

Our FAQs on KUNSTMENTORAT NRW



What is the Kunstmentorat?

This program is for NRW artists who would like to expand their network, for those who have recently moved to North-Rhine Westphalia and who are looking for an intense exchange with experienced artists as their mentors. In addition, the program brings mentees and mentors in contact with other professionals from the art scene in NRW. With adept mentors, this yearlong one-to-one mentoring shall benefit the mentees to refine their communication in their practice, expand their network and visibility, and work on their artistic development. Furthermore, the regular professional exchange with colleagues is another aim of this program. Next to the main mentoring program, mentees will have privileged access to participate in the training program or the discussion events of Mobile Akademie, which are both organized by the Landesbüro für Bildende Kunst (LaB K).

By whom is this program funded? Who are the organizers of this program?

The Kunstmentorat NRW is a support program for visual artists, which is organized by the LaB K. The LaB K is a department of the Kunsthaus NRW with its primary purpose in the consultation and qualification of visual artists in NRW and as the first port of call concerning questions around the artist profession. The funding institution of the Kunsthaus NRW is the ministry of culture and science of the State of North-Rhine Westphalia. The Kunsthaus does not only support the visual arts in NRW through the LaB K program but further through documentation, research and exhibitions in Aachen-Kornelimünster, where the government art collection of NRW is preserved and displayed.

Since July 2022, the LaB K is headed by Susanne Ristow. Franziska Wilmsen is the contact person for the Kunstmentorat NRW:

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How long does the Kunstmentorat run? What is included in this period?

The Kunstmentorat NRW 2024 runs for twelve months. The program starts officially on 1 April 2024 and ends on 31 March 2025. Every new edition of the program is named a season. Two previous seasons have been successfully completed, from which an alumni network has developed. Such is maintained independently by former mentees and still active mentors.

After the matching phase in which mentees and mentors are paired, all tandems, the team of LaB K and Dr Marcel Schumacher (artistic director of the Kunsthau NRW), come together for an initial workshop at Kunsthau NRW in Kornelimünster. This day shall be used as a kick-off event to discuss personal expectations and establish aims for each pair during the mentoring. Moreover, this event is the first possibility to touch base with the other mentees and mentors, building the cadre of this season. Also, logistics will be talked about.

Next to a summer event at the end of August, which will be conceived by the LaB K and tandems in concert, and which will invite guests from other institutions, artists' scenes or other areas, a final meeting takes place in March 2024. Such shall be used for reflections and feedback.

In addition, the LaB K organizes excursions within NRW, which are planned for the whole group of season four and includes trips to various art institutions. Also, a group exhibition with our cooperating partner at the end of 2024 can be used by the mentees as another way of positioning.

The mentees' active partaking in these events is the condition for the mentoring program's success.

Dates

Kick-off event: End of March

Summer event: One-day Summer School at the KH, end of August

Final meeting: 1. Quarter of 2025, likely in March 2025

Excursions

One-day excursions within NRW, organized by LaB K (first is planned for May 2024)

What is part of the tandems' cooperation (between mentees and mentors)?

Next to the dialogue as a form of exchange, tandems shall undertake other self-organized activities within NRW and along its borders. These activities can include exhibitions, studio visits, meetings with curators or with other tandems – depending on individual preferences.

The monthly meetings between mentees and mentors can take place in person or digitally via video call. As in the seasons before, topics can range, for example, from artistic practice, current art and society discourses, the building of a portfolio, self-marketing or other techniques. Eventually, the topics of these meetings are unlimited.

At the beginning of each season, the mentee and mentor take down their 'parameters', which means how often they agree to see or meet each other, at least, digitally. Within this year, each tandem should conduct three trips.

All these activities shall be organized independently by each tandem, whereby short documentation of such is welcomed by the LaB K (e.g., documentation helps to feed the contents of the Kunstmentorat's Instagram account).

What is expected from the mentees?

The mentees should have a genuine interest in working on their practice in the interplay of the NRW artistic field. Furthermore, mentees are expected to be open for self-critical reflection in their Kunstmentorat journey. Thus, mentees will be enabled to explore and analyze their potential and competencies with the help of their mentors – which might also include recognizing weaknesses and working on such. Initially set at the beginning of the programme, the aims shall function as guiding principles.

Further, mentees should bring up the time that is required for successful participation in Kunstmentorat's fringe events (i.d., meetings of the tandems or partaking in the events mentioned above). Mentees are asked to choose two events (or more) from the qualification programme of the LaB K which can be taken throughout the season's year (events in the English language are planned).

How have the mentors been selected? How is the matching process working?

The mentors have been short-listed by the LaB K and have been selected by a jury. There is no possibility of applying directly as a mentor. Next to the mentors from seasons one to three, new mentors could be recruited for season four. All available mentors of season four will be published until 20 December on our website.

Mentees can indicate three preferences in their selection of mentors. In another step, such shall be considered within the selection process in which also mentors will take their vote, i.d., mentors can choose between the mentees too.

What are the criteria for a mentor?

The crucial premises of a mentor are professionalism, the peers' respect, a robust network within the institutional and free art scene of the region, an interest in the exchange with

colleagues, and the willingness to share her or his knowledge and experiences. This role has mainly a voluntary character and requires to a certain degree, not only the mentor's expertise but also the time that needs to be devoted to this role. However, the Kunstmentorat is no one-way road, as the LaB K team understands it, but it also offers the mentors the possibility to learn about new artistic developments by guiding their mentees. Through this role model effect, mentors impact the art scene sustainably.

Each mentor will receive an allowance for her/his engagement within the programme.

What is part of the qualification program, and how can the mentees participate?

Additional to this one-to-one mentoring in tandems, mentees are encouraged to further enhance their professional career by taking part in the qualification programme of the LaB K. Such comprises of semi- and webinars (digital events and presence) on questions around taxes, law and social insurance, and workshops on practice-based skills (e.g., portfolio design, self-marketing, social media and more) or techniques (e.g., videography, communication and more). As another component of their qualification programme, LaB K offers under their mobile academy "MobiLaB" various discussion formats such as symposiums, gallery talks or debates which inform critically on the artist profession.

The mentees will have privileged access to this qualification programme. For each event (workshops, consultation hours, et cetera), several free places are reserved for the mentees; all events are free of charge. However, we recommend to RSVP as soon as possible. The qualification programme is regularly updated and can be accessed via our website.

Ein Programm des

LaB K **kunsthaus nrw**

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