

ec(h)otoning

*research-based art
commission*

The SMUS RBA Commission: ec(h)otoning is part of a multi-phase research-based art (RBA) programme run by the Mexican artist platform TRES as part of the Global Center of Spatial Methods for Urban Sustainability (SMUS).

SMUS is a global network of scholars and practitioners and serves as a platform facilitating dialogue and collaboration on urban sustainability research, teaching, and planning practice, addressing intertwined wicked urban problems (WUP).

The SMUS RBA programme invites RB artists to engage in an extradisciplinary space for heterogenous responses to wicked urban problems under the methodological approach of ec(h)otoning.

From a strictly ecological perspective, an ecotone is defined as a transitional area between two distinct ecosystems. By applying the term to the urban realm and converting it into a verb, we aim to extend this transitional area to mixed methodologies, as well as to different forms of knowledge and practice.

For this first fully funded commission running for a period of one year from April 2026 to March 2027, **one** selected RB artist or collective will benefit from monthly mentorships by TRES and will collaborate closely with Asian scholars from the SMUS network of universities: Chulalongkorn in Bangkok, Thailand; Diponegoro in Semarang, Indonesia; and IIT Kharagpur in Kolkata, India, representing a wide range of disciplines and knowledge systems.

(For more information on SMUS, ec(h)otoning, and the participating partners, please download the PDF “RBA Commission”)

[Download PDF](#)

Key information

Submission deadline: 15 December 2025

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Announcement of results: 26 December 2025

Project duration: 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 with two on-site residencies:

A two-week residency at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2026

A site-based residency between one and three months at one of three host universities. The RB artist(s) will choose and justify both the duration and location:

One month: June 2026

Two months: June to August 2026

Three months: June to September 2026

Public presentation at the local university at the end of each residency period

Delivery and presentation of final work: November 2026 in Semarang, Indonesia (at the Transregional SMUS Campus)
Delivery of reflective text and documentation: March 2027

The three universities focus on the following ec(h)otoning topics:

Bangkok, Thailand

Chulalongkorn University
Speculating Bangkok: ec(h)otoning through urban rewilding

What might ec(h)otoned urban rewilding look like? Benjakitti Urban Forest Park is not just a green space, it functions as a living laboratory and ecological infrastructure for urban futures through rewilding processes. These practises extend beyond a mere technical green infrastructure to foster inclusivity, while raising questions about ecological gentrification, access, contestation, and the coexistence of diverse urban worlds.



Semarang, Indonesia

Diponegoro University
Blurring boundaries: the role of ec(h)otones in shaping urban sustainability

By examining Sayung in Demak, we highlight the coastal zones at risk of sinking, particularly as an ecotone impacted by climate change and urbanisation. This situation underscores the growing need to understand, plan, and design responsive strategies for vulnerable regions with high-density populations. Our approach emphasises the planning process and the socio-ecological dynamics involved.



Kolkata, India

IIT Kharagpur
ec(h)otonal Kol-kata: reifyng resilience for amphibious urban spaces

The soaking ecologies of the Bengal Delta from which the city of Kolkata evolved have long since been forgotten. How can this history be retrieved using collective memories of recovery and interdisciplinary methods? We are interested in exploring the complex trajectories of urban nature that have been temporarily suppressed under the hubris of ‘modernity’.



What we offer for the selected proposal

(per artist or collective)

Monthly research stipend from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2027 (between EUR 400 and 700)
Roundtrip airfare to Bangkok and accommodation during the two-week residency
Accommodation during the one to three-month residency period at the chosen university
On-site travel allowance during residency period
Production and documentation budget of EUR 8,400

Eligibility

The SMUS RBA commission is open to international artists from the Global South who are working within the field of research-based art. There is no age limit. We are seeking RB artists who are committed to long-term research projects in dialogue with local knowledge systems. We encourage proposals that are process-driven, participatory, community-engaged, and/or site-specific and that emphasise transitional zones of ec(h)otoning, attuned to ecological and socio-cultural flux.

This open call follows a non-discriminatory selection process. We welcome diversity in all its forms. We strongly encourage female artists in particular to apply.

We welcome applications from RB artist-practitioners working in any medium or combination of media, including, but not limited to: visual arts, installation, photography, film, audio, performance, sculpture, social practice. We encourage you to choose the format that best conveys the depth of the ecotones you wish to explore.

Duos and collectives may apply, but the stipend and expenses covered will remain the same, as outlined above.

A jury made up of internationally renowned practitioners in the RBA field will be in charge of the selection process. The members will be disclosed after the results of the commission are made public.

Programme outline

	The RB artist(s) will devise their own one-year schedule, in conversation with TRES, as to achieve a balance between active research, reflection, experimentation, and production of material, related to the allocated project budget and scope. Project updates and feedback will be provided in monthly meetings with TRES.
	The RB artist(s) will begin their research with active participation in the Asia SMUS Regional Campus (May 2026), where they will be integrated into the ec(h)otonal deliberations set forth by Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand; Diponegoro University in Semarang, Indonesia; and IIT Kharagpur in Kolkata, India (see “RBA Commission” PDF for more information). During this period, the RB artist(s) will carry out fieldwork with local guidance and engage with different disciplines and knowledge systems.
	During the commission period, the RB artist(s) will carry out in-person and online meetings with specialists, as well as self-led experimentation and research.
	The research process may also include experimental group methodologies, as well as participatory or polisensorial events designed by the RB artist(s) as a method of inquiry.
	The commission includes one or more public presentations of personal artistic work with the SMUS partner universities during the one-year period as a contagious tactic and dialogues across scales and geographies.
	The commission results, events, and artwork created by the RB artist(s) will be shared, presented, and exhibited with the SMUS consortium and all SMUS partners. It will also be made publicly available, with full acknowledgement of the RB artist(s).
	The programme closes with a publication that will include the final text and RB art project documentation of the RB artist(s).
	The RB artist(s) will consent to the use of different materials for promotional, non-lucrative use.

Deliverables

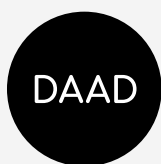
	Complete documentation of research and experimentation during the year-long process and public events (in multiformat mediums: text, field notebook, photographs, videos, designed walks, etc.) for each project phase.
	Production of art project (public intervention, photography, video, designed walks, etc.) that can easily be presented and/or produced for an exhibition in November 2027, which will take place in Semarang, Indonesia.
	Text and images (print quality) explaining the research and results of the commission (March 2027) to be included in the publication.

Submission requirements

Completed submission format	requirements
CV (max. 3 pages, 3 MB)	
Portfolio of most significant work (max. 5 projects, 3 pages per project, 10 MB)	

[Fill Application Form](#)

If you have any questions, please feel free to **contact us at:**
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SMUS



TRES

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