



After the Single Use
Rethinking Plastics in Healthcare



OSLO, NORWAY

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
OPEN CALL**

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OPEN CALL: Artist in Residence

OSLO

Plastics, Care and Disposability

We invite an artist to join a team of researchers at the University of Oslo to explore how objects meant for single use have shaped hospital life in Norway, with particular attention to how plastics became an increasingly important part of medical practice.

LOCATION

Oslo, Norway

INSTITUTION

Institute for Health and Society, Medical Faculty, University of Oslo

RESEARCH LEAD

Anne Kveim Lie, Professor, University of Oslo

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: 62,800 NOK

Materials: 10,000 NOK

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 BioArt 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 OSLO

The Oslo research unit consist of a historian and physician, a research assistant, and two PhD students who collaborate closely with students and stakeholders. They explore how potentially toxic plastics have become central to everyday hospital practice, in institutions that are meant to care for people rather than harm them. We combine archival and ethnographic research and are eager to combine that with artistic research and environmental advocacy.

The group's research is organised around three strands. The first examines how the Scandinavian welfare state shifted from reusable to single-use medical objects, focusing on Norway's national referral hospital as a key site where ideas of hygiene, efficiency, risk, and modernity were mobilised to justify disposability. The second strand traces the emergence of the disposable vaginal speculum as a gendered technology, looking closely at the materiality of plastics and how notions of women's bodies and clinical convenience shaped the move from metal to plastic instruments. The third follows medical plastics back to their industrial origins by studying a factory in Halden, founded by Baxter in 1977 to manufacture dialysis solutions and intravenous (IV) fluids in the company's patented Vialflex plastic containers. Taken together, these strands link hospital-based and community care to wider infrastructures of production, regulation, and global circulation of plastic devices.

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 OSLO WOULD ENGAGE WITH

The residency will be hosted by the Department of Community Medicine and Global Health at the University of Oslo, where the artist will have a desk and workspace. The department is interdisciplinary, bringing together anthropologists, historians, physicians and epidemiologists. Subject to the necessary permissions, the research group can facilitate access to research sites, archives and to environmental and health organisations such as Legenes klimaaksjon and Naturvernforbundet.

The position invites collaborative discussions and artistic responses to the question of how care, environment, and justice intersect in a health system where single-use plastics have become taken-for-granted—and how they might be imagined otherwise.

WHAT THE ATSU RESIDENCY OFFERS

The artist in residence will have the opportunity to work alongside the Oslo team and their students, participating in its activities and developing work that emerges from that encounter.

This includes access to:

- A substantial collection of documents (in Norwegian) and objects from archives and museums, tracing how single-use plastics were justified as an essential basis of modern clinical care.

- Active sites documenting the production, use, and disposal of single-use plastics in several Norwegian facilities, including a reference hospital, a primary healthcare unit, and a production facility (access currently being negotiated).
- Comprehensive insight into contemporary debates about safety, waste, and toxicity, and the work of local NGOs.
- The other ATSU artists and researchers in the network for exchange of ideas.

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.

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
- Norwegian would be useful if doing historical and archival research, but is not a requirement.

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.

