

OPEN CALL: STADTARBEIT

VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 2026

Stadtarbeit is an essential part of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK and a Social Design open call with a strong reputation far beyond the borders of Vienna. Made possible through the sponsorship program of Erste Bank and in close collaboration with Caritas Vienna, the format focuses on shaping the ways we want to live together. For more than ten years, pioneering projects have emerged from this initiative, driven by a design approach that is locally rooted and internationally connected.

Stadtarbeit places people at its center. The projects selected by a five-member jury are characterized by their engagement with societal relations and lived social responsibility. They analyze urban and social structures, including often overlooked in-between spaces, draw attention to specific societal challenges, and give expression to what tends to be overlooked in the city. Active in public space, the projects are accessible and understandable – design not for the few, but for the many.

As part of Stadtarbeit, the Erste Bank Social Design Awards, worth a total of €6,000, will be presented to projects implemented within the format.

FEIERTAGS GEÖFFNET!

OUR CITY CELEBRATES

For the anniversary edition of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK, Stadtarbeit is looking for Social Design projects under the title “Feiertags geöffnet!” (translating to something like “Open on the Holidays!”) that explore the social role of celebration. The jury will select three projects that place festivities in new social contexts and bring expressions of joint joy into public space.

But what should our reasons to celebrate be? Whom do we want to honour together, and which new rituals and holidays could be established?

The Stadtarbeit Open Call 2026 invites participants to develop new forms of collective happiness, social tribute, or urban subversion – as long as they’re festive!

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VIENNA DESIGN WEEK

WE INVITE

Stadtarbeit offers individuals, teams, and organisations the opportunity to realise a Social Design project within the framework of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK 2026, reaching both an international professional audience as well as local communities.

Designers, artists, architects, urban researchers, social workers, activists, craftspeople, educators, residents, students, professional creatives, developers, urban enthusiasts, and anyone with new approaches or existing projects they would like to develop further within the framework of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK are invited to apply. We are looking forward to your submissions!

WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Ideas, concepts, and projects that engage with the role of festivities for society and invite the city to celebrate during VIENNA DESIGN WEEK's 20th anniversary edition. Concepts developed in collaboration with Caritas are particularly welcome.

Application deadline: 19 April 2026 (midnight)

WHAT WE OFFER

- Implementation budget of €4,000 (incl. VAT)
- Curatorial and organisational support from the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK team during the planning and implementation of the project
- The selected projects will be part of the programme of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK and presented to the public as a core element of the festival
- The projects will be introduced in advance via social media, the festival website, and the newsletter

IMPORTANT

- The project must be publicly accessible during the festival period and freely reachable for visitors of VIENNA DESIGN WEEK. The specified opening hours must be respected. Participation should be possible for everyone interested – especially for people living in the city or staying there during the festival.
- Collateral events within the festival framework are welcome (e.g. opening event, closing event, mediation formats, workshops, readings, guided tours, etc.).
- Time for setup and dismantling must be planned and coordinated with the VIENNA DESIGN WEEK team.
- The same participation conditions apply to both local and international applicants.

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DEADLINES & DATES

- Application deadline: 19 April 2026 (midnight)
- Jury meeting: End of April
- Kick-off event with the three winning teams: Early May
- Deadline for programme material (texts, images, venues, opening times, ...): End of June
- VIENNA DESIGN WEEK: 25 September – 4 October 2026
- Jury tour and award ceremony: 1 October 2026

HOW TO APPLY

Online application form: <https://forms.gle/6qGahKoHdTNS7QYD9>

QUESTIONS

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THE SIX PILLARS OF STADTARBEIT

In recent years, the Stadtarbeit format has continued to evolve. Successful projects are particularly characterized by the following qualities:

PARTICIPATION

We are looking for projects that encourage interaction and encounters. They should develop low-threshold formats that invite people in public space to participate. Design becomes a tool to open up new perspectives on urban coexistence and encourage people to actively engage with their environment.

COMMON GOOD

Strong Stadtarbeit builds on existing networks. Collaborations with local initiatives, associations, social organizations, or residents are not only welcome – they allow projects to become more sustainable, impactful, and deeply rooted. Partnerships strengthen existing networks and create new impulses for collective processes. One example is the long-standing collaboration with Caritas, which supports both the format and its winning projects.

LOCALITY

Our city is full of possibilities. How can specific challenges in different neighborhoods or districts be addressed? Which places hold potential for new developments? Stadtarbeit projects thrive on their presence in public space. By actively shaping this space, they create direct connections with local communities and enable meaningful exchange.

SUSTAINABILITY

Stadtarbeit projects are implemented during Vienna Design Week and may pursue both temporary and long-term goals. They use the festival as a framework to initiate impulses while also having the potential to positively influence urban, social, and cultural structures beyond the festival itself.

ENGAGEMENT

The teams behind Stadtarbeit projects demonstrate strong commitment to their ideas. This is reflected in their willingness to invest time, energy, and resources to successfully implement the project during the festival. Successful projects are also characterized by initiative in shaping accompanying programs, reliable communication, and a readiness to take responsibility.

IMPLEMENTATION

Ideas come to life only when translated into reality. We are looking for projects that not only inspire but also develop tools, structures, stories, or provocative interventions to help shape Vienna's future. Whether through temporary installations, interactive workshops, or mobile formats – the approaches can be as diverse as the city itself.

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