**Statements by some of the previous Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory laureates and grant recipients**  
Joanna Mytkowska, curator and director of the MoMA, Warsaw • 2018 Igor Zabel Award laureate

“The Igor Zabel Award is a great distinction and honor, especially because I received it after a long line of outstanding people whom I have admired for many years. The award was especially important to me because I work in conditions of tension, crisis, and uncertainty. The award provided important support for me during this difficult journey and also provided external confirmation of the rightness of my actions. The Igor Zabel Award, because of its prestige, also enhanced the importance of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw of which I am a director, and subsequently the effectiveness of its activities in Polish society.”

Edith Jeřábková, curator, Prague • 2018 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient

“The Igor Zabel Award Grant does not impose conditions and does not burden the recipients with other obligations. This openness allowed me to support the interdisciplinary project WOODS. Community for Cultivation, Theory and Art, to which I could then afford to give my time and energy. It also helped me to establish a permanent residence in the forest by purchasing the basic necessities such as a solar power system, internet connection, tools, materials, and plants and supplies for animals. I am a founding member of the Are Association, which recently purchased three hectares of forest and meadows in Ústí nad Orlicí, the Orlické Mountain region in the Czech Republic. We are establishing an edible forest and permaculture garden, and will use various formats for sharing this combined artistic, academic, permaculture, and educational work, and connecting the city with the countryside. We organize permaculture courses, summer art-educational symposia, rescue events for animals, and the planting of trees and shrubs. Thanks to the Igor Zabel Award Grant, I was able to move to the forest where I take care of the soil and animals that are in need, grow vegetables, plant trees, and also devote myself to my curatorial, institutional, and academic work, which is no longer tied only to the city.”

**The Visual Culture Research Center (VCRC),** Kyiv • 2018 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient  
”VCRC was honoured to be one of the 2018 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipients. We would like to emphasize three dimensions of its impact on us: conceptual, institutional, and political. Because the VCRC is an interdisciplinary organization that perceives its cultural practice as theory in action, it is especially important that the grant is given not just for achievements in culture but also in theory. In the Ukrainian context where short-term structural institutional support is urgently required and almost always absent, the Igor Zabel Award Grant is a highly influential act of solidarity and international support. VCRC, as an organizer of the Kyiv Biennial, the aim of which is to propose an alternative narrative for the East European region, especially appreciates that it has become a part of the Igor Zabel Award's endeavour to look at Europe's eastern and southern (semi-) peripheries as a uniting whole.”

Klara Kemp-Welch, art historian, London • 2012 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient  
“The Igor Zabel Grant was critical in providing support for the research and writing of my book Networking the Bloc: Experimental Art in Eastern Europe 1965–1989 (MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, 2018). The project involved extensive travel in order to attend relevant conferences, work in archives, and interview artists across Central and Eastern Europe. The grant enabled me to make the most of these trips, to purchase relevant international publications, and, above all, it gave me the time I needed to focus on the organization of my materials and writing.”

Sabine Hänsgen, Slavic scholar and curator, Bochum/Zurich • 2012 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient

“The Igor Zabel Award Grant was a gift that allowed me to spend time inspired by “purposefulness without purpose”. During this time, I developed some of the initial ideas for what later became the research and exhibition project *Poetry & Performance: The Eastern European Perspective*. Poetry and performance as ephemeral genres presented an opportunity to look for alternative forms of communication and cooperation beyond state culture, the market economy, and mass media circulation. The focus on artistic positions from Eastern Europe does not imply a territorialization of the topic. With the term “perspective”, we aim to change the viewpoint in order to open up new horizons of reflection on what we do and what we are able to do with language in general.”

Raluca Voinea, curator, Bucharest • 2010 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient  
“I was still in the early stage of my professional career when I received the Igor Zabel Grant and it represented what I call “a white card of trust”. I used some of the grant money to pay for the office rent of the association I was a member of at that time (which was finalizing an international, exhausting, EU-funded public art project called The Knot) and the rest to pay my own rent because I was unemployed. Since those days, every time I feel overwhelmed by the wretched context in which I work, something like this grant happens to me (a bigger project, a research or travel grant, etc.), as if somebody was making sure that I can keep living and working in Bucharest. Ten years later, I am still here, the situation is just as wretched, but there are more people like me, deciding to write something on that white card of trust.”

Daniel Grúň, art historian and curator, Bratislava • 2010 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient

“In 2010, I was nominated for the Igor Zabel Award Grant by the award laureate Professor Piotr Piotrowski. At the time, I was a young and inexperienced recent graduate of doctoral studies. Apart from a just published book on art criticism in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, I had not completed any major projects. The grant was a big surprise for me, and I enjoyed it all the more and still appreciate it to this day because it bears the name of Igor Zabel upon whose work I still rely. This was also the time when I started researching the archive of Slovak artist, Július Koller, and I put all the financial means and time I had at my disposal into researching this huge archive. At the same time, I was travelling and getting acquainted with similar archival projects in other European cities and also in New York. My research into the Július Koller Archive deepened when I received an offer to work on a retrospective of the artist at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and Vienna in 2016–2017. My encounters with professional curators during this project as well as the preparation of the exhibition concept and its realization was a great experience for me. Since then, I have worked on several other exhibitions and publications, making many friends and professional contacts along the way. In essence, the voyage that began when I received the Igor Zabel Award Grant continues to this day in my research, curatorial, and teaching work.”

Fouad Asfour, art writer and editor, Johannesburg • 2008 Igor Zabel Award Grant recipient  
“On a perfectly ordinary Monday morning, I had just stepped into one of Johannesburg’s sudden thunderstorms. I was figuring out which path to run across campus that would get me the least soaking wet when I got a phone call from Ljubljana telling me that I had received the Igor Zabel Award Grant. No longer out in the cold, I was suddenly able to run art writing workshops in Johannesburg and Polokwane, to organize discussion events, to publish the *Manifesto* special issue of the Dead Revolutionaries Club E-Zine, to co-curate the exhibition *Esikhaleni – Spatial Practices* in the context of the first Johannesburg Art Fair, to write my own texts and guest edit the texts of South African artists and writers, to coordinate the first meeting of the Network of Independent Publishers at the first Jozi Book Fair, Johannesburg, to continue collaborative work with artists and researchers (Ricarda Denzer and Fadi Shayya among others) on their publications, and to continue my research on South African art writing which was published in the book chapter “Whitespeak: How Race *Works* in South African Art Criticism Texts to Maintain the Arts as the Property of Whiteness” (coauthored with Dr. Sharlene Khan) in *The Palgrave Handbook of Race and the Arts in Education* (2018).”