The ESS Curatorial Fellowship seeks to create space for the exploration of frameworks, strategies, and structures for connecting artists and audiences. The Fellowship additionally gives ESS an opportunity to develop a relationship with curators and bring fresh artistic vision in, furthering the mission of the organization to support a broad, creative exploration of sound. The goal of each seasonal Curatorial Fellow is to explore virtual engagement and sonic art presentation. Each fellow is paid a stipend of $1,500.

**ESS Mission, Values, & Core Activities**

Founded in 1986, ESS is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization dedicated to artistic evolution and the creative exploration of sound. As an international hub for sonic experimentation, ESS nurtures artists, heralds new works, and builds a broad, supportive community of makers, enthusiasts, and creative partners through production, presentation, education, and preservation.

**Core Values:**

- The artist is at the center of the creative process
- The past informs and inspires invention and innovation
- Experimentation requires both artistic rigor and risk
- Sonic-based expression has no boundaries and requires an inclusive environment that welcomes and values diverse perspectives and voices
- Collaboration activates growth

**Ongoing and often intertwined activities include:**

- Artist support: rehearsal space; artist residencies; fiscal sponsorship; public workshops/tutorials; recording studios.
Presentation in many formats from weekly concerts to site-specific installations throughout the city.

Documentation: Program recordings are archived in ESS’s Creative Audio Archive, which also stewards 7 additional collections.

**The Quarantine Concerts**

ESS launched The Quarantine Concerts (TQC) virtual concert series in March 2020. This series has established ESS as a leader in streaming and virtual presentation in Chicago and, in the experimental music world, in the U.S. and internationally. Originally conceived as a temporary fix until in-person performances could resume, TQC has since proven to fill a larger need in the international music and performance community; in 2020 alone the series presented over 1,000 artists in 194 shows, which raised $90,000 for the artists performing.

**Curatorial Fellowship**

This is a pilot program that is intended to build off of the expansive momentum and connections that ESS garnered in the past year, and create space for the exploration of frameworks, strategies, and structures for connecting artists and audiences in 2021.

**Expectations:**

- Curate and produce three virtual performances for presentation on ESS’s Twitch as part of the TQC series. The Curatorial Fellow will have access to a vast pool of international artists who have written in over the past year expressing interest in the series, as well as to ESS staff and the ESS archives. We hope that the Fellow will curate from a wide range of networks, including this artist pool.
- Produce at least one interview or piece of contextual writing per performance (3 total). The Curatorial Fellow will have the option to self-direct any other initiatives of their own design that can reasonably be implemented during the course of the Fellowship. Additional projects should be aimed at exploring new ways to engage artists and audiences during this time of continued social distancing.
- Interest in working closely with ESS staff, resources, and programs.
- Enthusiastic about connecting with diverse audiences through innovative programming.
- Ability to clearly communicate program ideas, and to implement those ideas along a set timeline.
- Provide feedback at the end of the Fellowship, towards the continued development of this program.
Who Are We Looking For

ESS is seeking applicants at any stage in their career who are interested in curating virtual presentations and enthusiastic about exploring the possibilities of this still emergent area of cultural programming. The Curatorial Fellow should have some experience in programming sonic arts and experimental media.

This is a pilot program, and as such, some elements of the program may evolve as we work together to build it. We hope to work with someone who is interested in a collaborative, and at times improvisatory, working environment. All work currently takes place remotely.

We know that arts and media organizations disproportionately alienate the most marginalized people in society — including BIPOC, disabled, and LGBTQ+ folx. We believe that these communities must be centered in the work we do. Thus, we strongly encourage applications from people with these identities or who are members of other marginalized communities.

ESS is committed to making this and all roles work for interested applicants with visible and invisible disabilities, and will work with the person selected for this Fellowship to make accessibility accommodations as necessary.

To Apply Please Provide

Resume/CV and cover letter
A writing sample in the form of a statement about yourself and your curatorial approach and/or the ways in which you would like to explore virtual sonic arts curation in this present moment (500 word max).
Examples or links to past work

Send all materials to Managing Director Adam Vida at info@experimentalsoundstudio.org with the subject line “Curatorial Fellowship - [your name]“