



## **Villa Aurora Grant Guidelines**

(as of November 27, 2024)

### **Mission & Principles**

The Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. (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 fellowships and grants at 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 grants to artists in the fields of visual arts, composition, film, and literature for a three-month stay in Los Angeles. Additional grants are awarded in cooperation with partner organizations. The grants in Los Angeles serve the purpose of supporting work 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 by the German Federal Government in 2018, with the aim of creating a vibrant space for transatlantic debate where outstanding personalities explore fundamental political, social, and cultural issues of today and the future, in dialogue both with each other and with the host country, the United States.

Additionally, VATMH annually awards the Feuchtwanger Fellowship for writers and journalists who advocate for freedom of expression in their home countries; the Michael Ballhaus Fellowship for outstanding visual artists; and the Berlin Fellowship which enables artists living in Los Angeles 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, through tone and choice of words, 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 the 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 Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach-Stiftung, and the Goethe-Institut.



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

For applications to Villa Aurora grants, the following application requirements and terms apply:

### *General Information*

- The grant in Los Angeles aims to support work on an artistic project.
- Two artists may apply for a joint grant to work on a project together. Each artist must complete a separate application form and indicate that the application refers to a joint grant.
- Grants are tied to the calendar quarter.
- Due to limited space, long-term stays of family members at Villa Aurora cannot be guaranteed. VATMH will be happy to advise on renting additional living space for family members and will always endeavor to find flexible solutions for families within the institution's capacity.
- Visits by partners, family members, and guests at Villa Aurora are limited to a maximum of two weeks and are possible only upon prior arrangement. Generally, visits are limited to one guest and cannot be split.
- Grant recipients receive support in realizing their projects and related research and in networking with individuals and partner institutions.
- Up to six additional Villa Aurora grants are awarded directly through our partner organizations in separate selection processes.

### *The Villa Aurora Grant includes:*

- a 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,
- free accommodation at Villa Aurora: During their stay, each grant recipient has their own furnished room with private bathroom. In addition, grant recipients have access to two shared kitchens, numerous communal areas and quiet spaces, and a garden area for interacting with other grant recipients and guests.
- child allowances (if applicable): EUR 400 per month for the first accompanying child, EUR 100 for each additional child.

### *Eligibility*

- Eligible are artists who have publicly presented their works or publications and who work as freelance artists.
- The applicant's main place of residence and work must be in Germany; German citizenship is not required.
- Applicants are expected to contribute to creating a social and productive living and working atmosphere at Villa Aurora and the Thomas Mann House.
- Students are not eligible to apply. Applications from doctoral candidates are possible.
- Applications may 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.
- Applicants must be freelance artists.



Villa **Aurora**  
**Thomas Mann** House

- Applicants must submit a streaming link to a film in which they were involved. The link must be freely accessible (no commercial streaming providers or registration requirement; password-protected links are okay) and active until at least mid-July 2025.

### **Literature**

- VATMH encourages applications from authors with a minimum of one book publication with an established publisher. Qualifying works include novels, poetry volumes, short story collections, graphic novels, and performed plays, radio plays or film works. The work must be published by a regular publisher. Self-publishing of any kind (including Books on Demand and self-publishing platforms), contributions to anthologies or magazines, online publications, editorships, academic/scientific and non-fiction books are not allowed.
- Applicants must be freelance artists.
- Applicants must submit a text sample (5–10 pages; in the case of poetry, up to 15 pages) from the planned project as a PDF file. Alternatively, you can also include an excerpt from an already published text. The upload link for submitting the work samples (total file size: 200 MB max.) will be sent to you by e-mail after submitting your 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.
- Applicants must be freelance artists.
- Applicants must submit a maximum of three work samples as MP3 or PDF files. Please submit video material as a PDF file with a streaming link. The upload link will for submitting the work samples (total file size: 200 MB max, no more than three files) will be sent to you by e-mail after receiving your online application.

### **Visual Arts**

- In the field of visual arts, application is possible by invitation only.



- Visual artists may not submit unsolicited applications nor can they be recommended for a grant by curators or institutions. Artists in this category will be invited to apply by curators who are selected by Villa Aurora on an annual basis.
- The application documents for grants in the visual arts will be sent directly to the nominated artists.

### *Selection Process*

- The applications will be checked by the VATMH office for completeness.
- Category-specific selection committees will review and evaluate the submitted applications and nominate the Villa Aurora grant recipients.
- Depending on the availability of the nominated grantees, Villa Aurora & Thomas Mann House e.V. will award the grants after confirmation by the Board of Trustees.
- Applicants have no legal right to the award of a fellowship.
- The decision will be communicated to the candidates by e-mail or mail; no explanation will be given for the decision.
- Upon acceptance, all selected candidates will receive a letter of agreement. The award of the grant is legally valid only upon signature of this letter of agreement by the grant recipient.



## 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 stipends and grants 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 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, grants 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.
- In the event of an unforeseen temporary closure of Villa Aurora or the Thomas Mann House, the grant recipients 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 grant recipient and VATMH cannot be reasonably expected due to a substantial breach of trust.
- VATMH also has the right to terminate the grant agreement 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 agreement,
  - 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 agreement, 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.