



After the Single Use
Rethinking Plastics in Healthcare



TANZANIA

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
OPEN CALL**

OPEN CALL: Artist in Residence

TANZANIA

Rethinking Reusability

We invite a Tanzania-based artist to collaborate with a team of researchers at the National Institute for Medical Research to investigate the convergence of medical history, contemporary healthcare practices, and the politics of disposability.

LOCATION

Tanga / Dar es Salaam / Dodoma, Tanzania

INSTITUTION

National Institute for Medical Research – Amani Medical Research Centre

RESEARCH LEAD

Dr Peter Ernest Mangesho, Principal Research Officer, National Institute for Medical Research

RESIDENCY PERIOD

Part-Time March-May 2027

Exact schedule will be developed in dialogue between artist and Research Unit.

The residency includes travelling to the different locations for site visits.

FEE

Artist fee: 7,100,000 TZS

Materials: 2,900,000 TZS

Budget for Site Visits (including Travel, Accommodation & Food): 2,650,000 TZS

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 NIMR RESEARCH UNIT

The Tanzania part of the ATSU project at NIMR Amani Medical Research Centre in Muheza is an interdisciplinary study combining anthropology, history, public health, environmental humanities, and design to explore how single-use medical plastics have transformed healthcare in Tanzania. Instead of just focusing on plastic pollution or waste, it examines the entire lifecycle of medical devices—from procurement and use to disposal—and how reuse systems evolved. The research investigates why and how single-use plastics became standard in healthcare, what histories and infrastructures enabled this shift, and what sustainable futures could look like. It aims to understand the social, environmental, historical, and material impacts of disposability in health systems.

Research will be conducted in hospitals, research institutions, laboratories, and healthcare waste facilities across Tanzania, focusing on historical and current infrastructures that influence the movement of single-use medical plastics. The study will examine the history of device reuse, the circulation of plastics in healthcare and research, pressures on waste management systems, and environmental impacts of technologies like incineration. It will involve healthcare workers, scientists, waste handlers, policymakers, historians, and nearby

communities. Using ethnography, archival research, oral histories, observation, interviews, photography, and audiovisual documentation, the project seeks to understand both visible and invisible systems of healthcare material circulation.

The Artist-in-Residence will collaborate with researchers, healthcare workers, and communities to explore material cultures and experiences related to healthcare, waste, repair, care, and environmental change. The residency provides opportunities to engage with materials like discarded medical plastics, hospital landscapes, archives, laboratories, healthcare worker stories, and medical waste infrastructure.

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 TANZANIA WOULD ENGAGE WITH

During the residency, the artist will join the Tanzania ATSU research team, engaging with field sites, research activities, and interdisciplinary collaborators. Working with anthropologists, historians, public health researchers, and healthcare professionals, the artist will develop an independent creative response to the research while participating in selected activities, subject to ethical and institutional approvals. The residency aims to provide access to the social, historical, and material worlds through which single-use medical plastics circulate in Tanzania.

The artist will have opportunities to engage with:

- Healthcare and research environments: guided tours of hospitals, research labs, waste management facilities, CSSDs, and, when approved, non-clinical healthcare processes like procurement, storage, sterilisation, and waste handling
- Historical collections and research materials: access to archival documents, photographs, policy papers, medical equipment collections, project photos, fieldnotes, and oral histories about Tanzania's shift from reusable to single-use medical technologies
- Fieldwork and community engagement: opportunities to accompany researchers during ethnographic visits, meetings, workshops, and community activities, engaging with healthcare workers, environmental officers, waste handlers, policymakers, researchers, and local communities
- Collaborative research activities: participation in project seminars, interdisciplinary reading groups, workshops, data sessions, and team meetings with Tanzanian and international collaborators
- Creative development and public engagement at NIMR Amani Medical Research Centre, including dedicated space for artistic work and collaboration with researchers on exhibitions, installations, performances, or visual narratives
- Access to the other ATSU artists and researchers in the network for exchange of ideas

WHAT THE ATSU RESIDENCY OFFERS

The NIMR Amani Medical Research Centre offers a unique setting for an artist-in-residence, sitting at the intersection of science, healthcare, history, and community life. Located in Muheza District, Tanga Region, it connects rural areas, health facilities, hospitals, and biomedical research. With a history of over a century, Amani has evolved alongside social and environmental changes, making it ideal for exploring themes like care, waste, sustainability, and medical technologies. Through long-standing partnerships with hospitals, universities, and communities, the artist can engage with diverse people, landscapes, and healthcare settings rarely available in traditional residencies. NIMR provides a supportive environment with workspace, meeting rooms, internet, library, and collaboration opportunities with interdisciplinary experts. Instead of a typical studio residency, the Centre becomes a creative lab where artistic practice is shaped through scientific inquiry, ethnography, archives, healthcare environments, and dialogue, allowing the artist to create work rooted in Tanzania's healthcare realities and histories.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We welcome artists who can translate complex research into visual, spatial, performative, participatory, or multimedia works that provoke new ways of thinking about health,

sustainability, and medical care's future. These artworks will be part of the project's public engagement, fostering dialogue among healthcare professionals, policymakers, researchers, students, and communities in Tanzania and globally.

We are looking for an artist who is curious, collaborative, and willing to immerse themselves in the everyday worlds of healthcare, research, and environmental change. Rather than simply illustrating the research, we hope the artist will engage critically and creatively with our questions, working alongside researchers, healthcare workers, and communities to generate new ways of seeing and understanding the histories, infrastructures, materials, and afterlives of single-use medical plastics.

We value an artist whose practice embraces experimentation, dialogue, and co-production, and who is interested in challenging conventional ways of communicating research through imaginative, thought-provoking, and publicly engaging artistic work that contributes to both the intellectual life of the project and wider conversations about sustainable healthcare futures. We are looking for artists who are curious, self-directed, and comfortable working in an unfamiliar environment.

You do not need prior experience of 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.

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 Tanzania

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.

