



FROM 27 JULY 2026 TO 24 OCTOBER 2026, FOLKWANG UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS IN GERMANY IS OFFERING TWO »ARTIST / DESIGNER IN RESIDENCE« SCHOLARSHIPS ON THE THEMES OF »NARRATIVES« AND »TECH« FOR GHANAIAN ARTISTS OR DESIGNERS.

Folkwang University of the Arts is one of the largest art and design universities in Germany with departments of Music, Theatre, Dance, Design, and Research. The university's design department is the host of the artist / designer in residence programme. The department is located in the Ruhr area, in the city of Essen at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein. The programme is part of the Space for Sustainability by Design (SBYD), funded in the "Innovative Hochschule" ("Innovative University") funding line by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) and the Joint Science Conference (GWK).

Sustainability by Design aims to transfer knowledge from sustainability research into society and the economy through art and design. It explores the potential of art and design in contributing to the development of a climate-neutral and resource-light society. It involves various formats such as international symposia, exhibitions, and workshops, revolving around the three core themes of craft, technology, and biodesign. Two external research institutes with an expertise in sustainability research are involved in the project as collaborators: the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy and the Fraunhofer Institute for Environmental, Safety and Energy Technology UMSICHT.

This residency programme is supported by:



Gefördert durch:



SBYD's artist / designer in residence programme offers two scholarships for Ghanaian artists or designers in 2026. From 27 July – 24 October 2026, two residents will be invited to work on self-initiated projects at Folkwang University of the Arts. The work created during the residency will be shown in a presentation at the Dutch Design Week 2026. The scholarships are aimed at designers, artists, activists, or similar who are interested in sustainability-related issues and who would like to develop a new project on one of the two topics described below:

NARRATIVES

THE »NARRATIVES« RESIDENCY

The first residency is thematically situated within the SPACE FOR NARRATIVES. It focuses on the role of stories and narratives in shaping how we understand the world, legitimise knowledge, and imagine possible futures. Particular critical attention is given to dominant linear narratives of extraction, production, consumption, and disposal, which continue to structure our relationship to artefacts, resources, and sustainability.

For the NARRATIVES residency, we are looking for artists, designers, scholars, or storytellers who engage with the question: How can narratives challenge dominant linear logics and open up spaces for sustainable futures? Across cultures, stories of circularity, frugality, regeneration, care, and conviviality suggest different relationships to resources and materials. We see these narratives not just as descriptions of past or future possibilities, but as tools for action in the present.

The project developed during the residency is free in its choice of media, methods, and narrative forms. It may range from abstract or theoretical approaches to speculative, fictional, or science-fiction-based world-building, and can involve artefacts, storytelling formats, or other narrative forms. Projects may revisit forgotten practices, imagine alternative futures, or explore frugal and resource-conscious ways of existing. It is desired that the residency results in a project that can be shared and communicated in an exhibition context.

TECH

THE »TECH« RESIDENCY

The second residency is thematically associated with the SPACE FOR TECH and focuses on the appropriateness of the use of technology. It operates on a spectrum between the two questions „Where does the use of technology cause disproportionately high resource consumption?“ and „Where can the use of technology contribute to sustainable transformation?“.

For the TECH residency, we are looking for a person who will focus on the second question: How can new technologies (e.g. Internet of Things, AI, Generative Manufacturing, Extended Reality, DIY-Electronics) be part of the transformation towards sustainable living or production manners?

The project the resident will develop based on this question is free in its choice of media and methods as well as its content, i.e. it can involve different approaches – from the abstract or theoretical level to the development and creation of objects or products – and can have different (in the sense of freely chosen) thematic focuses. It is desired that at the end of the residency, something will be created that can be shown and communicated in an exhibition.



WE OFFER:

- A scholarship amounting to €1000 per month to cover living expenses (= €3000 in total for the three-month residency)
- Free accommodation for the duration of the residency programme (one private room per resident in a furnished apartment shared between the two residents)
- €1500 materials budget
- Payment of travel costs from Ghana to Essen and back (economy class)
- A studio in the Folkwang University building at the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Access to the university's well-equipped facilities, including:
 - Wood, metal, ceramics, and plastics workshops (including CNC milling, laser cutting, ceramic 3D printing, etc.)
 - Bio Lab / Experimental kitchen (cooking and food processing equipment, dehydrator, laminar flow workbench, autoclave, microscope with 4K camera, incubator, fermentation equipment, etc.)
 - Textile workshop (Kniterate digital knitting machine, hand-knitting machines, CNC embroidery machine, various sewing machines, etc.)
 - Digital design workshops (additive manufacturing, XR technologies, physical computing, electronics, etc.)
 - Photo studios and facilities for producing high quality fine art prints
- A presentation of the work developed during the residency at the Dutch Design Week 2026 in Eindhoven – a suitable format (e.g. artist talk, workshop) will be determined during the residency
- Access to our network of collaborating institutions, including the sustainability research institutes Wuppertal Institute and Fraunhofer UMSICHT and contact with the SBYD team consisting of 15 team members from various design disciplines
- Access to our network of collaborating museums and craftspeople in the region who are specialised in different materials and craft techniques
- A follow-up presentation in Ghana in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut will share the residency experience with local audiences.

The logo for SBYD, featuring the letters 'S', 'B', 'Y', and 'D' in a stylized, bold, black font. The 'S' and 'B' are connected, and the 'Y' and 'D' are also connected. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page, set against a large, abstract orange and white graphic that resembles a stylized 'S' or a curved shape.

ABOUT THE LOCATION:

SBYD and its residency programme at Folkwang University of the Arts is based in Essen, in the Ruhr area. This region in the west of Germany is part of the Rhine–Ruhr metropolitan region, a region of 13 interconnected cities which form the third largest and most populous region in Western Europe, behind only London and Paris.

The city of Essen, historically known for its coal and steel industries, has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, and is turning into a cultural hub with a thriving arts scene. In 2010, the Ruhr region was awarded the status of “cultural capital of Europe“, with many former industrial sites transforming into spaces for the arts. Consequently, Folkwang University’s campus is located at the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which also hosts several museums, festivals, and the performing arts centre PACT Zollverein. Essen also features extensive green spaces, parks, and bike paths, offering opportunities for outdoor recreation amidst its urban environment.

THE RESIDENCY STUDIO:

The residents are provided with a studio at Folkwang University’s campus at UNESCO World Heritage Site Zollverein in Essen and have access to the university’s well-equipped workshops.



THE RESIDENCY APARTMENT:

During the residency, each resident is provided with free accommodation in a private room in an apartment shared between the two residents. The apartment is located in the city of Gelsenkirchen, one train stop away from the residency studio at the Zollverein campus of Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen. The location of the apartment is in the so-called Kreativquartier Ückendorf (Creative Quarter Ückendorf) in Gelsenkirchen. This area is part of the creative quarters programme in the Ruhr area, with which the state supports the establishment of, e.g., galleries, cafés, and artist studios.



REQUIREMENTS:

- applicants must have lived and produced most of their work in Ghana for at least five years at the time of application
- artistic and/or design project proposal on one of the two themes (“Narratives“ or “Tech“)
- experience in working on self-initiated art and/or design projects
- basic command of English or German, since there will be no translator present on site
- willingness to conduct most of the work for the residency at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen
- willingness to continuously reflect upon your project’s progress with the SBYD team at Folkwang University of the Arts
- valid travel documents that allow you to travel to Germany, and a visa for the duration of the scholarship



APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Please submit one single PDF-file in English containing the following:

- Curriculum vitae
- Portfolio showing a selection of a maximum of ten works
- Project proposal with text and images on no more than three A4 pages, addressing one of the two subject areas (“Narratives” or “Tech”). The proposal should describe which questions your project seeks to address, which ways of working / methods you intend to use during the three months, and which outcomes you envision.

Please submit your application by **06 April 2026, 23:59 (GMT)**, via the [linked online form](#).

All applicants will be notified of the results via email by the beginning of May 2026.

Please note that the residencies do not constitute employment relationships with the university and are not subject to German social insurance contributions. Students enrolled at a university are ineligible for the residency, except for doctoral students, who are eligible to apply. The Goethe-Institut Ghana team will assist applicants in their visa application.

CONTACT:

If you have any questions, please contact the SBYD Team at:
sbyd@folkwang-uni.de / <https://sbyd.space> / @sbyd.space

SUBMIT HERE:



This residency programme is supported by:



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