

Press Release

November 19th, 2025, Bern, CH

A call for submissions from Swiss-based artists and collectives

un—realized: A New Art Prize for Switzerland

“The Bilas Foundation aims, with the un—realized Art Prize, to strengthen the moment in which art comes into being in order for creative ideas to find space and grow.”

Bilas Foundation,
Bern

The un—realized Art Prize is a new Swiss award, which places the creative idea at its center. The prize seeks to support artistic concepts which exist in the mind and are thus not yet realized. un—realized makes visible what often remains invisible. The initiator of the new art prize is the Bilas Foundation, based in Bern. The first call for applications begins today!

At the heart of the prize is the realm of artistic possibility. The un—realized Art Prize fills a funding gap: it supports artistic projects at a stage before they have taken form. It brings the unrealized into view and directs attention to the idea as the starting point of every autonomous artwork. The prize funds concepts that exist in the imagination—concepts that lie between the imagined and the first form—whether as sketches, research material, models, or drawings.

In doing so, the prize strengthens both the diversity of artistic expression in Switzerland and the cultural relevance of thinking, conceptualizing, and experimentation.

The un—realized Art Prize does not understand art as a finished object, but as a living practice—something that already exists in a thought, a sketch, or an instruction. Art is not only what becomes visible, but also what is conceived and may never be realized.

● Concept

In the late 1960s, art critic Lucy Lippard described the “dematerialization of the art object”—the moment when the idea takes precedence over the physical artwork. In architecture,

the unrealized is a recognised part of cultural memory, exemplified by iconic yet never-built designs from figures such as Mies van der Rohe or Adolf Loos. In the visual arts, however, unrealized works often remain unseen.

The exhibition *Agency of Unrealized Projects* (AUP), co-initiated by Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, was the first to systematically examine the importance of the non-realized—the artistic potential embedded in sketches, fragments, and concepts. The un—realized Art Prize continues this line of inquiry, establishing a platform in Switzerland that brings visibility to this space of possibility and helps it evolve.

● Funding & Jury

An independent jury selects five projects from all submissions for the shortlist. Four projects are awarded CHF 3,000 each for their concept. The winning project will receive CHF 20,000 for its concept and realization. The presentation follows thereafter.

2026

Art Prize

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Jury 2026

Mitchell Anderson • artist
Tasnim Baghdadi • co-director, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst
Jasmine Gregory • artist
Prof. Dr. Chus Martínez • art historian, professor, and curator
Oskar Weiss • gallerist & publisher

The prize launches in 2026 in Bern and will be awarded annually from 2027 onwards in rotating Swiss cities. The first edition of the un—realized Art Prize will be presented in late summer 2026 at Kunsthalle Bern. The award ceremony will take place as part of a public event.

● Phases

- Call for applications:
19 November 2025
- Deadline for applications:
14 February 2026
- Jury evaluation:
March 2026
- Shortlist announcement:
April 2026
- Award ceremony and presentation of realized winning project:
27 August 2026, Kunsthalle Bern

Further information, participation conditions, and the application form can be found at:

www.un-realized.ch

● A New Prize for Swiss Art

The un—realized Art Prize is an initiative of the Bilas Foundation.

The prize supports the potential of the unfinished and recognizes the realm of possibility inherent in the idea as an autonomous work. It is aimed at artists and collectives in Switzerland. The Bilas Foundation is based in Bern and supports social, cultural, and artistic initiatives.

www.bilas.ch

● Press Office

For all media inquiries, please contact:

Eleonora Sutter
esu@neutral.plus
+49 176 203 68 188

Michelle Nicol
nic@neutral.plus
+41 79 642 02 07

www.neutral.plus

● Kunsthalle Bern

The first edition of the un—realized Art Prize will take place at Kunsthalle Bern.

www.kunsthallebern.ch

2026

Art Prize

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