



After the Single Use
Rethinking Plastics in Healthcare



GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

OPEN CALL

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OPEN CALL: Artist in Residence

GENEVA

From Reusable to Disposable

We invite an artist to join two historians at the University of Geneva to explore why plastics became ubiquitous in hospitals, and the infrastructures of laundry, sterilization, and repair that once made medical devices reusable.

LOCATION

Geneva, Switzerland

INSTITUTION

University of Geneva

RESEARCH LEAD

Bruno Strasser, Professor, University of Geneva

RESIDENCY PERIOD

Full-Time May 2027 OR Part-Time March-May 2027 (2-3 days/week).

Exact schedule will be developed based on artist preference in dialogue with Research Unit.

NOTE: No accommodation is provided as part of this residency

FEE

Artist fee: 5500 CHF

Materials: 880 CHF

APPLICATION DEADLINE

23 October, 2026

RESPONSE TIMEFRAME

You will receive a response to your application before 20 December, 2026

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT RESIDENCY

Info.noba@vitenparken.no

ABOUT: AFTER THE SINGLE USE

If the world's healthcare sector were a country, it would rank 5th in global carbon emissions. A significant portion of these emissions come from single-use plastic medical products like syringes, surgical drapes, and diagnostic devices, all designed for disposal. These materials emit toxins and greenhouse gases when burned, leak microplastics and chemicals when landfilled, and pollute marine environments, with direct and indirect effects on human health. After the Single Use (ATSU) is a five-year research project asking: how did we get here, and what would it take to move healthcare towards a circular economy of reuse?

Led by the University of Edinburgh, UK and funded by the Wellcome Trust, the project brings together historians, anthropologists, and public health researchers across eight countries (India, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, Senegal, Switzerland, Tanzania and USA) to examine the history, present, and future of single-use medical plastics.

Driven by the belief that understanding this crisis requires perspectives beyond research alone, each research unit will host an artist in residence. The eight residencies are independent but connected: selected artists will have the opportunity to meet online and exchange with other artists in residence at the other seven sites, and all eight residencies will contribute to a shared international online exhibition.

The artist in residence program is coordinated by NOBA (Norwegian Bio-Art Arena), Vitenparken, Norway on behalf of the After the Single Use collective. If you have questions about the open call reach out to info.noba@vitenparken.no

THE RESEARCH IN GENEVA

Why did plastics become ubiquitous in hospitals? Why did reusable medical devices, such as syringes, catheters, and gloves, become single-use? And what are the infrastructures — such as laundry, sterilization, and reparation — that currently make it possible to reuse medical devices? These are some of the questions we (two historians) are trying to answer using historical methods, based on written, visual, and material sources.

ABOUT THE ATSU ARTIST RESIDENCY

As part of ATSU, eight artists will be selected (one per research location) to join the local research team for a residency period between March-May 2027. This is a research-embedded residency: the focus is on curiosity, exchange, and process. Artists will have the time and space to engage with the research, bring their own perspective and practice to bear, and explore what emerges.

Artists are not expected to illustrate or communicate the research. They are invited to work alongside it — to observe, question, and respond in whatever way feels true to their practice. The aim is a genuine exchange, in which both the artist and the researchers come away with new ways of thinking.

Artistic works in progress will be presented locally at or near the end of the residency period, and the artist will contribute work to the ATSU online exhibition after completion of the residency. The results will be featured alongside 7 other artists in residence projects working with 7 other research groups worldwide. The artist fee covers the residency, the local presentation of work and the production of work for the online exhibition.

WHAT THE ARTIST IN GENEVA WOULD ENGAGE WITH

As the artist, you will be embedded in the team, participating in its activities and developing work that emerges from that encounter. This includes access to:

- the vast collection of visual materials held at the Medical Library, including advertisements and marketing materials from 1950s-1990s, documenting how plastics were sold as important material basis of clinical care.
- the sites at the university hospital in Geneva where medical devices are stored, used, cleaned, and sterilized.
- the sites where medical waste is discarded and incinerated.
- the exhibitions stands of companies selling medical devices and sterilization equipment at trade fairs.

WHAT THE ATSU RESIDENCY OFFERS

The residency will be situated at the University of Geneva (66 Bd Carl Vogt) in the center of Geneva in close proximity to the University hospital of Geneva (HUG), the medical school (CMU), and a number of arts studios (Kugler) and galleries. The residency will be able to program an exhibition at the University of Geneva exhibition space.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We welcome artists from any creative background, for example, visual art, performance, film, photography, installation, design, socially engaged practice, etc. We are looking for artists who are curious, self-directed, and comfortable working in an unfamiliar environment.

You do not need prior experience working with researchers. What matters is that you can articulate why this residency interests you, and that you are genuinely open to engaging with the research, not just its themes, but its specific questions and methods.

For the Geneva residency the candidate should be able to communicate in French and ideally English, and able to present a portfolio and proposal which speaks to issue of plastics, waste, disposability, reuse, care of objects and people.

You might be a good fit if you:

- are drawn to questions of health, waste, material culture, and environmental justice
- can work independently and take initiative with your time
- are interested in how knowledge is made; in archives, in fieldwork, in communities
- are open to process-led work without a pre-determined outcome
- are comfortable with ambiguity and willing to learn
- are based in Geneva or able to commit to being based there during the residency period

APPLICATION CRITERIA AND TERMS & CONDITIONS

There are general criteria for the artist in residence across all 8 locations worldwide. Before applying please read the terms and conditions document for the ATSU Artist Residency for more details on the residency. You can download both of these on the open call webpage.

<https://aftersingleuse.net/news-events/2026/open-call-artist-residence>

HOW TO APPLY

To apply for the ATSU Artist Residency, fill in [this form](#).

The QR code below also takes you to the application form.

