



Bern University of Applied Sciences – Academy of the Arts (HKB) is one of the leading Art Universities in Europe with a broad range of Bachelor and Master Programmes, a variety of advanced-level courses and a doctoral school Studies in the Arts which it runs collaboratively with the University of Bern. Its four research institutes perform cutting-edge research on topics related to artistic practice in visual and performing arts, music, theatre, design and conservation.

Within the research project **Critical Conservation**, funded by the **Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)** and situated in the Research Institute Materiality in Art and Culture, we are seeking to appoint

PROJECT ASSISTANT 15%

Starting on February 1, 2026, and concluding on January 31, 2030, this position is intended for individuals seeking experience in supporting a research team. It provides the opportunity to participate in research project activities while benefiting from valuable mentorship

Critical Conservation is a four-year research project that redefines conservation as a critical practice, theorizing it as a discursive, pluricultural, decolonial and epistemic activity shaped by politics, conventions, education, the economy and institutions. As a political and ethical activity—emerging from the critical-reflective developments of recent decades—Critical Conservation centers on cultural meaning, power dynamics and social responsibility. Our project aims to engage with contemporary *communities of practice*, including traditional knowledge holders, makers, artisans and craftspeople (broadly defined), who have historically been positioned outside the expert domain of professional and scholarly conservation. Through *transversal conservation*, the project fosters transtemporal and transspecialist dialogue, bridging separate fields of practice—such as the conservation of recent art, architectural preservation and the care of archaeological and/or “ethnographic” objects, as well as various forms of repair—that often operate in the silos of their specialisms. Lastly, it explores *experimental conservation* as a means to envision possible futures.

The Research Institute Materiality in Art and Culture explores the intricate connections among the materiality of art and cultural artifacts, their human and environmental contexts, and ongoing existence as spatio-temporal, economic and political constructs, whether within or outside collections. Through material and cultural analysis, reflective-theoretical approaches and addressing critical conservation questions, the Institute parses the human-made world and its expression in culture.

We require a candidate with a strong interest in research and committed to excellence and a high work ethic. Essential qualifications include a diploma or equivalent in heritage studies, conservation or a related field, along with a keen interest in the project's questions.

This is a **15% FTE**, fixed-term position spanning from **February 1, 2026, to January 31, 2030**. The Project Assistant collaborates closely with the Project Lead, **Prof. Dr. Hanna Hölling**.

Main responsibilities

- Facilitate the completion of the Critical Conservation research project by collaborating effectively with other project members and providing dedicated support
- Help facilitate internal project and expert meetings, public forums, workshops, as well as other methods of communication and dissemination, aimed at academic and professional audiences
- Play a significant role in the maintenance of the project's website and the creation of the datasets on public repositories
- Possess an excellent command of academic and spoken English. Proficiency in one of the Swiss national languages, preferably German, is beneficial

Queries about this opening can be directed to hanna.hoelling@hkb.bfh.ch

Applications require: (1) a cover letter outlining the candidate's motivation for this position, (2) a curriculum vitae including name and contact information of one referee able to speak to the candidate's suitability for this post.

Please note that we only accept online applications in English or German. The deadline for applications is **August 31, 2025**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

To apply for this position, please follow the link on the [HKB Jobs website](#).