

## Anna Polke Foundation Scholarships 2026

### *Call for Applications*

The Anna Polke Foundation is pleased to announce the availability of two scholarships of €5,000 each. Supported research projects include those by scholars in the field of art history or related disciplines that reevaluate aspects of Sigmar Polke's oeuvre from a relevant contemporary perspective. We invite proposals that explicitly and concretely explore Polke's multifaceted body of work or include it as one of several artistic positions within the discourse of the chosen research question. Early-career researchers (students and recent graduates) are explicitly encouraged to apply.

### *Focus: Sigmar Polke: Athanor NOW*

This year, we particularly encourage applications for research projects that are thematically linked to the international, interdisciplinary, and decentralized project *Sigmar Polke: Athanor NOW* (2026) initiated by the Anna Polke Foundation. Taking Sigmar Polke's celebrated *Athanor* installation in the German Pavilion at the XLII Venice Biennale in 1986 as a starting point, the project aims to develop new perspectives on Polke's work based on current discourses. You can find the project website [here](#).

*Sigmar Polke: Athanor NOW* takes up diverse aspects of this historical constellation of works and links them to our present. The aim of the project is to reflect on Sigmar Polke's contribution to the Biennale as a unique ensemble of works and to examine the inherent transformative, material, aesthetic, ecological, and political potential of materials, media, and contexts. Applications with research proposals relating to questions raised in connection with *Athanor* from a contemporary perspective are therefore especially welcome.

We also explicitly invite project proposals addressing the following research desideratum:

The conception and installation of Polke's work ensemble at the German Pavilion were preceded by a photographic exploration of the empty space. Multiple exposures, overlays of incoming light, the pavilion's architecture and details, as well as traces of experimental processes in the developer bath, reveal in the resulting photographs a transformation of space into painterly substance under Polke's investigative gaze. Alongside this, these photographs constitute independent, unique works that should be considered within the context of Polke's photographic practice and his unconventional engagement with chemical processes and image production techniques in photography.

A comprehensive documentation of Polke's Biennale photographs—some initially published in the catalog and artist book of the Venice exhibition, and later forty unique photographs distributed by the Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach's museum association—has not yet been compiled.

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Proposals aiming to catalogue these photographs, contextualize them, and reflect on selected aspects are therefore particularly encouraged.

## *Scholarships*

Two scholarships will be awarded, each worth €5,000. The division of the funding amount can be flexible depending on the applicant's qualifications as well as their living situation and the nature of their project proposal. Applicants are therefore requested to submit, in addition to their work schedule, a list of the desired use of funds (cost calculation). Approved funds must be used in 2026. The selection of the funded projects is made by an expert commission.

The results of the funded research project are to be presented by the scholars within a public presentation—as a lecture, discussion, or in another comparable format. The Anna Polke Foundation is interested in publishing the results of selected projects. However, there is no claim to publication.

Further information on the Anna Polke Foundation and the research projects funded to date can be found [here](#).

## *Application*

The deadline for applications is **1 May, 2026**.

To apply, please submit the following documents in German or English:

- CV
- Completed form ([Link](#))
- Project outline (about 1,000–2,000 words)
- Work schedule and cost calculation (where appropriate)

Please send your applications digitally as PDF files to: [stang@anna-polke-stiftung.com](mailto:stang@anna-polke-stiftung.com).  
If you have any questions, please contact Sophia Stang (+49 221 29438 633).