



COAL PRIZE 2023

STUDENT PRIZE COAL – CULTURE & DIVERSITY

PLANTE!

COAL

ACT
Art Climate Transition



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COAL PRIZE 2023

PLANTE!

'If you don't plant yourself, you'll never grow.'

This is the teaching of plants, which tame the depths to better grow towards the light, reminding us where to land to better orient ourselves. Swarming from all sides, they synthesise the blue planet into a green world, the colour of hope and renewal, the banner of ecology, the glimmer of a living world, hoping and inspiring a habitable Earth. They are our radical otherness, and yet they are everywhere, around us and within us. They pass through us and constitute us, metamorphosed in the food we eat, the air we breathe, our remedies, our possessions, but also our thoughts, from the human and social sciences to artistic creation.

Herbs, vegetables, wild plants, trees, shrubs, cereals, mosses, ferns, green algae - the plant kingdom abounds in an infinity of shapes, sizes and colours, representing the overwhelming majority of living things on Earth. Robust and durable, plants live in continuity and interweave every electron of their environment. Airborne with their leaves and subterranean through their roots, drawing mineral salts from the soil and capturing solar energy through photosynthesis, they are the food of the earth and the lifeblood of the world. Autotrophic, they are the only organisms capable of breaking down inert matter to produce their own organic matter, making them the cradle of life on Earth. At times edible and life-saving, heroic and therapeutic, at other times dangerous and deadly, bothersome and invasive, plants abound in the chemical prowess needed to survive and defend themselves against predators.

For several hundred million years, they have been a model of adaptation, robustness and diversity, fuelling and inspiring the development of human societies, which have never ceased to draw resources from them and imitate their forms. Human ingenuity, craftsmanship and industry have all relied heavily on the plant kingdom. This conquest has shaped the great history of the development of human societies, from imperial colonisation to world trade. Today, all over the world, plants are used in the agri-food, pharmaceutical,

agro-fuel and bioengineering industries, and guide the most futuristic projects. Plants are also strategic allies in combating climate change - especially in increasingly dense cities - in regenerating soil, cleaning up water and developing biodiversity. Yet plant life is under threat more than ever from the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems, climate change and pollution.

Yet we have everything to learn from the plant world, on which the survival and future of humanity depend. Recent scientific research has recently attributed new faculties to plants, such as proprioception, sensitivity, intelligence and memory, and has praised their potential for communication and socialisation, based on collaboration and mutual support, which can help shape our socio-political systems. There's even talk of a turning point for plants, calling on us to live today from the gift of plants rather than from their exploitation, a gift that is substantial and material, but also intellectual and spiritual, towards a way of thinking about plants that is organic rather than mechanical, complex, rhizomatic rather than simplistic. In addition to their undeniable aesthetic and therapeutic potential, which has been woven throughout the history of art, plants form the breeding ground for contemporary alternative movements seeking renewal through the earth, well-being through plants and communion through the art of planting.

With *Plante!*, 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 inventive and resilient plant-based thinking can germinate the world of tomorrow. This Prize is a call to action, to layer, to care, to reiterate, to hybridize. It's a call to feel the richness of plants, their balances and dynamics, from seed to calyx, from molecule to ecosystem. A call to plant and, why not, to plant oneself, because if you don't plant yourself, you'll never grow.

The Partners of the Prize

Created in 2010 by the COAL association, the COAL Prize is supported by:

The European Union and the Art Climate Transition network (ACT)

ACT is a European cooperation project on ecology, climate change and social transition initiated by 10 cultural operators from 10 European countries - including COAL, the French representative - working in the performing and visual arts. ACT is a project supported by the EU's Creative Europe programme.

The French ministry of Culture

Its mission is to promote artistic creation in all its forms and to encourage the democratisation and dissemination of cultural works. It has supported the COAL Prize since its inception in 2010.

The Office Français de la Biodiversité (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 using the expertise of its 2,800 staff, including 1,700 environmental inspectors. This public body also works to mobilise a wide range of cultural actors, decision-makers and citizens around biodiversity: the State, local authorities, associations, businesses, scientists, farmers, fishermen, hunters, nature sports enthusiasts, and people involved in the arts and culture.

The Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature and the Fondation François Sommer

Recognised as being of public interest since its creation on 30 November 1966, the Fondation was created by François and Jacqueline Sommer, pioneers in the realisation of a humanist ecology. Faithful to the commitment of its founders, the Fondation works for the protection of a biodiversity in which mankind has its rightful place, for the respectful use of natural resources, and for the protection of the environment.

The Fondation L'Accolade - Institut de France

The Fondation L'Accolade promotes artistic creation that is conscious of its environment, and encourages approaches, projects and actions that are carried out by artists in connection with the themes of water, the environment, the fragility of the living world and feminism, through research and creation residencies and exhibitions in France and the United States. It also promotes 'matrimony', i.e. the patrimony and heritage of historically or artistically recognised women.

This year's edition of the COAL Prize also benefits from partnerships with:

The Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris

Through its resolutely transdisciplinary programming, the Centre is mandated to use and promote the work of artists based in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, from the peripheral to the established.

The Ateliers Médicis

Committed to helping new and diverse artistic voices to emerge and to supporting artists with unique and contemporary approaches, the Ateliers Médicis welcomes artists from all disciplines to its residencies. It supports the creation of thought-provoking works with a local connection, and encourages encounters between artists and local people. Located in Clichy-sous-Bois and Montfermeil in the department of Seine-Saint-Denis, France, it occupies a pre-construction building. A large-scale facility with national ambitions will be built by 2025, reaffirming the place of artistic creation in the suburbs.



Awards

The winning artist(s) of the COAL Prize will receive a prize of 12,000 euros and a creative residency at the heart of the Domaine de Belval, owned by the Fondation François Sommer, run by the scientific and educational teams of the Musée de la Chasse et de la 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 rurality and wildlife, welcoming artists each year for their contribution to renewing the vision of the relationship between humans and their natural environment.

The winner of the Jury's Special Prize will receive a prize of 3,000 euros.

The winning artist of the NOVA_XX mention is invited by the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris to exhibit at the international biennial NOVA_XX which will take place from February to April 2024, both at the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles in Paris and outside its walls. 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 intricacy in a feminine and non-binary mode in the age of the 4.0.

The winning artist of the Ateliers Médicis mention will benefit from a residency in Clichy-sous-Bois/Montfermeil in connection with the Bondy regional forest. The Ateliers Médicis welcomes artists from all disciplines to residencies and supports the creation of works that are linked to local communities.

The jury

Cathy Bouvard

Director of Ateliers Médicis

Thomas Delage

Head of the Department for Mobilising Citizens for Biodiversity
at the Office français de la biodiversité (OFB)

Maïté Delmas

Honourary attachée of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, co-chair
of the Partenariat mondial pour la conservation des plantes

Catherine Dobler

Founder of the Fondation L'Accolade

Alexia Fabre

Director of the Beaux-Arts de Paris

Christine Germain-Donnat

Director of the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature

Olivier Lerude

Project Manager for Territoire de culture durable, DRAC Île-de-France, Ministère de la Culture

Michael Marder

Philosopher, Ikerbasque professor at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Vitoria-Gasteiz

Alexandra McIntosh

Director of the CIAP - Ile de Vassivière, centre d'art contemporain d'intérêt national

Stéphanie Pécourt

Director of the Centre Wallonie Bruxelles/Paris

Erik Samakh

Artist

Irène Varano

Sales Director of the Galerie ArtConcept

The Nominated Artists

Rita Alaoui (France/Morocco)

Lawsonia Cataplasma Garden

Al-Wah'at Collective (Palestine/United Kingdom/Sweden)

Wild Hedges

Laura Cinti (South Africa)

AI in the Sky

Fabiana Ex-Souza (Brazil)

Trouxas de mandinga

Shivay La Multiple (France/New Caledonia)

Ciels qui parlent

Sandra Lorenzi (France)

Vert(s) FOUGÈRES

Barbara Mydlak (Poland)

The Book of Extinction

Jean-Sébastien Poncet (France)

La Ferme des renouées

Azra Svedružić & Demirel Pašalić (Croatia)

Facing the Sun

Paula Valero Comín (Spain)

Herbier résistant Rosa Luxembourg / Atlas

Lawsonia Cataplasma Garden

The history of pharmacopoeia has always relied heavily on plants and their medicinal properties, but modern industrial pharmaceutical production has turned its back on them in favour of chemical inputs that end up in rivers and watercourses, causing harmful effects on wildlife, animals and humans. It has been shown that drug concentration levels in rivers and lakes are up to a thousand times higher than the maximum acceptable concentration for drinking water (Science, 2017). Sold as remedies, industrial drugs become poisons for the plants themselves, affecting their growth, development and physiology.

As a counterpoint to the systematic and interventionist approach of allopathic medicine, Rita Alaoui aims to create a space in which we can rethink our ways of healing and caring with plants. *Lawsonia Cataplasma Garden* seeks to express the memory of the past and promote transmission and repair, using the specific powers of henna (*Lawsonia inermis*). The

henna poultice becomes the raw material for the project, which takes the form of a sensory installation, a 'ritual of care' performance with the audience.

Between environmental protection and health and social progress, *Lawsonia Cataplasma Garden*, which is part of a traditional Moroccan ritual, is both an intimate family tribute and an invitation to practice self-healing.

Rita Alaoui (France/Morocco)

Born in 1972 in Rabat, Morocco. Lives and works in Paris, France.

Born in 1972 in Rabat, Morocco. Lives and works in Paris, France.

Rita Alaoui explores our relationship with the wild world and imagines connections with the extraordinary, focusing her approach on the representation of a dreamlike, sacred and healing nature. Following a protocol reminiscent of botany and archaeology, she places the collection, accumulation and observation of organic objects found in nature at the heart of her work. Initially a painter, Rita Alaoui's creative methods vary from painting to drawing, photography, installation, performance and the artist's book. A graduate of the Parsons School of Design in New York, her work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions in France and abroad (Galerie Siniya 28, Galerie Anne de Villepoix, Kunstrai, Paris Internationale Art Fair, Orangerie du Parc du Prieuré).



Wild Hedges

The prickly pear, or *Opuntia ficus-indica*, or *sabr* in Arabic, was introduced to Europe in the 16th century by the conquistadors in order to cultivate its parasitic insect, a species of cochineal used for centuries in Latin America to produce a brilliant red dye. While this species of cochineal has not survived the European climate, the cactus has spread widely, to the point of being considered invasive. The carmine mealybug (*Dactylopius opuntiae*) was therefore introduced to control the spread of the cactus. In turn, the insect has become a relentless pest, particularly for prickly pear crops in the Mediterranean.

the benefits of collecting cochineals both for making pigments and for slowing down the destruction of cacti; and the reactivation of the culinary and food practices that surround it. These are all participatory actions, underpinned by long-term research such as the study of ecological variables on the insect's propagation and the resilience of the cactus.

Prolific and inspiring, this plant that can survive with a minimum of water for long periods at high temperatures could well become a model of resistance for the future, at a time when geopolitical tensions over water management are intensifying as a result of climate warming.

The Al-Wah'at Collective takes as its starting point the colonial, ecological and symbolic histories of the prickly pear and the cochineal. With *Wild Hedges*, it questions the notion of invasive species and explores practices of care and resilience with and for plants. Through a variety of research and practices developed with local communities, in Palestine and elsewhere, the Collective explores the multiple potentials of this plant: the uses of its dead bark for weaving and construction;

Al-Wah'at Collective (Palestine/UK/Sweden)

Areej Ashhab, Ailo Ribas and Gabriella Demczuk, born respectively in 1995 in Jerusalem (Palestine), in 1996 in Cambridge (UK), and in 1991 in Stockholm (Sweden). Live and work in Palestine, UK and Spain.

The Al-Wah'at Collective is interested in care practices and the exchange of knowledge between humans and non-humans in ecosystems generally regarded as hostile and lifeless, in order to counter the anthropocentric and colonial narratives that are made in these arid lands. Graduates of the Center for Research Architecture/Goldsmiths, University of London, Areej, Ailo and Gabriella are currently working on a long-term project which explores the ecological and sociopolitical complexities of the prickly pear through multiple spatialities, temporalities and communities. They completed the first part of their project during an "Art, Science, and Agriculture" residency in Ein Qiniya, Palestine, as part of the Soil Futures initiative organized by Arts Catalyst.



AI in the Sky

The Wood's cycad, or *Encephalartos woodii*, is an endemic plant of the Ngoye forest (South Africa), a rare species that is now considered to be extinct in the wild.

Only a handful of male specimens, cloned from the only known specimen discovered in 1895, still survive in a few botanical gardens around the world. Despite numerous scientific expeditions, the Ngoye forest has not been fully studied, so it is possible that a female still exists.

With *AI in the Sky*, Laura Cinti is continuing to explore the technological potential of aerial drone mapping for locating rare and endangered species. Using generative artificial intelligence approaches and an automatic and evolutionary learning model based on the analysis of aerial images of the research area, she is attempting to identify a female partner for this tree-like plant, which comes from a family of plants that appeared on Earth over 60 million

years ago. The data collected in the field will be used to create an immersive interactive installation. The public will be able to interact with maps and multi-spectral data, offering new ways of seeing the world of plants.

By engaging the public in this quest for the enigmatic and solitary *Encephalartos woodii* and its elusive female, *AI in the Sky* merges generative artificial intelligence and environmental protection to tackle the crucial problem of biodiversity loss and attempt to revive the plant's natural cycle.

Laura Cinti (South Africa)

Born in 1979 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Lives and works in London, UK.

Laura Cinti is an internationally acclaimed artist-researcher working in the field of biology and co-director of the transdisciplinary art collective C-LAB, which she co-founded with Howard Boland in 2003. Within C-LAB, they have developed living techno-scientific works that have been exhibited around the world. Cinti's work has been shown at MAXXI, the National Museum of 21st Century Arts, the Van Abbemuseum, the Maison Européenne de la Photographie, the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo and the Royal Institute of Great Britain, and has been the subject of numerous publications.



Trouxas de mandinga

The history of plants refers to a set of historical processes linked to violence and domination. In his book, *La Colonisation du savoir: Une histoire des plantes médicinales du 'Nouveau Monde'*

(1492-1750), historian Samir Boumediene describes how some plants from the American continent were considered by European political, religious and scientific authorities of the time to be “goods of prime importance”, while others were “the target of the inquisitorial police”. The seeds of colonisation are indicators of the political balance of power and bear the stigma of independence.

Fabiana Ex-Souza understands plants as being “entangled in a set of bonds” that sometimes turn them into poisons and sometimes into remedies. Some plants, imported into Europe during colonisation, evoke processes of violence, such as coffee and cotton which are reminiscent of slavery, tobacco and the diseases it causes, and maize which is linked to the pillaging of native American crops.

But another force, equal in power and this time healing, can be expressed. Through weaving, embroidery and the collection of natural elements, Fabiana Ex-Souza creates healing objects called *Trouxas de mandinga*, inspired by the history of the Afro-Brazilian Patuás. Like amulets embroidered with living seeds, some of them are designed to return to the earth in order to trigger a process of plant transmutation.

By using the transmutational virtues of seeds to rethink our relationship with history, Fabiana Ex-Souza aims to restore our links with the living and transform the historical violence associated with plants into potential for healing.

Fabiana Ex-Souza (Brazil)

Born in 1980 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Vit et travaille à Paris, France.

An Afro-Brazilian artist and researcher, born De Souza, Fabiana Ex-Souza is developing a transdisciplinary practice linked to the ecology of care, combining performance, video, installation, photography and plant materials. Pursuing a doctorate in Visual Arts and Photography at the University of Paris VIII on Latin American Decolonial Aesthetics, she was a winner of the «La vie bonne»-AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions/Centre national des arts plastiques Prize in 2020. A recent winner of the French Ministry of Culture's «Mondes Nouveaux» scheme, her performances have been shown at the Fondation Cartier, the Musée national d'Art moderne - Centre Pompidou and the Maison de l'Amérique latine.



Ciels qui parlent

A woody fruit and a flowering plant, the calabash is produced by two plant species, one growing from the calabash tree and the other from a creeper that has been growing since time immemorial. Scattered by the waves, along rivers and oceans, it is spread over the entire surface of the planet and has many uses for humans, depending on the culture: as a container, decorative object, jewel, light, seat, musical instruments such as the kora, the balafon, the candombe, the berimbau or the imzad, or as an object of funerary, divinatory and magical rituals linking humans to the afterlife. In China, as in the Mediterranean, it is used as a lifebuoy; along the American coast, pirates used it to store gunpowder; in Mexico, it collects the sap of the agave; in Guyana, it is used as a plant dye for the stars...

Ciels qui parlent puts into form and volume an initiatory tale that begins in the Maroni river, then glides along the Congo river, sinks into the waters of the Senegal and Casamance rivers, and is carried away by the Nile. These crossings, which wind through space and time, dream and reality, the physical and the digital, all lead to the woody fruit with its many uses, forms and stories. It is embodied in an immersive sound installation made up of calabashes assembled together and decorated to welcome visitors.

Through this creative and spiritual gesture, the artist becomes a link in the chain of transmission of the calabash's knowledge and know-how, like a smuggler, a guardian of its multiplicity in terms of forms, addresses, uses and issues.

It is because of the multiple potentials of the calabash, omnipresent in time and in different worlds under different statuses, that Shivay La Multiple wishes to pay tribute to it, having themselves been introduced to the work of the calabash by the master of the Bushinengué Kaliman traditions in Guyana. Their project

Shivay La Multiple (France/New Caledonia)

Born in 1993 in Besançon, France. Lives and works between Paris and Nouméa, New Caledonia/Kanakay

Using multiple media, Shivay La Multiple seeks to teach reason the language of dreams and to create lines of flight towards new worlds, multiverses, pluriverses. Like Moebius, their research moves from the global to the visceral, from the macro to the micro, from dream to reality, from the physical to the digital. They are inspired by the concept of the poetics of relationships, while remaining influenced by the many places they have travelled. They are a graduate of the Haute école des arts du Rhin, the École d'arts La Esmeralda in Mexico City and the international post-graduate diploma course at ENSBA Lyon. Their work has been shown at the Women's Museum in Mexico City, the Bazaar Compatible in Shanghai, the Palais de Tokyo, the Fimenco Foundation and as part of the '100%' exhibition at La Villette in Paris.

© Blanche Lafarge



Vert(s) FOUGÈRES

Recent advances in contemporary science have highlighted the sensory, sensitive and emotional capacities of plants. Far from reducing their expression to a simple exchange of electrical information, devices have been developed to capture their feelings as they interact with human activity and the environment in which they are found. This is what phytoneurology is all about, transcribing a plant's electrical undulation into images, light, graphics or music, as explained by gardener Jean Thoby, a pioneer in France and author of *Le Chant secret des plantes: Vibrations et émotions végétales* (Rustica, 2022).

In the wake of recent experiments in phytoneurology and biomusicotherapy, and in the continuity of her work dedicated to the relationships between living beings, both visible and invisible, Sandra Lorenzi has created *Vert(s) FOUGÈRES*, an engaged work to ensure that plants are perceived as beings endowed with sensitivity and emotion, by creating a listening device for ferns and their expressions. These so-called archaic plants, which are almost 400

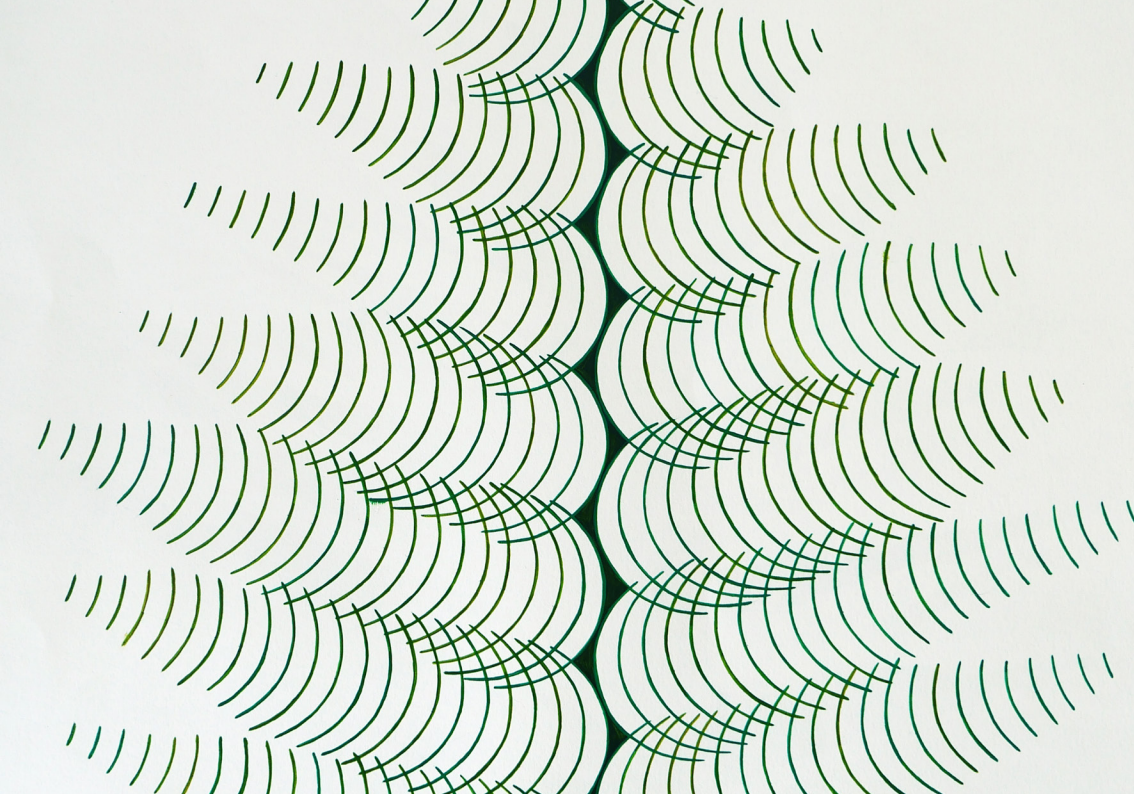
million years old, have the widest tessitura and the most complex harmonies. These will be captured in a specific area and transcribed into a musical score played by a musical instrument made of «fern glass», a technique that has disappeared in glassmaking. Conceived as a singular and addressed spatiotemporal writing, a veritable cartography of the liveliness of a territory, this work invites the listener to an emotional dialogue with the plants.

Combining sound sculpture and botanical music, *Vert(s) FOUGÈRES* presents for the first time a work of art devoted entirely to the resonance of plants. What if plants could speak or sing? Would they tell us their complaints or their joy at sharing our existence? Would they seek to convey to us their viridity?

Sandra Lorenzi (France)

Born in 1983 in Nice, France. Lives and works in Paris, France.

Sandra Lorenzi is an artist and poet who explores our relationship with natural environments as a historical and political substrate, as well as a fertile living territory. Her work is restorative and focuses on the question of 'taking care'. Based on material, energetic or symbolic entities, her drawings, sculptures and installations encourage us to compose alternative narratives to the accepted discourse of History. Sandra Lorenzi is a graduate of the Villa Arson in Nice. Her work has been shown in institutions and galleries in France and abroad (Palais de Tokyo, Bozar, Łaznia Center for Contemporary Art, South African National Gallery, MAC Lyon...). She teaches at the École supérieure des arts d'Annecy Alpes. She is also a guest artist at the Espace-Cerveau Laboratory at the Institut d'art contemporain in Villeurbanne.



The Book of Extinction

Green waste is the residual plant material left over from gardening and the upkeep of green spaces. In France, although this practice is formally prohibited, 830,000 tonnes of plant waste are burnt every year. Harmful to health and the environment, this practice emits toxic atmospheric pollutants, limits the return of organic matter to the soil and leads to the waste of a precious natural resource.

Attentive to the depleted biodiversity represented by decomposing and dying plants, old bunches of trees, dead trees, discarded crowns, cemetery waste, organic waste and even weeds, Barbara Mydlak gives them a second life. With *The Book of Extinction*, she transforms them into handmade paper. In a cyclical and resilient approach, dry leaves and diseased or decomposing plants become the raw material for the book.

Documenting the process allows the artist to identify the unique properties of each fibre. Using film and photography, she examines their durability, fragility and resistance to traction or creasing. These are all discoveries and knowledge that she reinjects directly into the content of the book itself. The project also includes the creation of four large-scale installations in the form of curtains made from decomposing flowers.

In an age of overproduction and accumulation, Barbara Mydlak is careful to produce objects that are recycled and reused. Educational in nature, her papers are intended to archive the transformations of today's world in order to tell the story of biodiversity and its constant loss. The book thus becomes a powerful tool for raising awareness, both in content and form.

Barbara Mydlak (Poland)

Born in 1987 in Biłgoraj, Poland. Lives and works in Gand, Belgium.

Barbara Mydlak explores the ephemeral aspect of the process of decomposition of matter and the endless repetition of the same cycle through various fields and media, including textiles, handmade paper, experimental film, drawing, installation and scenography. In seeking to create from the moving and the dying, she develops an «art of survival» that takes the form of biodegradable, ephemeral and changing installations. A graduate in archaeology from the Faculty of History at Warsaw University and the Faculty of Visual Arts at the Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, she is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Painting and Drawing at Poznań University of the Arts and teaches at other various institutions. In 2022, she set up her studio in Ghent, as an artist selected for the NUCLEO Kunstenaars Ateliers programme.



La Ferme des renouées

Plants are invaluable allies in decontaminating soils which, as a result of human activity, are being degraded by increasing urbanisation, deforestation, overexploitation, management practices on unfavourable land, pollution, overgrazing and climate change.

A herb classified as invasive in Europe, Japanese knotweed has excellent phytoremediation properties. It is capable of fixing metallic pollutants in its tissue and influencing the carbon-nitrogen cycle by inhibiting the formation of greenhouse gases through the tannins contained in its leaves. Jean-Sébastien Poncet experimented with the presence of knotweed in several urban interstices in the city of Saint-Étienne, following the plant's seasonality and mobility, and experimenting with a ritualised practice of soil co-production with local residents. *La ferme des renouées* activates the hypothesis of the production of fertile soil by conceiving a new, nomadic form of the farm in the anthropocene urban space. Through three ritualised and collective technical gestures (withering, treading, composting), the design of the tools and the cultural practices are questioned, as are the conventions of soil use and the future of these

plots with the inhabitants, the developers and the scientists who are stakeholders in the project. These technical gestures of remediation are thus transformed into gestures of care and sharing, for which the invasive plant is the intermediary.

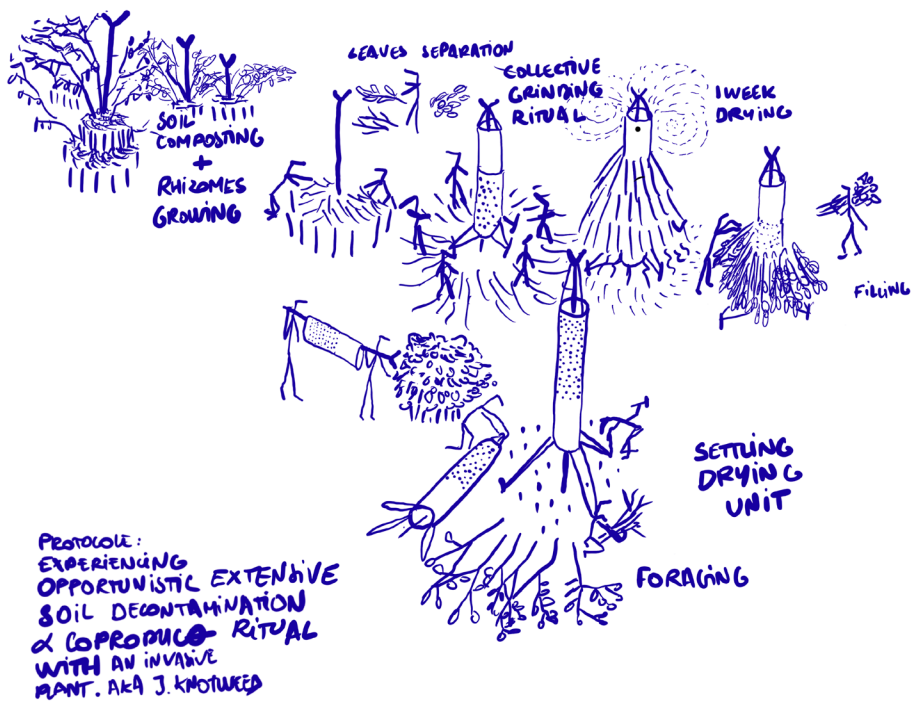
Between artistic research and design, between scientific experimentation, mediation and popular education, the farm acts as a relational space renewed by the intermediation of knotweeds. Through a new 'contract' for cohabitation between humans and non-humans, *La Ferme des renouées* aims to redefine the contours of ecological engineering as a tool for urban regeneration.

Jean-Sébastien Poncet (France)

Born in 1982 in Saint-Étienne, France. Lives and works in Saint-Étienne, France.

Jean-Sébastien Poncet explores the condition of the rural designer in resonance with a workshop practice that looks outwards (plant installation, micro-landscape, public space, etc.). With an economy of means, his creations are conceived as markers of the territory and tools for intermediation between humans and non-humans. Trained as an industrial designer, he has worked in public spaces (Établissement public d'aménagement de Saint-Étienne, Grand Lyon, Conseil général de la Loire) as well as creating objects and photography (ÉSÉ - édition sous étiquette, Galerie Georges Verney-Carron).

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Facing the Sun

Originally from North America, sunflowers were introduced to Spain in the 16th century by the first explorers. The plant then gradually spread to the rest of Europe to supplement the

oil production industry. Fascinatingly beautiful, the sunflower is particularly thrifty with water and has many nutritional and medicinal qualities. Its ability to regenerate has been used at Chernobyl and Fukushima, for example, to clean up the soil and extract poisons.

With *Facing the Sun*, Azra Svedružić and Demirel Pašalić join forces with the sunflower to initiate a collaborative process to clean up the soil in the city of Zagreb, Croatia. In a participatory way, they propose to plant, cultivate, document and harvest sunflowers around two sites: the Jakuševac rubbish hill, to the south of the city, and near several streams flowing from the Medvednica mountain, devastated by deforestation, to the north of the city. Conceived as 'healing performances', these collective actions will follow the rhythm of the

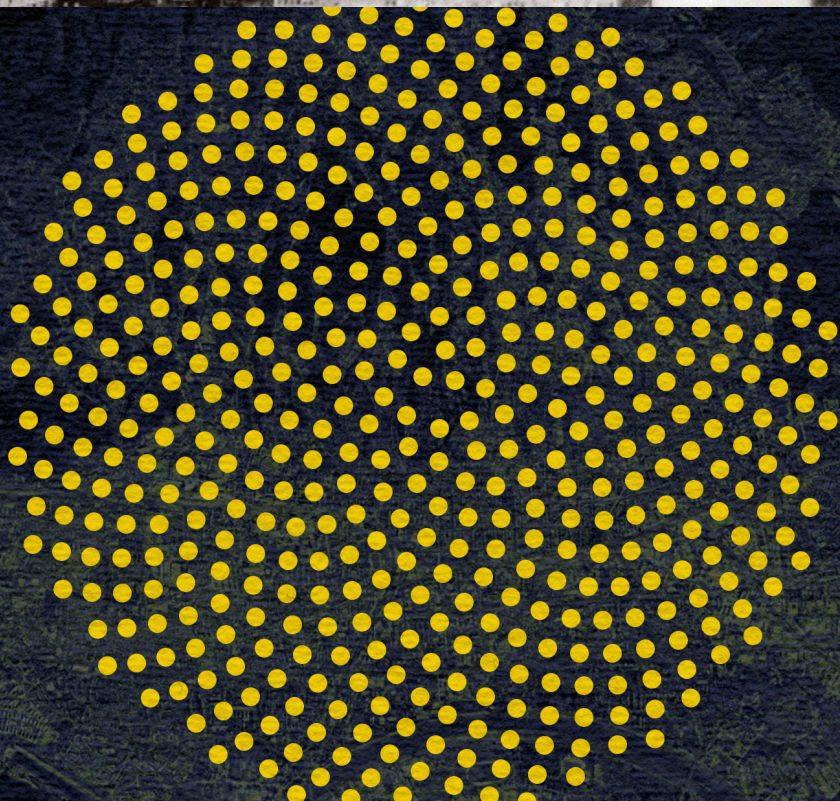
sunflowers' life, extending over a period of one year, the lifespan of the plant. In cooperation with the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Zagreb, the project includes photographic works, videos, performances, installations and experimental workshops.

Through an agricultural and artistic gesture, the rehabilitation of the damaged areas of Zagreb will bring both physical and symbolic healing to the city and its inhabitants. Through this permaculture project, Azra Svedružić and Demirel Pašalić are proposing a 'biodynamic' work in the wake of eco-interventions (interventions in the form of ecological art in a degraded environment) and see themselves as heirs to the American Reclamation Artists, engaged in the repair of polluted land in the United States.

Azra Svedružić & Demirel Pašalić (Croatia)

Born respectively in 1969 in Karlovac, Croatia, and in 1975 in Zagreb, Croatia.

Azra Svedružić is a multimedia artist trained at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb. A director of photography and a photographer trained at FAMU in Prague, Demirel Pašalić is also a designer, composer, singer and trumpeter. Working together since 2015, the duo seeks to implement social and environmental justice through creative practice, in an approach that is both critical and educational. Since 2019, they have been creating and exhibiting the *Listen to the Forest!* project, which is inspired by the processual and interdisciplinary workings of plants, and which they are shaping as a committed work of art through experimentation, research, installations, workshops and conferences, in conjunction with numerous institutions and arts organisations.



Herbier résistant Rosa Luxemburg / Atlas

Throughout her life, and particularly during her various campaigns, the German revolutionary and Marxist theoretician Rosa Luxemburg devoted herself to the creation of a herbarium, comprising of 133 botanical plates accompanied by handwritten captions, in which she expressed her love of nature and the inspiration it inspired. A testament to the particular attention paid to the living, this herbarium is an archival document on the political feeling for nature, the foundation of all ecology.

The *Atlas de l'Herbier résistant Rosa Luxemburg* project is an extension of this gesture and heritage, and seeks to forge links between the resistance of women committed to the protection of life and that of the hardiest of plants. These include urban plants that thrive in the most hostile places, but also wild plants that help each other to exist, create alliances and cross geological and temporal boundaries. The *Atlas de l'Herbier résistant Rosa Luxemburg* combines plants with resilient and healing properties with portraits of women from different

countries and eras, both famous and anonymous, who have fought against oppression. To realise this project, women from various indigenous communities (Afro Yoruba in Cuba, Guaranis in Brazil and Ecuador, Mapuche in Argentina and Chile) will be invited to create a local herbarium.

Following in the footsteps of Rosa Luxemburg, Paula Valero Comín interprets the creation of the herbarium as the manifestation of a concern for all living things. It pays homage to and brings up to date the heritage, both natural and cultural, ancestral and guarantor of our future, at the crossroads of our struggles.

Paula Valero Comín (Spain)

Born in 1976 in Valencia, Spain. Lives and works in Paris, France

Paula Valero Comín's work seeks to propose radical communication within a shared meeting space, to create poetic and political disruptions and interference in areas of public life and everyday life. Her work is based on a variety of media: drawing, public intervention, action, installation, video, research projects and curating. A graduate of the College of Fine Arts in Valencia and the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris, her work has been exhibited in Spain, France, Cuba and Brazil. Comín is currently in residence at the Cité internationale des arts/Montmartre and at the Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers for the *Herbier résistant Rosa Luxemburg* project.







STUDENT PRIZE

COAL — CULTURE & DIVERSITY

PLANTE!

The aim of the COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize is to support young student artists from French arts and culture schools who are imagining, experimenting with and proposing concrete and creative solutions to current ecological issues.

In 2023, the COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize is dedicated to plants. A radical otherness, they are everywhere around us and within us, representing more than 99% of the mass of living organisms on Earth. At a time when they are more than ever under threat from the destruction of natural habitats and ecosystems, climate change and pollution, we have everything to learn from the plant world, on which the survival and future of humanity depend. A symbiosis of state and process, Plante! brings together in a single word the noun plant, a living, teeming ecosystem, and the imperative of the verb plant, an action that is both disruptive and foundational.

Three student projects have been nominated for the fourth COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize. In partnership with the Réserves naturelles de France, the residence, which will reward the winner of the COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize, is inviting students to deploy their creative energies to germinate an inventive and resilient way of thinking about plants that will enable the world of tomorrow to flourish.

Award

The Fondation Culture & Diversité grants the winner a two-month residency in the Réserves naturelles de France, together with a production grant of 5,000 euros. As part of the residency, the Fondation Culture & Diversité will pay for accommodation, food and transport.

The Réserves naturelles de France

The Réserves naturelles de France (RNF) association runs a national network of over 700 nature protection professionals who work on a daily basis in the areas where there are almost 350 nature reserves. Their actions are based on three missions: knowledge of the natural biological and geological heritage, its management and protection, raising awareness and encouraging the public to discover these areas of nature, life, encounters and creation. As an ambassador for the nature reserves, RNF is the voice of nature, encouraging the active involvement of all players in society, particularly in the field of culture.

The Fondation Culture & Diversité

The Fondation Culture & Diversité, a Fimalac corporate foundation set up by Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière, aims to promote access to the arts and culture for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Since its launch in 2006, it has been designing and running sustainable programmes directly in the field with its cultural, educational and social partners. More than 50,000 young people have already benefited from its initiatives.

The COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize is supported by the Fondation Culture & Diversité and the COAL association.

The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the Ministry of National Education and Youth are partners of the COAL - Culture & Diversity Student Prize.

The Finalist Projects

Ce chemin que nous tracerons

Chloé Boulet

École supérieure d'art de Dunkerque - Tourcoing

Écoute holistique

Nikita Leroy

Villa Arson

Adventices

Louisa Selleret

École nationale supérieure de création industrielle – Les Ateliers

The jury

**Cathy Bouvard, Thomas Delage, Maïté Delmas,
Catherine Dobler, Alexia Fabre, Christine Germain-Donnat,
Olivier Lerude, Michael Marder, Alexandra McIntosh,
Stéphanie Pécourt, Erik Samakh, Irène Varano**

and

Lucile Deschamps

Managing Director of the Fondation Culture & Diversité

Charlotte Meunier

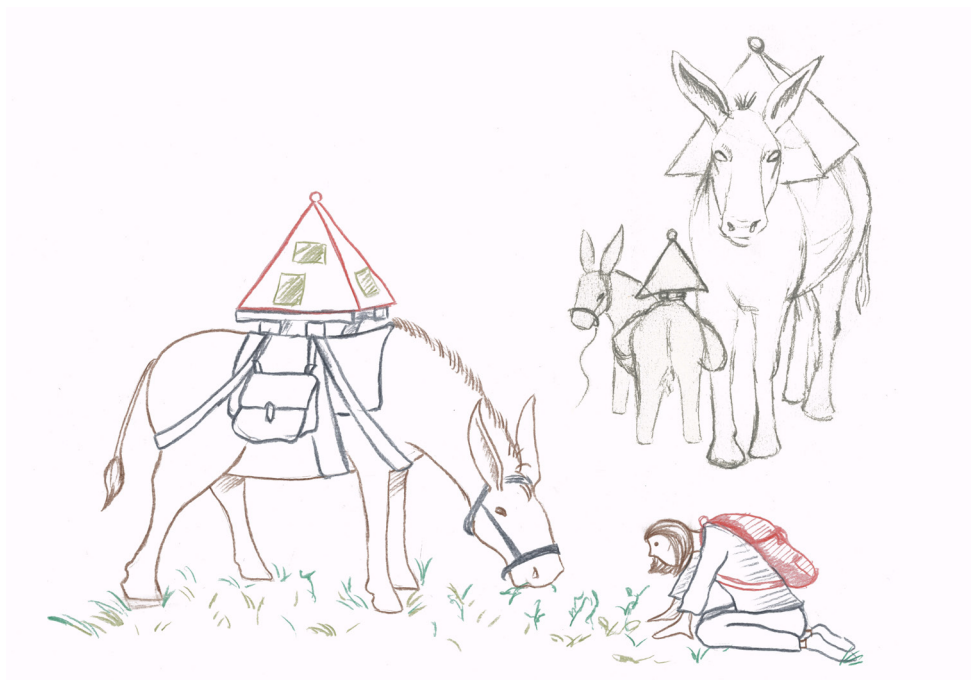
President of Réserves naturelles de France

Ce chemin que nous tracerons

Ce chemin que nous tracerons is a performative action whose aim is to map out a plant-centred walking itinerary, and to offer the story of an itinerary that has been entirely designed to give plants their full attention. This itinerary will be co-created by a donkey-human duo, who will set off to explore the chosen area at the pace of the animal's tastes.

The aim is to walk slowly, at a leisurely pace, to get closer to the rhythm of the vegetation so as to better meet the plants and develop a sensitive relationship with them. By recording the places where the donkey ingests and then ejects the plants, Chloé Boulet hopes to uncover an original hiking itinerary that invites walkers to change their pace.

During this itinerary, the duo will be equipped with a mobile bio-photography laboratory that will enable them to produce anthotypes (images created using photosensitive material from plants) representing the plants involved in the project. These prints will be revealed as they walk along, to the rhythm of the reaction between chlorophyll and the sun.





By making us sensitive to plants, their movements and their rhythms of existence, *Ce chemin que nous tracerons* proposes experimenting with other ways of looking at and situating ourselves among living things.

Above and left: © Chloé Boulet

Chloé Boulet

École supérieure d'art de Dunkerque - Tourcoing

Chloé Boulet reflects on the way in which technology generates the narratives that influence our ways of being in the world. She proposes forms that generate narratives that invite us to reconnect with the living by experimenting with rhythms of existence that are closer to the natural elements and the living beings that make them up.

Her work oscillates between scientific veracity and poetic fiction, which for her is a way of challenging the rules of reality and critiquing our ways of existing without entering into a form of sterile condemnation. Using minimal, often rudimentary techniques, and a pseudo-scientific approach, her interventions are akin to the 'doing as' attributable to children's games. She deliberately allows trouble to brew, because this pseudo-naïveté, which she wants to be as poetic as possible, allows her to create fertile ground for challenging the rules of reality and critiquing our ways of existing, without ever closing the door to the birth of new thinking.

Écoute holistique

Firstly, in a given natural space, Nikita Leroy equips plant species with sensors, which are then processed by a microcomputer and transformed into scores. These are then played by virtual instruments forged from field-recordings of the same space, to compose a perpetually mutating orchestra. The music produced is recorded, then cut up and reassembled in post-production to reveal the evolution of the rhythm of living plants and the soundscape of the site as a function of climate and time. The result is a radio broadcast, a panoramic soundtrack that moves back and forth between the scale of the biome and that of its constituent organisms.

In a second phase, the artist proposes to camouflage a listening station in the heart of the natural environment, in the form of soft silicone and latex sculptures, echoing visual elements of organic design. Placed in a stump or rocky hollow, they resemble half-insectoid, half-vegetal creatures, a kind of mysterious fairy. Connected to the sensors and powered by solar panels, they allow the curious to hear the concert of plants all around them, live and through headphones so as not to create sound pollution. In this way, visitors are brought back to their state of transitional Being, passing through a vast canvas of diverse flows, for a moment of curiosity and meditative introspection.





Above and left: © Nikita Leroy

Nikita Leroy

Villa Arson

Born in Paris in 1999, Nikita Leroy is a visual artist. At the intersection of sculpture and musical performance, her practice sees the emergence of hybrid robotic creatures and electronic instruments inscribed in feedback loops between their environment and the structures that animate them. Through a variety of media, she explores forms of holistic relationship to the world and seeks a belvedere in the midst of contemporary informational chaos, drawing inspiration from modular and noise practices. Oscillating between sound textures and alchemy, she diverts the physical properties of natural elements to fabricate certain components of her analog instruments, or builds mechanical devices producing absolute unpredictability to generate her sounds.

After graduating from the Villa Arson in 2023, she turned her attention to digital formats and docu-fictions, experimenting

critically with both video and radio narrative voices, as a study of the fantasies that emerge in the midst of (post)modern despair and the cultural legacy of past utopias, somewhere between counter sociology and the midnight movie science fiction genre.

Adventices

Weed (from the Latin *adventium*, literally 'additional') is a plant that is added to a stand of vegetation that was previously free of weeds. Weeds are therefore introduced, non-native plants that eventually adapt and proliferate. The establishment and development of certain non-native plants in a territory weakens the environment, making invasive plants the second most important factor in the loss of biodiversity worldwide, and a key issue in nature reserves.

Through her eponymous project Adventices, Louisa Selleret has devised an itinerant device

enabling her to collect these prolific plants and then transform the cellulose-rich material she discards, reducing it to paper pulp and re-constructing it using the formal codes of plant biology anatomy. Her wanderings will take her to colonies of floating pennywort in northern France, to bohemian knotweed in the Côtes-d'Armor, yellow skunk cabbage in Haute-Vienne, eastern baccharis in Gironde, aquatic African elodea in Lot-et-Garonne, and alligator weed in Vaucluse.

As each species has its own hue, the whole will constitute a large fresco revealing a diversity of colors and textures, which will accompany a documentation and pedagogical work on the issue of invasive plants. The giant sample generated will cohabit weeds as a unique material.





In an act of sublimation, Louisa Selleret will bring this battered material to life, transforming it and, at the end of the project, making it visible, with the aim of informing people about the problem and offering a critical and sensitive look at the condition of these rejected plants.

Above and left: © Louisa Selleret

Louisa Selleret

École nationale supérieure de création industrielle (ENSCI) – Les Ateliers

Louisa Selleret describes herself as “an eternal eco-anxious”, which is why she regularly works with self-sufficient communities and actors involved in sustainable projects. She took a four-year break from her design studies to train as a prosthetist for amputees and to “design just what was needed”. Back at ENSCI - Les Ateliers, she sees design as an open, experimental discipline that must play a part in repairing the world. She directs her practice towards systemic projects, taking into account local resources and players. She sees herself as a translator of concepts and issues through the creation of rituals, tools and workshops.

About COAL

In a multidisciplinary spirit, COAL mobilizes artists and cultural players on social and environmental issues in collaboration with institutions, local authorities, NGOs, scientists and businesses, and supports the essential role of creation and culture in raising awareness and implementing concrete solutions.

COAL has created around a hundred exhibitions, cultural events and regional programmes around the ecological transition for major cultural structures and institutions (such as the MAIF Social Club, the Anglet Biennial, the Société du Grand Paris, La Condition publique, UNESCO, La Villette, Gaité Lyrique, FIAC, Domaine départemental de Chamarande, Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Halle aux Sucres, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Berges de Seine, CEAAC, Parc naturel régional du Haut-Jura...). COAL awards the Prix COAL and the Prix étudiant COAL - Culture & Diversité each year, and contributes to the knowledge and dissemination of the theme through European cooperation (French member of the ACT - Art Climate Transition, Imagine 2020, Creative Climate Leadership networks and founder of the La table et le territoire and Transformatives Territories networks on transformative artistic practices), consultancy, the organisation of symposia and conferences, publications (the book *Art et Écologie* will be published by Palette in 2021), and the running of Ressource0. com, the first media and resource centre dedicated to promoting national and international initiatives linking art and ecology. COAL is also developing workshops and training courses for the cultural sector, and these links between culture and ecology are now the focus of a truly international movement in which COAL is participating as the leading French player. In 2015, COAL implemented ArtCOP21, the Cultural Agenda for COP21, and in 2020-21, VIVANT, a Cultural Season for Biodiversity as part of the World Conservation Congress with the Ministries of Ecological

Transition and Culture, the IUCN and the OFB. Since 2021, COAL has been artistic advisor to the Nuits des Forêts (co-founded by Lauranne Germond and others) and runs the Murs d'Audubon programme, a vast public art project - derived from the Audubon Mural Project born in the United States - involving the painting on city walls of frescoes depicting birds threatened by climate change.

COAL is an association under the law of 1901, founded in 2008. The three active co-founders of COAL are Loïc Fel, a doctor of epistemology and sustainable development consultant, Clément Willemin, a landscape architect, and Lauranne Germond, an art historian and exhibition curator, who has also managed the association and all its artistic projects since its inception.

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COAL

ACT
Art Climate Transition



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