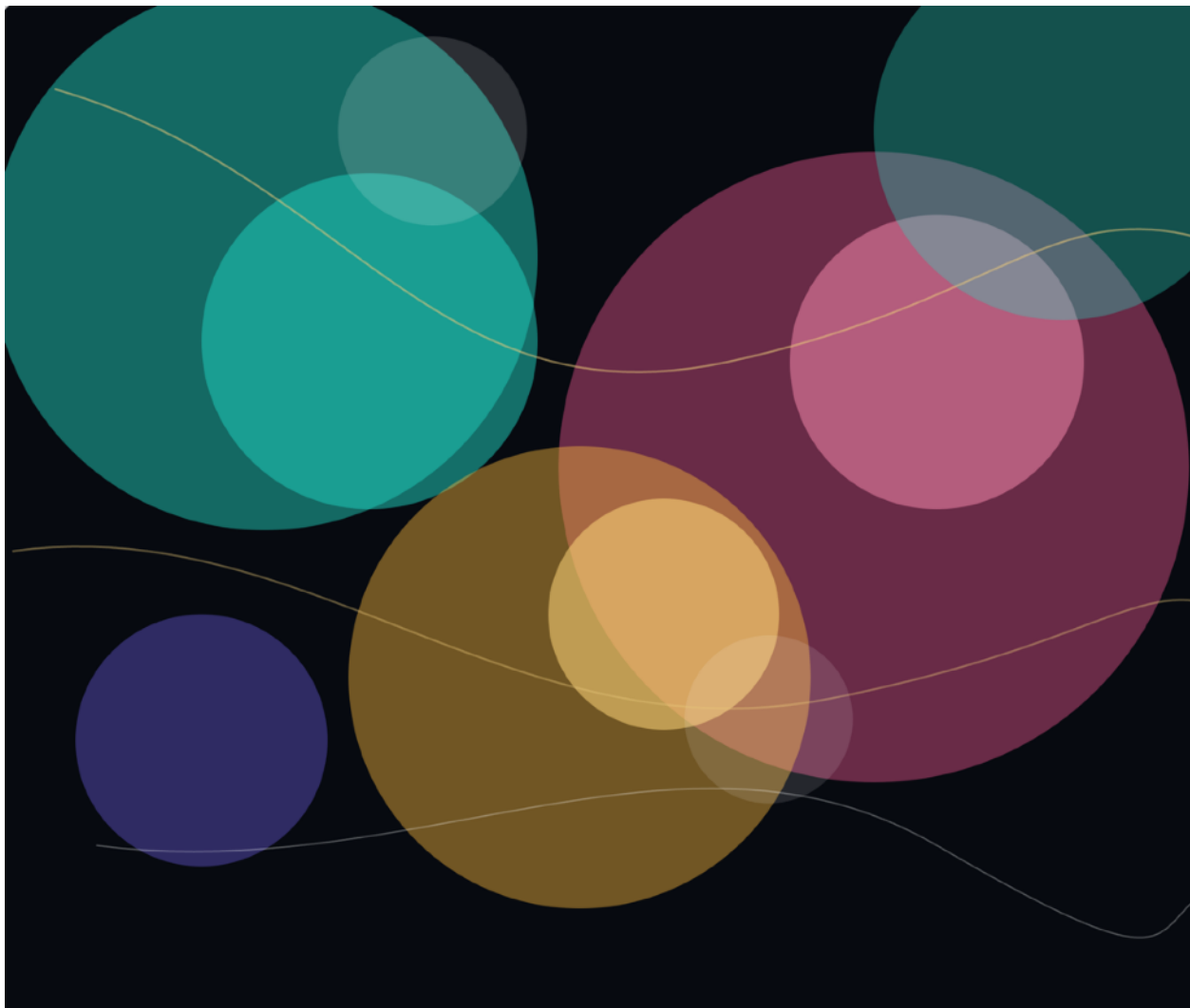


TRACES · ART & SCIENCE @ ENERGYPOLIS

TRACES

Transdisciplinary Research in Arts, Creation & Sciences

International Open Call for Artists **Art&Science Residency**



Visual proposal — photoluminescence of perovskite crystals,

“Art and science are two branches of the same tree.”

Albert Einstein

1. Introduction

TRACES is an Art&Science residency programme run by the FDDM¹ in Switzerland, in partnership with EPFL-Valais², Energypolis SA, the City of Sion and the Canton of Valais.

For its pilot phase, TRACES invites an international visual artist to enter into dialogue with the Laboratory for Energy Materials led by Prof. Sascha Feldmann (EPFL), on the Energypolis campus in Sion (Valais, Switzerland).

The residency offers the selected artist privileged access to a cutting-edge research environment focused on tomorrow's energy materials, together with scientific support, with a view to creating original works that will be presented to the public at the end of the residency.

2. Context and vision

TRACES aims to strengthen the links between art, science and society in the context of the development of the Energypolis Campus in Sion, Switzerland.

The programme seeks to foster collaboration between artists and researchers through residencies, cultural and scientific events and outreach activities, exploring new forms of interdisciplinary creation while also making scientific issues accessible to the public.

2.1 The scientific partner

The partnership with the Laboratory for Energy Materials anchors this pilot edition in the themes of the energy transition, sustainability and the materials of the future. The laboratory's research explores the interactions between light and matter in order to design the next generation of “soft” semiconductors³ — materials at the heart of flexible solar cells, ultra-energy-efficient displays and emerging quantum technologies.

2.2 Professor Sascha Feldmann

Trained in chemistry at Heidelberg University and in physics at the University of Cambridge, Sascha Feldmann earned an acclaimed PhD on hybrid perovskites. He then became a Rowland Fellow at Harvard University, where he developed ultrafast spectroscopy techniques to study light-matter interactions.

Since 2024, he has led the Laboratory for Energy Materials at EPFL-Valais Wallis.

His work has earned him several international distinctions, including an ERC Starting Grant, the Wiley Young Innovator Award and a place in C&EN's “Talented 12”.

3. Thematic framework

The laboratory's research opens up a rich imaginative space between chemistry and physics. The very title of the programme — TRACES — invites reflection on what materials, light or energy leave behind as imprints, memories or becomings.

Applicants are invited to put forward a proposal that resonates with one or both of the following open questions:

- How can we make perceptible what escapes perception — the transformation of light into energy, phenomena at the scale of materials?

- What forms, narratives or experiences can emerge from a dialogue between visual creation and the science of energy materials?

All visual arts disciplines are welcome (installation, sculpture, digital media, visual performance, photography, etc.). The proposal does not need to be fully developed at the application stage: the jury will assess the relevance of the proposed dialogue with the scientific laboratory and the originality of the artist's overall approach.

4. Residency terms

- **Duration and dates:** 3 months (11 January – 18 April 2027), including the public presentation.
- **Residency location:** Energypolis Campus, Sion (Valais, Switzerland), with access to the workspaces provided (studio, production space) and to EPFL's scientific laboratories, under conditions agreed with the research team.
- **Overall project coordination:** FDDM
- **Artistic and curatorial direction:** Nicolas Rouiller
- **Scientific support:** collaboration with Prof. Sascha Feldmann and his team (Laboratory for Energy Materials, EPFL).
- **Artist stipend:** CHF 2,000 per month, i.e. CHF 6,000 in total (the stipend covers living expenses and research; production costs are covered separately).
- **Production budget:** the total amount of the production budget will be set by the project's curator. An agreement will be drawn up between the curator and the artist.
- **Accommodation:** self-catering apartment at the Villa Les Pâquerettes in Sion, in collaboration with the Fondation Margherita (the conditions and house rules will be communicated to the resident at a later stage).
- **Travel expenses:** TRACES covers the artist's travel costs from their home to the residency and back, up to a maximum of CHF 1,500.
- **Important:** on site, food, local transport and telephone costs remain the responsibility of the resident artist. Obtaining a visa or any other travel documents is the responsibility of the resident; the TRACES team nonetheless remains available for any administrative questions. Insurance covering medical assistance and accidents during the stay in Switzerland is required, and proof must be provided before the start of the residency.
- **Public presentation:** 15 April 2027.

5. Profile and eligibility

- Established, professional international visual artist⁴. Applicants must have specialised training or equivalent experience, as well as recognition in their field demonstrated by public presentations of their artistic work. A minimum of two years of professional practice is required. Applicants must be at least 25 years old and have completed their studies at least two years ago.
- **Geographical eligibility:** international.
- **Working languages:** English (main), French, German.
- Availability for the entire residency period and commitment to take part in the public presentation (opening).

6. Selection criteria

Applications will be assessed by the TRACES Art&Science jury on the basis of the following criteria:

- Quality and distinctiveness of the artistic approach.
- Relevance and originality of the proposed dialogue with the laboratory's research.
- Feasibility of the proposal within the given time frame and location.
- The artist's ability to engage in a collaborative process with a scientific team.
- Potential of the proposal for public outreach and engagement with audiences.

7. Application file

The application, written in English or French, must include at least the following:

- A cover letter of no more than one A4 page (3,000 characters).
- A statement of intent of no more than two A4 pages (6,000 characters) presenting the envisaged approach in relation to the thematic framework.
- A portfolio representative of the artist's recent work.
- An artistic CV.

Important: applications must be submitted via the project website: www.traces-opencall.ch

8. Timeline and selection process

- **Call opens:** 5 October 2026
- **Application deadline:** 22 November 2026, 23:59 Swiss time (CET). No applications will be accepted after this deadline.
- **Selection of the laureate:** 7 December 2026
- **Residency period:** 11 January – 18 April 2027
- **Public presentation:** 15 April 2027

The recipient of the TRACES residency is selected by a jury of experts. Applicants will be informed of the decision in writing. The jury's decisions are final and no reasons will be given.

9. Practical and legal framework

Arrangements regarding intellectual property and the use of the works, the artist's obligations and communication matters will be discussed with the selected artist and set out in a specific contract.

10. Submission and enquiries

Applications must be submitted via the project website: www.traces-opencall.ch

For any questions: Nicolas Rouiller, TRACES project lead — FDDM — nicolas.rouiller@fddm.vs.ch

Notes

¹ Since 1999, the FDDM has been helping to make Valais an exemplary and sustainable region. Founded on the joint initiative of the State of Valais and the City of Sion, the foundation supports, advises and raises awareness among the Canton, municipalities, schools, businesses and citizens who wish to have a positive and tangible impact on Valais, now and for future generations.

² With 19 laboratories active in the key fields of energy, the environment and health, run by researchers and doctoral students of 40 nationalities, the Valais campus, firmly integrated into the Energypolis project, plays its full part in research and innovation at the heart of the Alps.

³ A soft semiconductor is a material that combines two properties usually thought of as opposites. On the one hand, it behaves like a semiconductor: it handles light and electrical charges, halfway between a conductor and an insulator — the family of materials at the heart of electronics and photovoltaics. On the other hand, its atomic structure is soft: deformable,

flexible, “alive”, rather than rigid. In a soft material, light, electrical charges and the atomic lattice are closely coupled. When the material absorbs a photon, the resulting charge does not travel through a frozen scaffold: it locally deforms the lattice around it (this is known as a polaron), and the lattice in turn trembles and responds. The material’s electronic life becomes inseparable from its mechanical and vibrational life. It is precisely this dynamic softness that gives these materials their remarkable qualities — highly efficient light absorption and emission, surprising tolerance to defects — and makes them promising for flexible solar cells, high-efficiency displays and LEDs, and certain emerging quantum technologies. In practical terms, this softness is as much an advantage (solution-printable, flexible, low-cost materials) as a challenge (they are more fragile and less stable than silicon).

⁴ Applicants must meet the definition of professional, established and internationally recognised creators set out by the Culture Department of the State of Valais (document in French): https://www.culturevalais.ch?action=get_file&language=fr&id=110&resource_link_id=1924