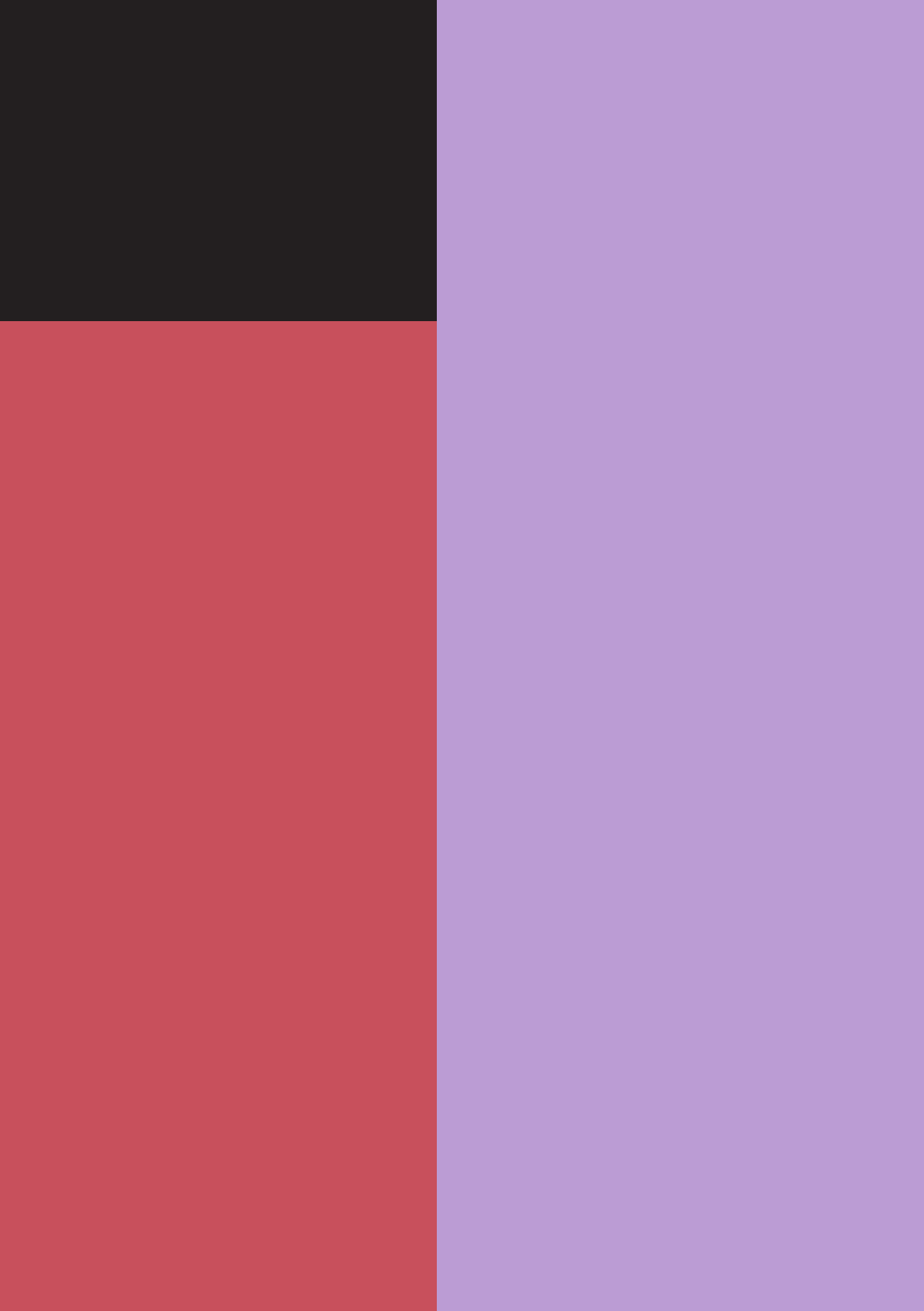


# WOMEN IN ART FELLOWSHIP

FOUNDING, MENTORING  
AND AMPLIFYING  
WOMEN IN ARTS

2025



# What is WAF?

---

The **WAF - Women in Art Fellowship** is an initiative of **Freeport Lisboa Fashion Outlet and Vila do Conde Porto Fashion Outlet**, in partnership with **Portugal Manual** and **SOTA - State of the Art**.

---

Created to empower women in art and culture, this grant provides financial support, mentoring and visibility for women artists in Portugal.

The project is part of the VIA Group's sustainability strategy, owner of the Freeport Lisboa Fashion Outlet and Vila do Conde Porto Fashion Outlet centres, aligning itself with the pillar of resilient communities and promoting a lasting positive impact on the cultural sector.

Each edition of WAF will feature a guest mentor, a renowned artist, who will follow and support the edition, amplifying the visibility of the project.

For the first edition, we are honoured to welcome Joana Vasconcelos as our mentor. One of Portugal's most internationally recognised contemporary artists, her work explores issues of identity, feminism and popular culture.

## **WAF is designed to:**

- A.** Create real opportunities for women artists in the cultural sector.
- B.** Support artistic creation and production by guaranteeing financial resources and training.
- C.** Provide mentoring and specialised support, connecting the selected artists to professionals in the sector.
- D.** Create an exhibition and promotion space, increasing the visibility of the participants and their work.

With a total investment of €27,000, WAF provides funding, mentoring and an exhibition space for the selected artist, guaranteeing complete support for the production and promotion of their work.

# Who is behind the project?

---

The initiative is the result of collaboration between three organisations with combined experience in the cultural sector:

## **FREEPORT AND VILA DO CONDE FASHION OUTLETS**

Financial and operational partner of the program, ensuring visibility, logistical support and the necessary infrastructure to carry out the initiative.

## **FILIPA BELO**

Founder of Portugal Manual, curator and strategic consultant in the sector of new crafts and creative industries, with a proven track record in valuing know-how and creating support networks for artists and new craftspeople.

## **ASTRID SAUER**

Founder and CEO of State of the Art (SOTA), the program's financial and operational partner; a specialist in contemporary art, cultural consultant and curator of international exhibitions. Regular speaker and commentator in the cultural field.

Together, they are heading up a project that aims not only to support women artists, but also to create a model with a lasting impact on the creative economy and the valorisation of women's cultural production.

# Who is it for?

---

WAF is aimed at women artists who:

→ Work with visual arts, crafts, design, sculpture, textiles or other forms of artistic expression.

→ Have an original artistic project.

→ Have never been funded by other grants or patrons.

→ Are not represented by galleries.

→ Have been resident in Portugal for at least 3 years.

→ Are proficient in Portuguese (written and spoken).

The program not only supports the artists financially, but also boosts their careers through training, promotion and networking opportunities.

# Structure

---

## **OPEN CALL AND SELECTION OF FINALISTS**

A total of 10 finalists will be selected to advance to the next stage.

## **MASTERCLASSES**

The finalists will take part in masterclasses to train them in developing their projects.

**The four masterclasses in this phase are:**

### **A. Positioning and artistic identity**

How to translate artistic identity into visual and narrative language; practical exercises to develop a clear and impactful artistic pitch.

### **B. Portfolio and professional presentation**

How to put together a strong portfolio for galleries, festivals and competitions; what to include (and what to avoid!) in artist's documentation; strategies for online and face-to-face presentation.

### **C. Communication and social media for artists**

How to create a digital strategy while retaining one's artistic essence; tips for an attractive Instagram page and website for collectors and curators; how to write good picture captions and describe the work in an engaging way.

### **D. Pricing and financial sustainability**

How to calculate fair and sustainable prices for your work; models for direct sales, consignment and trade shows; strategies for diversifying income: prints, limited editions and commissions.

## **PROJECT DELIVERY**

After the masterclasses, the finalists will have one month to present their proposals.

## **SELECTING THE WINNER**

A winner is chosen based on the proposals presented.

Exclusive mentoring to support the winner in the development of the project and the final exhibition.

The jury will be made up of recognised experts in the sector and will be made public before the final selection process.

# What does the grant offer?

---

WAF offers a full support package for the selected artists, ensuring that they are able to produce, exhibit and promote their work professionally.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF WORKS

The total investment in the WAF program is €27,000, distributed as follows:

ITEM	VALUE IN €
Direct financial grant	5000
Mentoring and training	7500
Communication pack	7500
Final exhibition	7000
TOTAL	27,000



# What does the grant offer?

---

## **MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The winning WAF artist will have access to ongoing mentoring by curators, gallerists and industry experts, including:

### **A. Mentoring with Curators: Building an Artistic Narrative**

→ How to structure a strong and coherent artistic statement.

→ How to think about the work in the context of exhibitions and biennials; how to create a curatorial dialogue between the works.

→ What curators are looking for and how to present a project for an exhibition space.

### **B. Mentoring with gallery owners: How to position yourself in the art market; how to approach galleries and present a portfolio.**

→ Differences between commercial and institutional galleries.

→ Models of artistic representation: exclusive contract, consignment, temporary exhibitions.

→ Pricing strategies in the contemporary art market.



---

### **C. Mentoring with Journalists & Art Critics: Visibility & Communication**

- How to build an engaging narrative for the press.
- The difference between art criticism and media coverage.
- What journalists are looking for and how to stand out.
- How to put together a good press kit.

### **D. Meeting with Artists: Creative Process & Professional Career**

- Building an artistic identity over time.
- Strategies for expanding your network and creating opportunities.
- How to deal with challenges and creative blocks.
- Experiences with artist residencies, fairs and funding.

### **E. Ongoing Support – Weekly Mentoring**

- Definition and Structure of the Artistic Project – Review of the concept and evolution of the work.
- Time Management and Production Organisation – Schedule planning and process optimisation.
- Construction of Artistic Discourse - Rehearsals for presentations and interviews. → Feedback on Communication Materials – Review of portfolio, texts and promotional materials.
- Positioning and Visibility – Strategies for strengthening your digital presence.
- Project development for the
- Final Exhibition – Monitoring the production and setting up the installation.
- Review of Financial Sustainability Strategies – Pricing, funding sources and career plan.
- Final Reflections & Next Steps – How to continue to develop professionally after the fellowship.

# What does the grant offer?

---

## DISSEMINATION AND PROMOTION

→ The artists will have guaranteed visibility on the communication channels of the Freeport Lisboa Fashion Outlet and Vila do Conde Porto Fashion Outlet centres, Portugal Manual and SOTA.

→ Reports, interviews and audiovisual content to raise awareness of your work.

## EXHIBITION SPACE

→ The works will be exhibited at the end of the fellowship, in a location yet to be selected; WAF will guarantee the curatorship, exhibition design, transportation of the pieces, installation, disassembly and insurance.

## PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION PACK

→ Creation of an artist's Instagram account and pack or activation of improvements

→ Creation of a website for the artist: includes payment for the platform, domain and hosting for the first year.

→ Creation of videos and photo reports of the artist and her work to compile a high-quality professional portfolio.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKING

→ Exclusive meetings with curators, gallery owners, artists from the sector, journalists and cultural agents.

→ Opportunity to join future exhibitions, fairs and private collections.

# Operating model and timetable


The project will be structured according to a cyclical and scalable model, allowing for replication in different countries. Each VIA Group outlet will be able to award a grant to a local artist, promoting a global impact and connecting different artistic contexts.



## TIMETABLE 1ST EDITION

PHASE	DESCRIPTION	DEADLINES
WAF launch	Announcement of the fellowship and presentation of the mentor	9 May
Opening and Closing of Applications	Announcement of the program and submission of applications.	9 May to 8 June
Selection of the 10 Finalists	Analysis of applications (CV, portfolio and motivation letter)	9 June to 30 June
Announcement of the Selected Artists	Official announcement of the artists chosen to go through to the next stage	30 June
Masterclasses	The finalists will take part in masterclasses to train them in the development of artistic projects.	July, August and September
Project Delivery & Pitch	In-person presentation or video pitch	30 September
Announcement of the winner	Official communication and start of mentoring	15 October
Mentoring	Training and support for the production of works	4th quarter 2025
Final exhibition	Public presentation of the created works	February/March

# Evaluation criteria



To ensure a transparent and fair process, the artists will be selected based on the following criteria:

## **ARTISTIC QUALITY AND ORIGINALITY OF THE PROJECT (25%)**

- Creative development and strength of the authorial voice.
- Aesthetic and conceptual innovation within the field of visual arts.

## **POTENTIAL FOR EXPOSURE AND INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC (25%)**

- Proposed public presentation of the project.
- Strategies for activating the spectator experience.

## **IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE ARTIST'S CAREER AND THE CULTURAL SECTOR (20%)**

- The work's potential to transform the artist's career and generate new opportunities.
- The project's ability to establish connections with the artistic and cultural environment.

## **COHERENCE AND FEASIBILITY OF THE PROPOSAL (20%)**

- Detailed and well-founded structure of the presented concept.
- Realistic planning with due consideration for the deadlines and resources available.

## **SUSTAINABILITY INNOVATION IN MATERIALS AND PROCESSES (10%)**

- Responsible and ethical use of materials and techniques.
- Exploration of new approaches within artistic production.
- The jury's decision is final and irrevocable and no appeals are permitted.

# Selection process

---

## ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS

→ Initial screening of submitted proposals, evaluating criteria such as artistic quality, motivation, innovation and potential.

### PRE-SELECTION (TOP 10 CANDIDATES)

→ The jury evaluates all the applications and selects the 10 finalists who will have access to masterclasses and specialised mentoring.

→ The selection will be made on the basis of a voting table, where each judge will assign scores according to predefined criteria.

### MASTERCLASSES AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

→ The 10 finalists will take part in a series of training sessions, mentoring and practical activities to improve their projects.

### SELECTION OF WINNER

→ After taking part in the masterclasses, the finalists will present their final projects to the jury. A final jury meeting will be held (in person or virtually) to decide on the winner.

### OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND START OF THE PROGRAM

→ Announcement of the winner of the Women's Fellowship and start of her mentoring within the program.

# Jury

→ Teresa Santana, representative of Freeport and Vila do Conde Fashion Outlets

→ Filipa Belo, representative of Portugal Manual

→ Astrid Sauer, SOTA representative - State of the Art

→ Joana Vasconcelos, Mentor for the 2025 edition

The jury may request additional information or clarifications from any of the finalists in order to ensure a rigorous evaluation of the bids.

The jury's decisions will be taken by simple majority and are not subject to appeal.

The members of the jury undertake to keep the work submitted and the identity of the candidates confidential, ensuring the impartiality and confidentiality of the selection process.

The jury's decisions are final and no appeals may be lodged

**Gender Equality:**  
Strengthening the presence of women in art and culture.

**Decent Work and Economic Growth:**  
Support for the professionalization and financial sustainability of artists.

**Reduced Inequalities:**  
Inclusion of women at different stages of their artistic careers, without age or institutional restrictions.

**Sustainable Cities and Communities:**  
Promoting culture as an essential element in  
community development.

The WAF - Women in Art Fellowship is a structured program of transformation and impact, training 10 artists every year and promoting new opportunities for professional growth.

+info  
waf.portugal@gmail.com

