



Romain Bernini, *Grans bwa X*, detail, 2017, Oil on canvas, 220 x 180 cm. Courtesy Suzanne Tarasieve gallery / HdM gallery

## OPEN CALL COAL PRIZE 2023 - PLANT! OPEN TILL 19TH MARCH 2023

**"If you don't sow, you'll never grow". Thus advises the wisdom of plants, organisms that tame the depths to grow towards the light, that remind us *where to land* to better orient ourselves. Endlessly iterating, they synthesise the blue planet into a green world, the colour of hope and renewal, the symbol of ecology, the shimmer of life, dreaming and generating a habitable Earth. They are radically *other*, yet radically *everywhere*. Metabolized and transformed, they traverse and constitute us, through the food we ingest, the air we breathe, our remedies, and our goods, as well as through our thinking, from the human and social sciences to artistic creation.**

Grasses, garden vegetables, wildflowers, trees, shrubs, cereals, mosses, ferns, green algae: the plant kingdom, abundant in an infinite number of shapes, sizes and colours, **represents the overwhelming majority of the mass of life on Earth**. Robust, the plants live in continuity and mesh every electron in their environment. With their leaves reaching skyward and their roots underground, they draw mineral salts from the soil and capture solar

energy through photosynthesis, generating nourishment and breath. Autotrophic, they are the only organisms capable of metabolising inert matter into organic matter; they are the cradle of life on earth. Sometimes edible and life-saving, heroic and therapeutic, sometimes dangerous and deadly, bothersome and invasive, **plants brim with chemical survival strategies, defending themselves with prowess.**

Thus, for several hundred million years, they have been a model of adaptation, resilience and diversity, **feeding and inspiring the development of human societies**, which ceaselessly draw on their resources and imitate their forms. All human ingenuity, craftsmanship and industry has prospered on the fruits of the plant kingdom. Its conquest have shaped the development of human societies, from imperial colonisation to world trade. Today, some of the most futuristic engineering anywhere can be found in plant-based projects run by the agricultural, pharmaceutical, biofuel and biotechnology industries. Plants are also strategic allies for increasingly dense cities, capable of improving living conditions, reducing energy

consumption and cultivating biodiversity. Yet plant life is, more than ever, threatened by climate change, the destruction of natural habitats and the depletion of resources.

**However, we have everything to learn from the plant world** on which the survival and future of humanity depends. Recent scientific research in the West has recently attributed new faculties to plants, such as proprioception, sensation, intelligence and memory, and has praised their potential for communication and socialisation. **There is even talk of a vegetal turn that today calls for us to live from the wisdom of plants and not from their exploitation**, wisdom that is substantive and material but also intellectual and spiritual, towards organic, rather than mechanical, vegetal thinking: complex, rhizomatic and entangled. In addition to their undeniable aesthetic and therapeutic potential that have woven the history of art, plants also form the fertile ground for contemporary alternative movements that seek renewal through the earth, well-being through plants and communion around the art of planting.

**With Plant! the COAL Prize 2023 invites artists from all over the world** to sow the seeds of creation and action, to germinate new research and experimentation, so that an inventive and resilient plant-based way of thinking can flourish in the world to come. This Prize is a call to act, to transform, to heal, to revive, to hybridize. A call to feel the richness of plants, their balances and dynamics, from seed to calyx, from molecule to ecosystem. A call to *try* and, why not, to fail, because failure is the seed of growth.

*In parallel, a call for projects is open for the **COAL – Culture & Diversity Student Prize 2023** for students of French schools in the field of arts and culture.*

*> See the call for projects of the **COAL – Culture & Diversity Student Prize 2023***

## CALENDAR

Application deadline: 19th March 2023  
Announcement of the nominees: June 2023  
Award ceremony: September 2023

## ABOUT THE PRIZE

Every year, ten projects are shortlisted by a committee of professionals among the projects received through the international open call. The COAL Prize and its special mentions are awarded from among these ten projects by a jury composed of representatives of the partner organisations and personalities from the fields of art and ecology. In addition, all applications considered by COAL and the selection committee will become part of a network of artists and projects may be solicited or promoted for opportunities and actions carried out by COAL and its partners.

## JURY 2023

**Cathy Bouvard**, Director of the Ateliers Médicis  
**Thomas Delage**, Head of the Mobilising Citizens for Biodiversity Department at the Office Français de la Biodiversité  
**Maïté Delmas**, Honorary Attaché of the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, co-chair of the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation  
**Catherine Dobler**, Founder of the L'Accolade Foundation  
**Alexia Fabre**, Director of the Beaux-Arts de Paris  
**Christine Germain-Donnat**, Director of the Museum of Hunting and Nature  
**Olivier Lerude**, Ministry of Culture  
**Michael Marder**, Philosopher, IKERBASQUE Professor at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) Vitoria-Gasteiz  
**Alexandra McIntosh**, Director of CIAP - Île de Vassivière, centre for contemporary art of national interest  
**Stéphanie Pécourt**, Director of the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/Paris  
**Erik Samakh**, Artist  
**Irène Varano**, Sales Director of the ArtConcept Gallery

## PARTNERS 2023

**The COAL Prize is supported by the European Union through the European cooperation programme ACT - Art Climate Transition, the French Office for Biodiversity, the Museum of Hunting and Nature, the Fondation François Sommer and the Fondation L'Accolade, as well as by a partnership with the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris and the Ateliers Médicis.**

**The French Office for Biodiversity (OFB)** is a public institution dedicated to the protection of biodiversity. With its 3,000 agents, it carries out missions to improve knowledge, to police the environment and it works by mobilising society through a group of actors, decision-makers and citizens around biodiversity.

**The François Sommer Foundation** was founded in 1966 by François and Jacqueline Sommer, pioneers in the implementation of a humanist ecology. Faithful to the commitments of its founders, it works towards the respectful use of natural resources, for sharing the wealth of natural, artistic and cultural heritage and for the protection of a biodiversity in which mankind find its proper place.

**L'Accolade Foundation's** main goal is to support, promote and encourage artistic creation. It pays special attention to creations, approaches, projects, and actions that are carried by artists in connection with the themes of water, the environment, the fragility of the living and feminism. It also aims to enhance and promote the heritage, that is to say the legacy of women who have had historical or artistic importance.



**The Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/Paris.** Through a resolutely de-analytical and transdisciplinary programme, the Centre is mandated to disseminate and promote the work of artists based in the Walloon Federation of Brussels. In this way, it promotes emerging or established approaches, from the periphery to the established.

**The Ateliers Médicis** are committed to bringing out new and diverse artistic voices and to supporting artists with singular and contemporary languages. They welcome artists from all disciplines in residence and support the creation of works that are thought out in connection with the territories. They encourage or organise encounters between artists and residents. Located in Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis, near Paris, they occupy a prefiguration building. A large-scale facility with national ambitions will be built by 2025, reaffirming the place of artistic creation in the suburbs.

## AWARDS

**- The winner of the COAL Prize** will be awarded 12,000 euros and benefits from a residence in the heart of the Domaine de Belval, property of the François Sommer Foundation, run by the scientific and educational teams of the Museum of Hunting and Nature and those of the Domaine de Belval. Located in the commune of Belval-Bois-des-Dames, in the French Ardennes, the Domaine de Belval is a veritable observatory of rural life and wildlife, which welcomes artists selected each year for their contribution to the renewal of the vision of the relationship between human and his natural environment. > *See the residency chart*

**- The winner of the Jury's Special Prize** will be awarded 3,000 euros.

**- The winner of the NOVA\_XX mention** is invited by the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/Paris to exhibit at the NOVA\_XX 2023 international biennial, which will be held from December 2023 to February 2024 at the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles in Paris and outdoor. Founded in 2017 in Brussels by Stéphanie Pécourt, director of the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/Paris, NOVA\_XX is an international biennial dedicated to artistic, scientific and technological entanglement in a feminine and non-binary mode and in the 4.0 era.

**- The winner of the Ateliers Médicis mention** receives a residency in Clichy-sous-Bois/Montfermeil, in connection with the regional forest of Bondy, near Paris. The Ateliers Médicis welcome artists of all disciplines to residencies and support the creation of works that are thought out in relation to the territories. They encourage or organise encounters between artists and local residents.

## CRITERIA

Applicants will be judged on the following criteria: artistic

value, relevance (understanding of the theme - *PLANT!*), 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. Its 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 should include the following documents in a single PDF saved as SURNAME\_Name\_2023\_Project-title, and not exceeding 30 Mb:

- The completed application form, download it [HERE](#)
- A detailed description of the proposed project, describing its artistic dimension, its relevance to the theme *PLANT!*, 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 applications are to be submitted by March 19th, 2023 at 11:59 pm at the latest via the COAL server: **upload. projetcoal.org/en**

By entering this competition, applicants expressly authorize the COAL organization and its partners to publish, reproduce and display in public all or part of the elements of their entry for any purpose linked to the promotion and communication of COAL and its partners, via all platforms and media, in all countries, for the legal duration of the copyright if they are nominated. Entries submitted but not selected will remain in the archives of the COAL organization. They will, however, remain the property of their authors. Participation in this open call entails the full acceptance of these conditions.

## COAL PRIZE

**Created in 2010 by the COAL association**, the COAL Prize has in fourteen years become a vehicle for the identification, promotion and dissemination of artists all over the world who dare to imagine and experiment, to transform territories, lifestyles, organizations and production methods. Together, they contribute to making changes visible, in building a new collective narrative, a new imaginary world, a common heritage, a positive, optimistic and necessary framework, to help everyone find the means and the motivation to implement necessary changes for a shared and livable Earth.

## CONTACT

If you have any questions, please write to us at [contact@projetcoal.fr](mailto:contact@projetcoal.fr)