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Mediterranean Futures Residency 2026

Cultural Heritage, Contemporary Art & Emerging Technologies

Sidi Bou Said, Tunis, Tunisia

International Open Call

EL SPACE is pleased to announce the inaugural edition of the **Mediterranean Futures Residency**, a selective two-month international residency bringing together artists, designers, architects, and creative technologists whose practices engage with cultural heritage, memory, and contemporary technological transformation.

Situated within the exceptional historical and cultural landscape of Tunisia, the residency offers a rigorous framework for artistic inquiry, critical exchange, and experimental practice. A cohort of five residents will be selected through an international open call. Selected residents will be invited to undertake a period of focused research and production at one of the Mediterranean's most culturally rich sites, Carthage.

Curatorial Framework

Heritage is often understood as a repository of the past. Yet heritage is equally a question of the future: how cultural memory is transmitted, transformed, and reinterpreted across generations, communities, and technological shifts.

At a moment when digital technologies are fundamentally reshaping how societies record, access, and experience history, the Mediterranean Futures Residency invites participants to examine heritage not as a fixed inheritance but as a dynamic field of cultural production — contested, evolving, and open to reinvention.

Through artistic research, site-based investigation, and technological experimentation, residents will develop new relationships between memory, material culture, architecture, archives, craft traditions, and the possibilities opened by emerging technologies.



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The program welcomes critical, speculative, and transdisciplinary approaches that challenge conventional understandings of heritage and open new possibilities for engagement, authorship, and transmission.

Residency Environment

The residency is anchored in the unique cultural, historical, and architectural landscapes of Tunisia, a country situated at the crossroads of Mediterranean, African, and Arab histories, and home to one of the world's richest concentrations of archaeological and living heritage.

Residents will be based in Tunis and will have access to workspaces in Sidi Bou Said, with opportunities for sustained engagement with Ennejma Ezzahra Palace, one of Tunisia's most significant cultural landmarks and a site of rare historical and architectural distinction.

The program combines immersive, situated artistic practice with access to contemporary digital fabrication infrastructure, creating a productive dialogue between historical knowledge systems and future-oriented modes of making.

Areas of Interest

Applications may address, but are not limited to:

- Cultural memory and contemporary society
- Archives and counter-archives
- Architecture, urbanism, and spatial heritage
- Oral histories, storytelling, and intangible heritage
- Material culture and craft traditions
- Digital heritage, preservation, and access
- Artificial intelligence and cultural memory
- Digital fabrication and contemporary making
- Sound, image, and technological mediation
- Speculative and critical futures of heritage
- Public space, collective memory, and contested histories
- Networked culture and decolonial historical narratives
- Climate change and environmental risks on local cultures



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Who Should Apply

The Mediterranean Futures Residency welcomes applications from emerging and established practitioners across disciplines, including:

- Visual artists
- New media and digital artists
- Designers
- Architects
- Video artists
- Photographers
- Sound artists
- Creative technologists
- Independent researchers and scholars
- Interdisciplinary and hybrid practitioners

Applicants should demonstrate a strong, sustained artistic or research practice and articulate a clear and compelling engagement with questions of heritage, technology, and contemporary culture. The residency particularly welcomes practitioners whose work operates at the boundaries of disciplines and challenges established frameworks.

The residency is committed to assembling a cohort that reflects the geographic, cultural, and disciplinary diversity of the contemporary art world.

To be eligible, residents must be nationals of one of the following countries:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Ukraine.



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What the Residency Provides

Selected residents will receive:

- Full accommodation for the duration of the residency in Tunis
- Travel support to/from Tunis
- Meal support throughout the program
- Production support, including access to digital fabrication facilities:
 - 3D printing
 - Laser cutting
- Curatorial and research mentorship from the program team and invited specialists
- Access to cultural and heritage institutions, archives, and collections
- Integration into an international cohort of artists and researchers working across disciplines
- Opportunities for public presentation, professional exchange, and critical dialogue

Residency Philosophy

The Mediterranean Futures Residency is structured around the conviction that artistic practice constitutes a distinctive and irreplaceable form of knowledge production, one capable of generating new understandings of history, culture, and collective life that other disciplines cannot reach.

The program prioritizes research, experimentation, dialogue, and process over the production of finalized, exhibition-ready works. Residents are encouraged to pursue lines of inquiry that may be uncertain, speculative, or unresolved, and to treat the residency period as space for genuine intellectual and creative risk-taking.

Outcomes may take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Moving-image and video works
- Sound compositions and acoustic investigations
- Archival interpretation and counter-archives
- Digital works and interactive projects
- Prototypes and fabricated objects
- Experimental and hybrid formats



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Public Program

Throughout the residency, participants will contribute to a structured series of public conversations, presentations, studio visits, and informal exchanges designed to foster dialogue between artists, researchers, cultural practitioners, heritage professionals, and local and international audiences.

Invited guests, including curators, theorists, architects, and practitioners from the Mediterranean region and beyond, will participate in the program as interlocutors and collaborators.

The residency will culminate in a public presentation of research outcomes, prototypes, artistic works, and ongoing investigations developed during the program, open to the public and the broader cultural community.

Selection Process

A maximum of five residents will be selected by an Advisory Committee through a rigorous international review process.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Artistic excellence and depth of practice
- Originality and conceptual strength of the proposed project
- Relevance and engagement with the curatorial framework
- Quality and clarity of the research approach
- Feasibility and ambition within the residency context
- Potential contribution to the cohort and to collective dialogue
- Capacity to engage meaningfully with the cultural environment of Tunisia

The program is committed to assembling a cohort of exceptional diversity and complementary perspectives. Shortlisted applicants may be invited to a conversation with the selection committee prior to final decisions.



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Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following materials in English or French:

1. Curriculum Vitae: maximum 3 pages
2. Artist Biography: maximum 300 words
3. Statement of Practice: maximum 500 words, describing the applicant's artistic or research background and primary areas of inquiry
4. Project Proposal: maximum 1,000 words, outlining the specific research questions, methods, and intentions the applicant wishes to pursue during the residency
5. Portfolio: up to 10 representative works or project examples, with captions and brief descriptions
6. Preliminary Production and Resources Plan: a concise outline of intended activities, resources, and timelines for the residency period (include a list of materials needed)
7. Links to relevant websites, videos, or online work (*optional*)

All materials should be submitted as PDF files via email at aslema@elspace.co

Application Deadline: July 19, 2026 no later than 12PM Tunis Time.

Key Dates

Application Deadline: 12PM on July 19, 2026

Notification of Results: July 30, 2026

Residency Period: October 1, 2026 - November 30, 2026

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted via email at aslema@elspace.co

For inquiries: aslema@elspace.co



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About EL SPACE

EL SPACE is Tunisia's first social innovation hub, dedicated to building resilient and empowered communities through innovation and creative practice. Founded in 2015 in the wake of Tunisia's democratic transition, EL SPACE has spent a decade strengthening the entrepreneurial and creative capacities of young practitioners, growing from a single coworking space in downtown Tunis into a network of three complementary sites that together form one of North Africa's most distinctive creative innovation infrastructures.

EL SPACE Lafayette, the original hub in downtown Tunis, remains the civic core: a coworking space, learning environment, and meeting point for entrepreneurs, designers, and researchers working across disciplines.

EL FABSPACE Lac is EL SPACE's digital fabrication laboratory at the Orange Digital Center, Lac 1. Open to all, it provides access to laser cutters, 3D printers, a PCB milling machine, and a 3D scanner, alongside training and mentorship for students, makers, and startups.

The Creative Hub Sidi Bou Said is EL SPACE's most culturally distinctive site. Located inside the iconic Ennejma Ezzahra Palace, it is dedicated to craftsmanship, design, artistic innovation, and the development of Tunisian creative talent.

The Mediterranean Futures Residency draws on the full breadth of this ecosystem. Residents will be embedded within the Creative Hub Sidi Bou Said and have access to the fabrication facilities of EL FABSPACE Lac, working across two of Tunis's most distinctive environments, from the cliff-top gardens of Sidi Bou Said to the contemporary innovation district of Lac 1.

The Mediterranean Futures Residency is committed to the principles of equity, access, and cultural diversity.

Personal data submitted through this application will be collected and processed by EL SPACE solely for the purposes of administering the selection process. Application materials will be shared only with members of the selection committee and will not be disclosed to third parties.

Applicants may request access to, rectification of, or deletion of their personal data at any time by contacting: aslema@elspace.co

By submitting an application, applicants consent to the processing of their data as described above. EL SPACE handles all personal data in accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Tunisia's Law No. 2004-63 on the Protection of Personal Data.