

Call for projects COAL PRIZE 2025 *Freshwater*

OPEN UNTIL APRIL, 20

The immemorial cosmogonies that have been passed down to us, all say that the origin of life is linked to Water. Contemporary science confirms this. Yet, nothing can exhaust the mysteries of Water. We now know that Water has been omnipresent in the Universe since its very origins, and that it played a decisive role in the formation of stars and galaxies. Outside our planet, the molecule has only been formally identified in its solid or gaseous states. This makes its presence in liquid form on Earth even more remarkable. Our planet's unique conditions allow Water to flow. It is through its liquid form that it has been, and will continue to be, the primordial origin of all life.

Every organism on Earth, from the simplest to the most complex, is a "creature of thirst". Its unique properties, including capillarity, its power to dissolve and its constant flowing, make Water, in Gaston Bachelard's words, "the eye of the Earth" or "the organ of the world". To the rhythm of its cycles, it passes from one state to another, traversing matters, connecting elements, carving ravines in the mountains, shaping plains, draining minerals, elevating vegetation, vitalising animals, composing the climate by cooling the atmosphere and capturing carbon. Every

drop of Freshwater brings life, whether from groundwater, wetlands or surface water. Swamps, mangroves, ponds, lakes, springs, rivers, and streams determine biological existence.

Yet, Freshwater represents only a few hundredths of Water on Earth. In temperate zones, we live in the illusion of its abundance, but in arid ones, we know how scarce it is. Water can only be shared. Anthropogenic pressure on Water cycles, linked to intensive agriculture, industrial activity, urbanisation, energy production and the production of most of our goods, is seriously disrupting the balance. Extreme droughts and major floods, as well as chemical and plastic pollution, are the most visible indicators.

Our thirst for growth is compromising the only source capable of quenching our thirst. **Pollution is compounded by inequalities of access — over a quarter of humanity is still deprived of drinking Water — which give rise to increasingly extreme conflicts.** Thinking about a Freshwater policy can only be done on a planetary scale, with a shared vision of its uses, and with a concern to

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repair and protect all the places where Water is found: the aquifers and glaciers that store it, the wetlands that capture carbon, the mangroves that slow down erosion, the streams that bring us life... **More than a common good, a fundamental right of all living beings, it nowadays needs to be considered as a subject with rights.**

How can we envisage an ecology and politics of Water without a poetics of Water? Protecting Water also means regenerating the imaginaries, narratives, representations, and practices that condition the way it is shared, and the way it is used in our lives and actions.

The COAL Prize 2025 dedicated to Freshwater is a call to fight against the drying up of our sensibilities towards it, to elevate it to its rightful place at the heart of general attention, to rehabilitate it in its symbolic and sacred prerogatives, to consider it as the ally and partner of our lives. It's also a call to protect it, to play our part in restoring its natural cycles, to repair places that have been damaged, in solidarity with those, human and non-human, who are irretrievably affected.

Created in 2010 by the COAL association, the COAL Prize is a vehicle for identifying, promoting and disseminating artists around the world who bear witness to, imagine and experiment with solutions for transforming territories, ways of life, organisation and production. Together, these artists are helping to make the changes visible, to build a new collective narrative, a developing common heritage, a positive and necessary framework for everyone to find the means and inspiration to implement the changes towards a more sustainable and fairer world.

At the same time, a call for projects is open for the **COAL Student Prize**, open to students from schools in the artistic and cultural field.

> See the call for projects for the COAL Student Prize 2025

CALENDAR

Call for projects closes: April 20, 2025

Announcement of nominated artists summer 2025

Announcement of winners autumn 2025

Ceremony awards ceremony at *Sans Réserve*, the meeting place for creative artists committed to ecology: autumn 2025

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Ten artists are nominated by a selection committee of professionals for their projects submitted in response to this international call for entries. The Prix COAL and its special mentions are awarded from among these ten projects by a jury made up of representatives of the partner organizations and personalities from the fields of art and ecology. In addition, all the entries considered by COAL and the selection committee help to make known

artists and projects that may be solicited or promoted according to other opportunities and actions carried out by the association and its partners.

The composition of the jury will be revealed this spring.

AWARDS

- The winning artist of the **COAL Prize** will receive €12,000 and a creative residency at the heart of the Domaine de Belval, owned by the François Sommer Foundation and run by the scientific and educational teams of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature and the Domaine de Belval. A true observatory of rurality and wildlife, each year the Domaine welcomes artists selected for their contribution to renewing the vision of the relationship between humans and their natural environment.

- The winning artist of the **Special Jury Prize** receives 3,000 euros.

- The winner of the **Ateliers Médicis award** will benefit from a residency in Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil, in association with the Bondy regional forest.

- The winning artist in the **Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/ Paris aka le vaisseau award** receives 2,000 euros and will be invited to exhibit at the Paris institution.

CRITERIA

Applicants will be judged on the following criteria: artistic value, relevance (understanding of the theme – Being Transformative), originality (the ability to introduce new approaches, themes, and points of view), pedagogy (ability to get a message across and raise awareness), social and participative approaches (engagement, testimony, efficiency, societal dynamics), eco-design and feasibility. The COAL Prize supports artistic projects in progress. The award is not intended to cover all production costs of the project but should be considered as an aid to its development.

APPLICATION

The application must include the following documents in a single pdf file named NAME_Firstname_2025_Project-Title (the file must not exceed 30 MB):

- Download the application form **HERE**
- A detailed description of the proposed project, describing its artistic dimension, its relevance to the theme 'Freshwater', including a note on the technical feasibility of the project and a budget estimation
- At least two visuals illustrating the project
- A CV and a portfolio

All proposals must be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. on April 20, 2025, on the COAL server: [upload. projetcoal.org](https://projetcoal.org)

By participating in this call for entries, project authors expressly authorize the COAL association and its partners to publish, reproduce and publicly distribute all or part of the elements of their project, for any purpose related to the promotion and communication of the COAL Prize, in any medium, in any country, in the event of nomination, as well as on the Transformatives territories platform dedicated to transformative artistic practices. Entries submitted but not selected will remain in the archives of the COAL association. They will, however, remain the property of their authors. Participation in this open call entails the full acceptance of these conditions.

PARTNERS 2025

The COAL Prize 2025 is founded by the French Ministry of Culture, the French Office for Biodiversity, the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, the Fondation François Sommer and the Fondation L'Accolade, as well as benefit of a partnership with the Ateliers Médicis and the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris.

Ministry of Culture

In addition to its core mission of making the most important works of humanity, and first and foremost of France, accessible to as many people as possible, the Ministry of Culture is convinced that culture must play its full part in the vast project of ecological transition, and has been committed to this through successive strategies since 2010. Since 2023, the Ministry of Culture's strategy has been set out in the Guide d'orientation et d'inspiration, which sets a course for the ecological transition of cultural players. The Ministry of Culture has supported the COAL Prize since its first edition in 2010.

French Biodiversity Office (OFB)

The OFB is responsible for protecting and restoring biodiversity in France and its overseas territories. It works to preserve life in aquatic, terrestrial and marine environments, thanks to the expertise of its 2,800 employees, including 1,700 environmental inspectors. This public establishment also works by mobilizing a range of players, decision-makers and citizens around biodiversity: the State, local authorities, associations, businesses, scientists, farmers, fishermen and hunters, nature sports enthusiasts, art lovers...

Musée de la chasse et de la Nature and François Sommer Foundation

Recognized as a public utility since its creation on November 30, 1966, the Foundation was the brainchild of François and Jacqueline Sommer, pioneers of humanist ecology. Faithful to the commitments of its founders, the Foundation works for the protection of a biodiversity in which mankind finds its rightful place, for the respectful use of nature's resources, and for the sharing of the riches of our natural, artistic and cultural heritage.

L'Accolade Foundation – Institut de France

The Fondation promotes artistic creation aware of its environment. It encourages approaches, projects, and actions by artists around the themes of water, the environment, the fragility of living beings and the feminine, through research and creation residencies and exhibitions in France and the United States. It also looks after the "matrimoine", the legacy of women of historical or artistic importance.

Les Ateliers Médicis

Committed to the emergence of new, diverse artistic voices, and to supporting artists with singular, contemporary languages, Ateliers Médicis welcomes artists from all disciplines to residencies, and supports the creation of works conceived in conjunction with local communities. They encourage or organize encounters between artists and local residents. Located in Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil, in the outskirts of Paris (Seine-Saint-Denis), they occupy a building in construction.

A large-scale facility with national ambitions will be built by 2025, reaffirming the place of artistic creation in the suburbs.

Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris

Through its resolutely de-auctuarizing and A-trans-indisciplinary programming, the Centre is mandated to disseminate and promote the work of artists based in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation in France. It thus promotes emerging and established approaches, from the peripheral to the established.

CONTACT

for all inquiries, please contact
contact@projetcoal.fr

credit : Nicolas Floc'h, *La couleur de l'eau, Lerins, Sainte Marguerite, - 10m, 2021, ADAGP Paris*

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