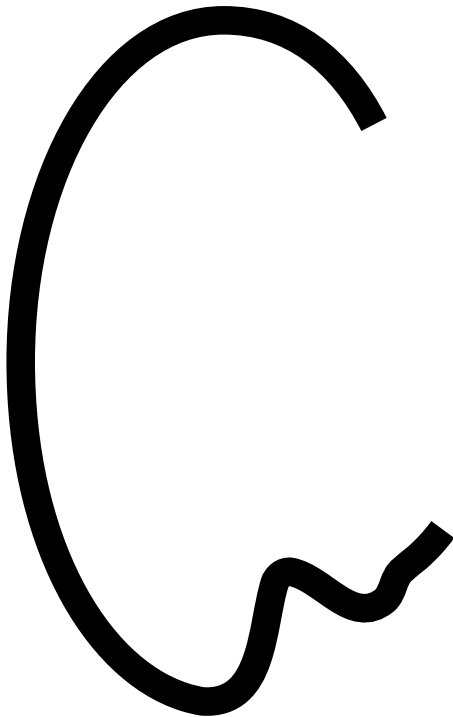


Open Call Saga Residency 2026

This document is a descriptive translation of the original Dutch *Open Oproep Residency Saga 2026*. The English translation is provided for reference purposes only, and in all instances the original Dutch text takes precedence. If you would like to report a translation error or inaccuracy, we encourage you to contact the Creative Industries Fund NL.



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The Creative Industries Fund NL and the Mondriaan Fund are each offering a work period with paper producer Nao Tesuki Washi and the Morodomi woodworking community in the Japanese region of Saga in the autumn of 2026. If you are a designer, an architect, a spatial practitioner or a maker and would like to be considered for the work period, then make sure you submit a proposal to the Creative Industries Fund NL by 4 March 2026, 16.00 CET at the latest. If you are an artist, then send your proposal to the Mondriaan Fund by 28 February 2026 at the latest.

The work period in Japan offers designers and artists the opportunity to carry out research in artistic and technical fields and to develop their own work through intensive collaboration with the participating craftsmen who specialise in Japanese washi paper and woodworking. Saga has a rich tradition of various crafts, including Arita porcelain, Nao washi and furniture production to name but a few.

in short

- **Number of grants:** one from the Fund
- **Grant amount:** € 12,000 per work period per designer
- **Work period:** 14 September 2026 - 14 December 2026
- **Deadline:** 4 March 2026, 16.00 CET

what is the objective?

Creative Residency Arita/Creative Residency Saga (CRA/CRS) is an international artist-in-residence programme initiated by the Saga Prefecture and various local municipalities. CRA, active for more than ten years now, focusses on Arita's historical porcelain industry and has developed a consistent programme model for the exchange between designers, artists and local porcelain makers. CRS, starting its first residency this year, introduces a parallel residency programme focussing on other artisanal and production traditions essential to Saga - washi at Nao Tesuki Washi and the woodworking/furniture workshop in the Morodomi region. CRS is a residency programme in development, with this first edition being the pilot.

CRA/CRS is an initiative of the Saga Prefecture, the Creative Industries Fund NL and the Mondriaan Fund to stimulate research, experiments and new forms of exchange between designers, artists and local craftsmen. The initiative aspires to familiarise international professionals with the traditional production cultures in Saga and to promote new applications, perspectives and cooperative ventures.

The CRS residency programme's emphasis is on learning from and working with experts in crafts, materials and the industry, and in this open call it centres on the crafts of washi production and woodworking, which both have deep historical roots in Saga. While Nao Tesuki Washi preserves a four-hundred-year-old tradition of papermaking using kaji fibres, Morodomi represents sixty years of woodworking knowledge connecting traditional techniques with contemporary production. Within CRS, participants will be given the opportunity to work with materials and processes specific to the region and to progress into taking their practice into new directions.

CRS encourages the selected designers and artists to start a dialogue about their own perspectives with local craftsmen, so that all can learn from each other while laying a foundation for long-term collaborations. With various crafts, sources of materials and production networks, the Saga surroundings offer an important context that can support new insights, research processes or applications in existing practices.

who is this open call intended for?

- You are an individual designer, an architect, a spatial practitioner or a maker.
- You are established in the Netherlands or on one of the Dutch Caribbean islands of

Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten.

- You are prepared to immerse yourself in woodworking and papermaking techniques. No practical knowledge is required, but it is recommended.
- You have an affinity for the specific Saga region context and the intention to keep working with the local craftsmen after the end of the work period, if possible.
- It would be handy if you have a driving licence, but this is not a deal-breaker.

This open call is not intended for:

- duos, collectives or cooperative ventures;
- makers who are receiving support for a work period in Arita in 2026;
- makers who will be receiving a grant under the Talent Development Grant Scheme, the Open Call Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS or the Open Call Self-taught Designer in 2026.

Please be aware that if you are to receive support for a work period in 2026 under this open call, then in that year you won't be able to submit an application under the aforementioned Talent Development Grant Scheme, the Open Call: Emerging Design Practices ABCSSS or the Open Call: Self-taught Designer.

Visual artists can submit a proposal to the [Mondriaan Fund](#).

amount and work period

The work period takes place from 14 September 2026 up to 14 December 2026. This period is fixed and you are expected to be present at the location for the entire time.

You will receive a grant of € 12,000 for the work period, intended to cover:

- travel expenses;
- insurance policies;
- transport expenses;
- material expenses;
- necessities for your research;
- contribution to living expenses.

The rent for accommodation, the working space and the guidance costs will be paid directly by the Creative Industries Fund NL to the Creative Residency Saga.

practical information about the residency

Accommodation

Only one artist and one designer will be working in Saga City per period. The residents live together in a house, each with their own bedroom, with the living room, bathroom and kitchen being shared. There is a small work studio available per person and for daily commuting there are various means of local public transport available.

In addition to the residency programme's working space, individual workplaces will be assigned by Saga City's partner companies: LEGNATEC for the woodworking participant and Nao Tesuki Washi for the washi participant. These workplaces enable the participants to work in the vicinity of the craftsmen, where technical specialists will be available to guide the woodworking process, washi production and other relevant processes.

The CRS programme is built on the expectation that participants will spend part of their time in the workshops and workplaces of the craftsmen to observe, learn, discuss possibilities and share their practice on the spot. The extra working space offers additional room for development, reflection and prototyping.

Programme

The CRS programme consists of a three-month work period, divided into three different phases, which together form a foundation for learning, research, development and

exchange between residents and the participating craftsmen in Saga.

Phase 1 – Orientation, practice experience and research (weeks 1-4)

Residents kick off the programme by getting acquainted and working with the washi craftsmen at Nao Tesuki Washi and the woodworking craftsmen at Morodomi. This phase focusses on:

- practical learning, observing production processes, understanding materials and techniques and identifying possible research or development directions;
- participants will gain insight into how local methods, tools and working patterns shape the craft.

Phase 2 – Project development and further exchange (weeks 4-8)

Residents continue to develop their research and project direction. This phase combines independent work with scheduled sessions in the artisanal workshops.

During this period:

- access to craftsmen is arranged and scheduled when needed; technical guidance is offered in line with the participants' research direction; prototypes, tests and material studies can be carried out; the participants and the coordination staff evaluate the progress and discuss any next steps;
- in this phase the emphasis lies on experimenting, reflecting and negotiating materials and techniques.

Phase 3 – Production, consolidation and preparing the presentation (weeks 8-12)

In the last phase, the residents either refine their research or begin their production phase, depending on how their work is progressing. Activities may include:

- producing prototypes or finished products; completing the research documentation; preparing material for a public presentation; intensive collaboration with craftsmen;
- the goal of this phase is for participants to consolidate their findings and prepare for the public presentation.

Presentations

The CRS programme comprises two important presentations:

1. Personal introduction – within the first two weeks

Residents introduce themselves to the local craftsmen and a wider audience during a short presentation. This presentation serves to put their practice into context and build relationships.

2. Closing presentation – within the last two weeks

The residents present their research, work process and completed works or prototypes, if they have any. This presentation serves as a moment of reflection and exchange with craftsmen, local partners and the community.

Guidance

Throughout the residency programme:

- English-speaking coordinators will support the communication with craftsmen;
- the coordinators and the board team will hold regular meetings with the residents to monitor the progress and to discuss any extra possibilities or requirements;
- the residency team will assist in arranging technical access to and scheduling work periods with craftsmen;
- residents are expected to communicate openly and regularly about the status of their work and any needs.

CRS has primarily been set up as a research-driven residency programme, although developing work or prototypes in collaboration with craftsmen will be possible if this is relevant to the resident's practice.

what is assessed?

The assessment of this open call is similar to a tender - this means that a number of proposals will be preferred over other ones. The assessment based on the criteria will lead to a ranking of the proposals submitted. The available work period will be awarded to the applicant whose application ranks the highest. Only positively assessed projects may be supported.

In assessing submitted proposals, the Fund seeks advice from external advisors with relevant expertise in the field of product design, artisanal production techniques and the importance of practice development in the international context. The advisors are provided with information by a CRS representative about the local context, the possibilities given the facilities offered and the local needs. The advisors assess the extent to which the proposal matches this open call's goal, basing their opinion on the following criteria:

a. the artistic quality of the work

The committee reviews the applicant's portfolio and CV and the applicant's position within the area of expertise as well as the quality of the applicant's work in relation to the location and theme.

b. the quality of the project plan

The committee assesses the project plan and whether it meets the applicant's goals. It assesses how well the proposed activities contribute to the applicant's artistic and professional development, whilst also looking at the proposed creative angle on the theme selected for the work period.

c. the motivation in relation to the residency's objective and mission

The committee assesses whether the plan is in line with the Saga residency's objective and/or mission. It also considers the contribution the applicant could make to strengthening collaboration and long-term exchange in the Saga Prefecture.

The above criteria contribute equally to the final score per application. The advisers apply the assessment method described in the [Advisory Committee Procedure of the Creative Industries Fund NL](#).

If two applications have an equal final score, priority will be given to the proposal scoring the highest for criterion c. *The motivation in relation to the residency's objective.*

how do you submit an application?

Designers can submit their application for a work period in Saga up to 16.00 CET on Wednesday 4 March 2026 via the Creative Industries Fund NL's application environment by selecting the 'Open Call Saga Residency 2026' round.

An application should consist of a fully completed application form and the following attachments:

- a plan for the work period in Saga (no more than 3 A4 pages in PDF, 8 MB). Include at least the following points:
 - What do you want to develop or research during the work period?
 - How does the work period fit into the long-term vision of your design practice?
 - What is your vision on the residency's local context and on the specific crafts the Saga region specialises in?
 - How do you view the potential international exchange that may ensue from the work period?
- a brief CV (no more than 2 A4 pages in PDF, 4 MB);
- relevant visual material/portfolio that gives insight into your work and practice (no more than 10 A4 pages in PDF, 10 MB);

- an extract from the register of the Chamber of Commerce, issued no more than one year ago;
- a representative image of the work or intended plan, free to use for communication purposes by the Fund, the necessary rights to which are held by the applicant.

If the application does not meet the above description, no substantive assessment can take place.

Please make sure that you create an account for the application platform in good time, as it takes one working day to activate a new account.

grant procedure

This open call has a legal basis in the Fund's [Open Call Grant Scheme](#), so please read this scheme carefully before submitting an application. Applications are processed and assessed and any grants awarded on the basis of this grant scheme, which describes the general conditions, grounds for rejection, manner of publication, submission procedure, assessment, award and grant obligations.

acknowledgement of receipt and announcement of the selection

You will be informed about the processing of the application no later than two weeks after the closing date. The Fund will let you know about the decision no more than ten weeks after the closing date, including a brief motivation on how well your application fitted in with the three criteria of this open call.

contact

For more information about the work period in Saga you can contact the Internationalisation team via internationalisering@stimuleringsfonds.nl or call on +31(0)10-4361600.

context

This open call is part of the Design Sector Internationalisation Programme, implemented by the Creative Industries Fund NL with the support of the Dutch Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and Foreign Affairs. This programme supports, among other things, artistic and creative work periods at various cultural organisations all over the world.