

Call for proposals: Robot in Residence

As part of the ongoing project *Robots in Residence* the Goethe-Institut Montreal will be hosting a NAO-Robot in 2023.

In 2020 the Goethe-Institut sent two of these unusual residency artists on an exploratory voyage through Europe. Despite Covid-19, they crossed borders unhindered and were hosted in a different country/city each month. **2023 will be the North American premiere of this program and the Goethe-Institut Montreal will host a NAO 6 during six months from February to July. During this time, the Goethe-Institut offers one residence for artists to work closely with the NAO during a period of 8 consecutive weeks.**

NAO 6 is now the sixth generation of the interactive humanoid robot NAO, developed by the Japanese French company SoftBank Robotics. It is in use worldwide and serves primarily as a research object for educational institutions. Its 25 degrees of movement make communication with NAO seem particularly natural. The robot has various sensors as well as modules for speech, object and face recognition and speaks several languages. Since 2020 two of these NAO robots have traveled to various Goethe-Instituts, mainly in Europe. On-site, the robots were supervised and further programmed by coders and artists, taking local issues and circumstances into account.

***Robots in Residence* aims to examine and illustrate the relationship between humans and machines with a focus on communication in a variety of cultural contexts.** During each residency the robots learn new skills and carry their newly acquired knowledge and skills further afield, picking up more and more aspects that, taken together, can capture and spark a multifaceted debate on artificial intelligence.

Call for Ideas/Proposals

Interdisciplinary students, artists, researchers and teams are invited to submit proposals for research-creation projects that broaden the skillset of the NAO, take local contexts into account, and inspire a multifaceted debate on artificial intelligence. The selected project will be developed during an 8-week residency with the NAO. Technical devices like the NAO can reduce fear of contact with humanoid robots, reflect the current state of robotics and dismantle stereotypes taken from pop culture about autonomous entities with their own consciousness.

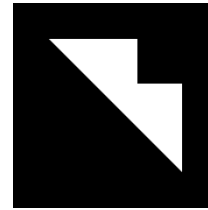
Selected applicants will have 8 weeks to work closely with the NAO robot and will receive between 4,000 and 6,000 CAD (depending on network affiliation) in funding to produce an interactive artistic program that broadens the NAOs skillset but also inspires social, technical-philosophical questions and bring to life visions for future human-machine interactions.

Local teams will be able to work with the robots independently, in their research institution, at the facilities provided by Milieux Institute, Hexagram, Eastern Bloc or at the Goethe-Institut - and for a period of approx. 8 weeks.

Goethe-Institut Montreal
1626, boul. Saint-Laurent, bureau
100
T +1 514 499 0159
F +1 514 499 0905
info-montreal@goethe.de

Tatiana Braun
Chargée de projets, programme
culturel
T: +1 514 499 0159, poste 113
tatiana.braun@goethe.de

www.goethe.de/montreal



Deadline to submit proposals: March 24th, 2023.

Eligibility:

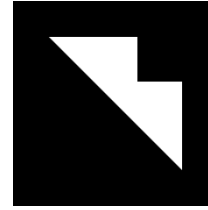
- Interdisciplinary individuals and teams of up to 4 members residing in the province of Quebec can apply. Hexagram regular and student members living outside of Montreal can apply for interregional travel funds (round-trip only, no accommodation). For more information, please contact: coordination.hexagram@gmail.com
- **All applicants must be members of Milieux and/or Hexagram.**
- Applicants should demonstrate an interest in robotics as well as a body of work in art, design, or technology. Portfolios should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the research-creation process through conceptual research, technical sketches, and production. Applicants from underrepresented communities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Benefits:

- Approx. 8 consecutive weeks (from May 1st to June 30th) to work closely with the robot.
- 4,000 CAD stipend (per team)
- Hexagram members are eligible for extra monetary support.
- Access to a residency space at Milieux-Institute and Hexagram-UQAM in Montreal:
 - Designated desk
 - Bookable conference rooms
 - Shared community event space
 - Local creative community/network
 - Media production lab
 - Technical support
- Workshops and skill development opportunities
- Connections to academic and creative networks through project partners Milieux, Hexagram and Eastern Bloc
- Public speaking opportunity during Milieux Institute's Machine Agencies Symposium on [AI's Publics and Policies](#) on May 23 or 24, 2023 (date tbc)

Outcomes and Expectations:

As part of a research-creation project, participants will develop an interactive and artistic program/project presentation for and with the NAO that illustrates their questions and/or reasonings about human-machine interactions. The media art projects/performances should reflect their local context and focus on communication. Projects/works in progress will be presented to the public in a public presentation at Eastern Bloc at the end of the residence period. Participants are expected to complete the following:



- Lead one skill-sharing workshop open to students / the public (with the support of the Goethe-Institut, Milieux, Hexagram and/or Eastern Bloc).
- Communicate progress updates to the Goethe-Institut.
- Be available for an artist panel and/or workshop during Milieux Institute's Machine Agencies Symposium on [AI's Publics and Policies](#) on May 23 or 24, 2023 (date tbc)
- Provide project documentation (audio, video, written). Hexagram student members can receive support for project documentation through Hexagram's [DEMO program](#). For more info, please contact: Manuelle Freire: freire.manuelle@uqam.ca.

Process:

One project proposal will be selected. The selected artist/team will have approx. 8 consecutive weeks (from May 1st to June 30th, 2023) to work closely with the NAO. At the end of this period, there will be a public presentation of the work (details to be discussed).

Evaluation Criteria:

Proposals should contain:

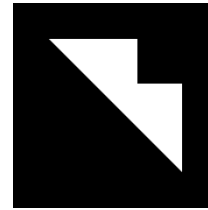
- Concept/Project Outline (approx. 500 words)
- Artist Statement (approx. 250 words)
- Biography/ies
- Motivation as to why NAO is of interest for the artist's/team's work/research etc. (approx. 250 words)

Applications will be assessed based upon the following criteria:

- Outlines an innovative approach to the project goals.
- Demonstrates depth of thought around socio-philosophical questions of human-machine connection, as well as innovative use of the NAO and its features/skills.
- Relevance to the program focus areas (listed above) and values of cultural exchange.
- Feasibility given time and budget constraints.

Advisory board to the selection of proposals:

- Milieux Institute
- Hexagram
- Eastern Bloc
- Goethe-Institut Montreal



Timeline

- January 23, 2023- NAO arrives in Montreal.
- **February 24, 2023** – Publication Open Call
- **March 24th, 2023** – Project Proposals Deadline
- **April 15th, 2023** – Project Selection Announced
- **May 1st – June 30th, 2023 – Artist x NAO / Residence**
- May 23rd or 24th, 2023 – [AI's Publics and Policies](#) (exact date tbc)
- **End of June/Beginning of July** – Project Presentation
- *March to May 2023 – NAO at the Goethe-Institut - There is a possibility to see the NAO before applying/before the residency starts. To know more, please contact: Tatiana Braun, tatiana.braun@goethe.de*

Please send your proposal including a concept/project outline (approx. 500 words), artist statement (approx. 250 words), Bios/CV of artist/team members, and short motivation statement (approx. 250 words) to the Goethe-Institut Montreal: tatiana.braun@goethe.de

Please get in touch with us if you'd like to see the NAO before the residency.

Point person at the Goethe-Institut for questions:

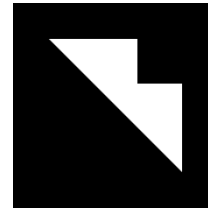
Tatiana Braun, tatiana.braun@goethe.de, +1 514 499 0159 / 113

Commitment to Diversity

Robots-in-Residence is committed to embracing and enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion, and encourages applications from individuals across racial, ethnic, geographic, socio-economic, cultural, age, gender, and sexual orientation spectrums.

Terms and Conditions

In the spirit of openness and collaboration, programs/projects created within the residence will be published under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International Public License](#), so that others may build off the programmes and further develop them to enhance the NAOs skillset and abilities.

**About the Goethe-Institut:**

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. With 157 institutes in 98 countries, it promotes knowledge of German abroad, encourages international cultural exchange and conveys an image of contemporary Germany. Our cultural and educational programs encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. With our network of Goethe-Instituts, Goethe Centers and cultural societies, we are partners for all who actively engage with Germany and its culture, working independently and without political ties. Visit our country portals for the USA, Canada, and Mexico to find out more and find us on social media. All inquiries may be directed to info-montreal@goethe.de

About Milieux:

Milieux is an institute for research-creation at the intersection of the fine arts, digital culture and information technology. It is a platform for creative experimentation, interdisciplinary training and progressive imagination in the middle of Concordia University in downtown Montreal. At Milieux we examine, co-create and share ideas, technological prototypes, experiences and practices that challenge assumptions about what is possible to be, to do and to imagine in a rapidly changing digital world. Our main focus is on creative and critical articulations of new technologies and the production of tangible, playable and accessible research that can be useful to generate new meaning and inform participation, engagement and innovation across culture, economy and civil society. Milieux breaks down barriers that have separated researchers, designers and artists in the university to work with communities, industry and the cultural sector to explore new solutions to pressing problems through core research on the interaction between people, technologies and culture.

About Hexagram:

Hexagram is an interdisciplinary network dedicated to research-creation addressing the relationships between arts, cultures and technologies. It comprises around forty co-researchers, about fifty collaborators, and a little over 200 students from various artistic disciplines related, in particular, to living arts, visual arts, design, and media arts, while also touching disciplines in the social sciences and humanities or natural sciences and engineering.

About Eastern Bloc:

Since 2007, Eastern Bloc has been at the forefront of digital art dissemination, promotion and production in Quebec. The vision at Eastern Bloc is to explore and push the creative boundaries situated at the intersection of art, technology, and science, as well as all other emerging digital practices. Hybrid processes and new modes of production are at the core of the centre's mandate, as is to support the work of emerging artists by providing them with an exchange platform with more established artists, through initiatives of a local and international scale. Eastern Bloc promotes audience participation, technological democratization, and the utilization of urban space via public intervention projects. Innovative in its nature, Eastern Bloc, through emerging artistic and technological practices, continues to advance a critical stance with regards to these many evolutions.