



## **Villa Aurora – Grant Guidelines**

(as of December 12, 2023)

### **Mission & Principles**

The Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House Association (VATMH) promotes the intellectual and cultural exchange between Germany and the United States as an independent and nonpartisan intermediary of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The nonprofit organization awards scholarships in its two residency centers, Villa Aurora and Thomas Mann House, both located in Pacific Palisades, a neighborhood of Los Angeles in the state of California, USA; it also organizes cultural programs and events in both the United States and Germany. It keeps alive the memory of European and Jewish exile history in the United States, conveys a contemporary and diverse image of Germany, and facilitates joint reflection on social, cultural, and political challenges.

Villa Aurora annually awards scholarships to artists in the fields of visual arts, composition, film, and literature for a three-month stay in Los Angeles. Additional scholarships are awarded in cooperation with partner organizations. The scholarship in Los Angeles serves the purpose of working on an artistic project, networking with Californian cultural creatives and institutions, and publicly presenting the relevant project and/or work.

The Thomas Mann House was opened as a residency center in 2018 by the German Federal Government, with the aim of creating a vibrant transatlantic debating space where thought leaders, artists, and intellectuals explore fundamental political, social, and cultural issues of the present and future, in dialogue both with each other and with the host country.

Additionally, the association annually awards the Feuchtwanger Fellowship for writers and journalists who advocate for freedom of expression in their home countries, the Michael Ballhaus Scholarship for outstanding visual artists, and the Berlin Fellowship for artists living in Los Angeles, enabling them to live and work in Berlin for several weeks.

VATMH supports artists, thinkers, and intellectuals who represent a diversity of opinions, positions, and approaches during their residencies in Los Angeles. VATMH is committed to this freedom of expression, which includes the responsibility to contribute to an empathetic



and peaceful coexistence of all people without any form of racism, exclusion, or hatred. Together with its partners, VATMH champions humanity and compassion in the world.

VATMH is funded with public funds from the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media, based on a decision of the German Bundestag.

The residency program at the Thomas Mann House is supported by the Berthold Leibinger Stiftung, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung, and the Goethe-Institut.

## **Villa Aurora – Application Requirements and Selection Process**

### *General Information*

Every year, Villa Aurora [&] Thomas Mann House e. V. awards up to twelve fellowships to visual artists, composers, authors, and film makers. Grant recipients reside at Villa Aurora in Pacific Palisades for three months.

- During the fellowship, artists work on a specific project.
- Two artists may apply for a joint fellowship to work on a project together. However, each artist must complete a separate application form and mark it as an application for a joint fellowship.
- Fellowships are awarded per calendar quarter.
- Accommodating family members for an extended period of time cannot be guaranteed due to limited space.
- Visits can be arranged for stays of up to two weeks.
- Villa Aurora staff provides assistance with the implementation of projects and corresponding research as well as networking opportunities with individuals and partner institutions.
- Up to 6 additional scholarships for Villa Aurora will be awarded directly through our partner organizations in separate selection processes.

### *The Villa Aurora Fellowship entails:*

- a non-repayable basic monthly stipend of EUR 2,500 including project funds,
- a round-trip travel allowance of EUR 1,275 and a monthly mobility allowance of EUR 600,



- if applicable: child allowances (EUR 400 per month for the first accompanying child, EUR 100 for every subsequent accompanying child),
- free lodging at Villa Aurora in a room with private bathroom. All Fellows have access to two shared kitchens, numerous spaces, and a garden area for interaction with other Fellows and guests.

### *Eligibility*

- Eligible applicants are artists who have already made public appearances with their own works or publications and are active as independent artists.
- Applicants must have their center of life and work in Germany; however, German citizenship is not necessary.
- It is expected that the applicants contribute to creating a social and productive living and working atmosphere at Villa Aurora and Thomas Mann House.
- Students are excluded from applying. Applications from doctoral candidates are possible.
- Applications can be submitted in the fields of film, literature, and composition.
- In the field of visual arts, applications are only possible by invitation; unsolicited applications in this area will not be considered.

### *Details on the application processes and work samples in the individual categories:*

#### Film

- VATMH encourages applications from freelance artists whose work has been presented to the public at a festival, in movie theatres, or on television.
- The following work sample is required: Submission of a streaming link to a film in which the applicant was involved. Please select a maximum of one work or excerpts from it and insert a low-barrier streaming link (i.e. no streaming providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime etc., password-protected links are of course okay) in the field provided.

#### Literature

- VATMH encourages applications from freelance authors whose work has been presented to the public in form of a book publication (No self-publishing, no anthologies, no editorship, no scientific or non-fiction books).
- The following work samples are required: Upload of a text sample (already published or in progress / \*.pdf, no length restrictions). The upload link will be provided by e-mail after submitting the online application.



## Composition

- VATMH encourages applications from professional musicians and composers whose work has been presented to the public at renowned venues and concert halls.
- The following work samples are required: Upload of a total of three work samples (\*.mp3 and \*.pdf). Video material can only be submitted by PDF with links to streaming platforms. The upload link will be provided by e-mail after submitting the online application.

## Composition

- Visual artists and performance artists may apply by invitation only. They cannot submit unsolicited applications or be recommended for a fellowship by curators or institutions. Artists in this category are invited to apply by curators who are selected by Villa Aurora on an annual basis.
- The documents for an application in the field of visual arts will be sent to the nominated artists.

## *Procedure*

- The applications are reviewed by VATMH's office for completeness of the documents.
- Independent juries decide on the granting of fellowships.
- There is no legal entitlement to the award of a fellowship.
- The decision is usually communicated to the candidates by e-mail or mail, but no reasons are given.
- Upon acceptance, all selected candidates will receive a contract. The fellowship is only legally valid after the fellows have signed the contract.

## **Terms and Conditions**

- As an entity pursuing exclusively non-profit purposes as defined by article 52 AO (German Fiscal Code), VATMH is exempt from corporate tax according to article 5, section 1, clause 9 KStG (German Corporate Tax Act), and is authorized to award scholarships as defined by article 3 clause 44 EStG (German Income Tax Act) for the promotion of artistic education and training.
- The awarded grants are intended to cover the living costs of the grant recipients.
- The exact amount of the grant is defined in the respective contract and transferred into an account specified by the grant recipient.



- The grant does not establish an employment relationship as defined by labor law, social security law, and tax law. It is not considered compensation as defined by article 14 of the Social Code IV.
- Please note that VATMH cannot make a universally binding statement regarding the income tax exemption of VATMH grants. To resolve existing doubts, scholarships must be assessed individually by the competent tax office. The responsible office is the Finanzamt für Körperschaften I in Berlin (Bredtschneiderstr. 5, 14057 Berlin). When making the inquiry, please provide the tax number of the association – 27/680/62067. We also advise that you talk with your employer about issues related to the receipt of a grant (income offset, leave of absence, etc.) before starting your stay.
- For the duration of their stay, grant recipients will have a room with a bathroom, private telephone line, Wi-Fi, and desk. The communal areas are accessible to all grant recipients.
- A long-term stay of family members at Villa Aurora or the Thomas Mann House cannot be guaranteed due to space limitations. Visits for up to 14 days are possible by arrangement.
- In the event of an unforeseen temporary closure of Villa Aurora or the Thomas Mann House, the scholarship holders agree to be accommodated with a partner organization of VATMH.
- Grant recipients are obliged to comply with the legal provisions and other generally binding standards applicable in the USA and California and to refrain from any political activity.
- Grant recipients are entitled to inform themselves about general political developments and political parties abroad in accordance with applicable legal and social standards.
- If the grant recipient violates these criteria, VATMH may, after issuing a warning, exclude them from continuing the scholarship, terminate the scholarship contract, and demand repayment of the payments made.

## **Termination**

The grant is legally effective only after the grant recipients have signed the consent form. VATMH has the right to revoke the grant with immediate effect – without observing a notice period – if there is a solid reason for doing so. This must be a reason where the continuation of the collaboration between the scholarship holder and VATMH cannot be reasonably expected due to a substantial breach of trust. VATMH also has the right to terminate the

scholarship contract without notice for an important reason, especially if the grant recipient has

- obtained the grant through gross negligence or intentionally by providing false or incomplete information, or by concealing double funding in a grossly negligent or intentional way,
- violated the goals and mission of VATMH,
- breached essential obligations laid down in the grant contract,
- failed to submit documents requested by VATMH by the set deadline,
- not used the monthly grant in accordance with the purposes of the agreement,
- or if the grant is classified by the competent tax office as endangering the non-profit status of VATMH. In this case, the grantee is obliged to immediately repay and return all benefits. The claim for repayment exists regardless of whether the funding amount provided by VATMH has already been fully or partially used or consumed. The repayment amount is due immediately; objections and defenses are not permitted. The rights of VATMH according to articles 119 ff. BGB (German Civil Code) for contestation, especially contestation due to fraud, remain unaffected by this.

From the date of signing the contract, each party is entitled to terminate the grant contract with a notice period of four weeks at the end of the month, if the stay cannot be commenced or continued due to factual or legal reasons, without any breach of duty by the parties. In this case, a reversal of transactions will take place according to the general legal regulations of articles 812 ff. BGB. Unused funds must be refunded to VATMH in full and without delay. The claim for repayment is immediately due; objections and defenses – in particular, the plea of disenrichment – are not permitted.