Kunsthaus Graz

PART 1 — b2match Profile Entry

Organisation

- **Name:** Kunsthaus Graz (Universalmuseum Joanneum)
- **Type:** Public authority / Cultural institution (museum)
- **City, Country:** Graz, Austria
- **Website:** https://www.museum-joanneum.at/kunsthaus-graz

Organisation description (profile text)

> Kunsthaus Graz — the "Friendly Alien" designed by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier and opened in 2003 as the landmark of Graz's year as European Capital of Culture — is one of Europe's most distinctive museums of contemporary art and part of the Universalmuseum Joanneum. Its biomorphic body is clad in 1,066 translucent acrylic-glass panels (max. 2.8 × 2 m, ~300 kg each) that form both the building's signature skin and the carrier of the BIX media façade — a 900 m² matrix of 930 individually controllable fluorescent rings by realities:united, part of the collection of the Museum of Modern Art (New York) and listed as a protected work of design. The building sits on the bank of the River Mur directly adjacent to Graz's UNESCO World Heritage historic centre and is physically connected to the "Eisernes Haus" (1847), whose cast-iron façade is heritage-protected.
>
> Two decades after opening, the façade system is reaching the end of its technical life: the waterproofing membrane beneath the panels is ageing and increasingly leak-prone, the façade provides insufficient thermal regulation (high cooling and heating loads to maintain museum climate conditions), and the neon tubes behind the panels can no longer be placed on the EU market. In 2026, Kunsthaus Graz therefore ran a public innovation challenge ("Innovative façade solutions for energy efficiency, weather resistance and communication", IÖB Innovationsplattform, winners announced October 2026) to identify market-ready and research-stage façade retrofits — including bio-based and recycled materials, integrated media skins, and flexible roof waterproofing for complex free-form geometries — that upgrade the envelope without altering the building's iconic geometry.

Areas of activity

- Renovation / retrofit of existing cultural buildings (museum, heritage context)
- Bio-based and sustainable façade materials — material testing and demonstration
- Thermal comfort and energy efficiency in buildings with controlled-climate requirements
- Media façades / creative integration of communication technology in architecture
- Cultural and creative sector engagement, participatory and transdisciplinary approaches

Topics of interest

- NEB-2026-01-REGEN-01: Sustainable, inclusive, affordable and beautiful solutions for thermal comfort in buildings *(primary)*
- NEB-2026-01-REGEN-02: Advancing sustainable maintenance and repair measures for existing buildings
- MISS-2026-04-CIT-NEB-B4P-CCRI-03: Introducing circular economy models in the construction sector

Keywords

Kunsthaus Graz, museum, retrofit, façade, bio-based materials, media façade, BIX, thermal comfort, heritage context, demonstration site, energy efficiency, circularity, contemporary art

Cooperation ideas (Marketplace opportunity text)

> **Cultural demonstration building for thermal comfort retrofit in REGEN-01 consortia**
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> Kunsthaus Graz offers itself as a real-life demonstration and validation site in HORIZON-NEB-2026-01-REGEN-01. The building combines features that are rare in a single demo object:
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> - **Iconic, geometry-frozen envelope:** a biomorphic free-form skin of translucent panels that must be preserved in form and appearance — the ideal test case for retrofit solutions where "beauty" and design identity are non-negotiable, and for addressing regulatory constraints (heritage context adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage zone; connected protected monument "Eisernes Haus").
> - **Acute, well-documented retrofit need:** leaking waterproofing, insufficient thermal performance, mandatory lighting-technology transition, high operation and maintenance costs — documented in a 2026 public innovation challenge with technical annexes (façade documentation, fire safety concept) available for project partners.
> - **Museum climate requirements:** continuous controlled-climate conditions for contemporary art exhibitions, i.e. a demanding, measurable thermal-comfort use case.
> - **Cultural visibility and dissemination power:** an internationally renowned institution whose retrofit of a publicly visible, media-capable façade offers outstanding demonstration, communication and outreach value for NEB projects.
>
> **We are looking for:** consortia seeking a demonstration building in the continental/oceanic climate zone (Austria) with heritage and cultural-use constraints; research institutions and universities for testing façade and material solutions; partners for material testing of bio-based and recyclable façade systems under real weathering and museum-climate conditions; and integration with our ongoing innovation process (IÖB challenge winners: bio-based façade concepts, media-skin solutions, flexible roof waterproofing).
>
> **We offer:** site access, technical documentation, energy and climate data, curatorial and communication expertise for participatory and dissemination activities, and a public contracting authority experienced in innovation-oriented market exploration.

Suggested representative entry

- **Katharina Dilena,** International Project Coordinator
- **Contact:** ++katharina.dilena@kunsthausgraz.at++

PART 2 — Factsheet

Organisation

Kunsthaus Graz · Universalmuseum Joanneum
Museum of contemporary art · Graz, Austria
https://www.museum-joanneum.at/kunsthaus-graz

- Landmark building by Peter Cook & Colin Fournier, opened 2003 (European Capital of Culture)
- "Friendly Alien": biomorphic blob architecture, 1,066 translucent acrylic-glass panels

- BIX media façade by realities:united — 900 m², 930 controllable light rings
- Located on the River Mur, adjacent to the UNESCO World Heritage historic centre of Graz; connected to the protected "Eisernes Haus" (1847)

The demonstration case

Façade retrofit of an icon: energy efficiency, weather resistance, communication

- Envelope system technically outdated: ageing waterproofing membrane, insufficient thermal regulation, high maintenance effort (heavy panels up to ~300 kg, work-platform operations), external fire-protection system
- Neon lighting behind the panels can no longer be placed on the EU market — technology transition is mandatory
- Museum-climate requirements: continuous controlled interior conditions for contemporary art
- 2026 public innovation challenge (IÖB Innovationsplattform) on façade and roof-skin solutions completed; winners include bio-based façade concepts, media-skin and flexible roof-waterproofing solutions
- Constraint set ideal for research: geometry and outer appearance must be preserved; weight limit ~300 kg per panel; ≥ 20-year lifetime; maintenance intervals ≥ 3–5 years

Expertise / what we offer

- **Demonstration site:** real building, real climate data, real regulatory constraints (heritage context, public procurement, fire safety)
- **Material testing environment:** bio-based, recycled and translucent façade systems under Central-European weathering and museum climate conditions
- **Cultural-sector expertise:** curatorial practice, artistic programming of the media façade, participatory formats with urban publics
- **Dissemination platform:** internationally known institution — high visibility for project results
- **Experienced public partner:** completed innovation-oriented market exploration with technical documentation ready to share

What we are looking for

- REGEN-01 consortia needing a **cultural / heritage-context demonstration building** in the continental climate zone
- Partners developing **bio-based, circular and low-maintenance façade solutions** (incl. integrated media capability) for validation under real conditions
- **Research institutions and universities** for testing façade and material solutions
- Research partners for LCA, cost and regulatory barrier analysis (heritage, public procurement, fire safety)
- Municipal and civil-society partners for participatory demonstration activities

REGEN-01 fit & contact

Fit with HORIZON-NEB-2026-01-REGEN-01:

Call requirement	Kunsthaus Graz contribution
Demonstration in ≥ 2 climate zones	Continental-zone demo site (Austria); consortium partners e.g. Province of Liège, University of Palermo
≥ 1 cultural heritage building among demos	Iconic cultural building in heritage context + connected protected monument
Sustainable, affordable, beautiful solutions	Retrofit preserving iconic appearance; bio-based materials; media façade as "beautiful" communication layer

Call requirement	Kunsthaus Graz contribution
Regulatory barriers	First-hand case: heritage setting, fire safety, public procurement law
Participatory / transdisciplinary	Cultural institution with public programming and co-creation experience
NEB hub / dissemination	High-visibility institution; media façade as public outreach channel

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Sources: IÖB challenge page (ioeb-innovationsplattform.at), Kunsthaus Graz / Universalmuseum Joanneum website, Wikipedia (Kunsthaus Graz, BIX Medienfassade).