a written agreement to be signed by all the Residency parties.

In the case of the project presented builds on / is complementary to an existing project already funded by another or more parties, you must clearly mention this point in your application and indicate the name of the party(ies).

Processing of Personal Data:

The reply to any open call for projects involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, e-mail, and address). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested that are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the open call will be processed solely for that purpose by the consortium of Solar Futures.

[4] EVALUATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

We're committed to a fair and transparent selection process. We're looking for artists whose vision aligns with SOLAR FUTURES, so take the time to clearly explain your proposal and show us how it connects to Solarpunk principles and the residency's unique structure.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

==> INNOVATION

We want to see bold ideas that imagine positive, alternative futures. Can you ask questions that challenge the status quo? Can you disrupt conventional thinking and propose new ways of doing things? Show us your capacity to think differently.

==> ORIGINALITY

Surprise us. We're looking for fresh perspectives on what a desirable, inclusive society could look like, and proposals that offer something unexpected rather than repeating familiar ideas.

==> RELEVANCE

How well does your proposal engage with Solarpunk principles? Does it meaningfully explore one or more of our three themes (renewable energy & circular resources, permacomputing & digital sobriety, or new imaginaries for political organization)? Make these connections clear.

==> BUDGET

Show us you can work within the €6,000 production budget allocated to each project. Your budget should be realistic (aligned with what the residency actually offers) and relevant (the costs should make sense for your specific project).

==> TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY

Can you actually do this? We need to see a convincing work plan, evidence of your professional experience, and a clear understanding of how you'll use the resources offered by our partner organizations across Brussels, Rennes, and The Hague.

==> ARTISTIC QUALITY

Beyond the concept, we're looking at the strength of your artistic practice. Your portfolio should demonstrate technical skill, conceptual depth, and a strong creative vision.

*** **EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

==> ELIGIBILITY CHECK:

the four hosting partners will verify if the applications are complete, if the legal information follows the requirement of the call, and if the applicants comply with GDPR. The proposals that do not comply with the eligibility criteria will be excluded.

==> FIRST ROUND OF EVALUATION:

experienced staff members of the four hosting cultural organisations will assess and score the applications following the guiding questions mentioned above. They will come to a shortlist of applications, by summing the scores obtained by their individual evaluations. The scores will be from 0 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). The number of applications contained in the shortlist will be around 12, upon the quality of the applications.

==> CONSENSUS MEETING:

the four partners will review the shortlisted and agree on a top 5.

==> INTERVIEWS:

the applicants selected in the shortlist will be called for a 30-minute interview, involving the consortium partners (aiming 3 out of 4 for each interview). This interview aims at exchanging with the applicant in a relaxed manner and getting more insight on the project presented. Each partner will vote with a score of 0 (not in favour) or 1 (in favour). Once the decision is taken, the selected 3 artists will be informed. Each will sign a Grant Agreement, which will mark the official start of the residency implementation period.

[5] INFO SESSION

To help you get a better understanding of the open call, we organise an online Info Session on **February 4th, from 15h30 to 17h00 CET.** (Brussels Time).

During this session, OHME, LEV, Electroni[k] and iii will present the open call, the thematics explored, the expectations from the artists, the foreseen outcomes, and the application process, requirements, budget questions and submission.

A recording of the info session will be available online, via the partners websites and/or social media channels.

[6] FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- * **My project is already at an advanced stage and has already been developed through residencies. Is it still eligible?**

This open call aims to support the creation of new works, which have not been publicly presented yet. In the case of the project presented builds on / is complementary to an existing project already funded by another or more parties, you must clearly mention this point in your application and indicate the name of the party(ies).

- * **Our artistic team includes several people ? Are we eligible to apply ?**
Unfortunately, this open call is open to individual artists only.

- * **What types of formats are included in "screen-based" ?**

Any work designed to be viewed on a screen, such as video, videoprojection, videogame.

- * **Can I apply if I'm an emerging artist without extensive exhibition history?**

The residency is open to artists who can demonstrate professional experience and maturity in their practice. This doesn't necessarily mean extensive international exhibition history, but your portfolio should show:

==> Sustained artistic development.
==> Technical competency.
==> Conceptual depth.
==> Ability to complete complex projects.

Both emerging and established artists are encouraged to apply, as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

- * **Will I receive feedback on my application if I am not selected?**

Due to the expected high volume of applications, we are unable to provide personalized feedback on individual submissions. Only shortlisted candidates invited for interviews will receive feedback during the selection process.

*** **SOLAR FUTURES** is supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

