

## **The *Gaude Polonia* Scholarship Programme for Young Foreign Cultural Professionals**

### **Background**

*Gaude Polonia* is a scholarship programme for young artists from Central and East European countries to stay and work in Poland on a specific artistic project for a 6-month period. It is aimed at young artists under the age of 40 including: visual artists, writers, translators of Polish literature, musicians, filmmakers, art critics, literary critics, monument renovation specialists and museum staff from the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Albania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Russia and Moldova. Scholarships are granted on a competition basis.

Since 2003, *Gaude Polonia* has been organised by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, its Department of Cultural Education and the National Centre for Culture (main operator).

The main goals of the *Gaude Polonia* programme are to promote:

- young ambitious artists' self development;
- regional exchange between countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the area of art;
- knowledge and experience which could be an inspiration for further creative activities; and
- understanding and good relations in the field of culture between Poland and its neighbouring countries.

### **How it works**

During their 6-month stay in Poland, artists from neighbouring countries have an opportunity to learn more about Polish contemporary culture and to improve their skills under the direction of one of Poland's most famous cultural professionals. Young artists prepare their creative projects with the help of Polish artists and professors in one of the country's most important cultural or scientific centres, e.g. academies of art, museums, galleries, universities, etc.

An open call for applications is announced through various mass media channels. Applicants may send their applications to the National Centre for Culture or apply through Polish diplomatic offices and consulates located in their country. Applicants must be under 40 years of age (in some cases exceptions are made up to 45 years old) and must have achieved a certain level of success in their field. Higher education and an elementary command of the Polish language (basic communication skills) are also required. Applications must be sent by 15<sup>th</sup> October each year and contain:

- a description of the artistic project to be undertaken during their stay in Poland (with a proposal of where they would like to carry out this project and a justification for their participation in the programme);
- a minimum of two recommendations from professors, cultural institutions, artistic associations or unions;
- a copy of their university diploma (with a certified Polish translation); and
- a copy of other diplomas, competition awards, festival participation, courses, exhibitions, etc. (with an attached Polish translation).

Candidates are chosen through a 3-stage selection process. The first stage is an evaluation of whether they meet the formal conditions. The second stage is an evaluation of the projects proposed by the candidates. The last step is a final selection.

6-month scholarships are granted every year for a period beginning on the 31st July. Artists receive 2 000 PLN (about 600 EUR) per month + accommodation. The recipients are obligated to cover their own travelling expenses and health and accident insurance expenses.

## **Results**

A total of 209 artists from Byelorussia, Ukraine, Albania, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Macedonia and Russia took part in *Gaude Polonia* over the past 7 competition cycles. Their works are from a wide range of fields, e.g.: literature, music, theatre, visual arts, photography, film, monument renovation. At the end of the 6-month period, an exhibition is organised for these young artists to present their artistic work (but is not obligatory). The number of candidates applying to the programme has been increasing each year.

*Gaude Polonia* is cyclic and one of the biggest mobility programmes in Poland which aims to develop the artistic talents of young people from neighbouring countries. For many of them, spending six months in a different country, under the direction of well known/successful cultural professionals, is an experience which could shape their individual artistic work.

The main significance of the programme is that the field of culture and art becomes a platform that provides an opportunity for establishing good relations between Poland and its neighbouring countries. *Gaude Polonia's* philosophy is to communicate, to teach, and to understand each nation/country through its art and artists.

Feedback on the programme is gathered from both the participating artists and his/her mentor; this information is not publicly available.

## **Sources**

National Centre for Culture: [http://www.nck.pl/wspolmlod\\_gpangl.php](http://www.nck.pl/wspolmlod_gpangl.php)

Application forms: [http://www.mk.gov.pl/docs/programy/stypendia-wz\\_wnioskow.doc](http://www.mk.gov.pl/docs/programy/stypendia-wz_wnioskow.doc)

## **Author**

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