



**WATER  
MUSEUMS**  
GLOBAL NETWORK



## SOIL ART TALES

### OPEN CALL

#### Notice for the selection of four artists to promote the value and literacy of soil

In the frame of the project “SOILTRIBES - Glocal Ecosystems Restoring Soil Values, Roles and Connectivity”, supported by Horizon Europe - the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation - the Global Network of Water Museums launches an open call for producing new artworks to increase soil interpretation and literacy across society. The objective is to trigger *a new soil tale adding emotional and motivational layers to human-soil connections, offering new ways of visualizing, interpreting, and interacting with soil*. The project of the call is titled SOIL ART TALES. It will be curated by WAMU-NET through the work of selected artists and a number of travelling exhibitions. The selection, production and exhibition process will last for three years.

Four artists will be selected to produce four artworks. Next to the artworks, and under the guidance of an art curator, artists will have to produce a film teaser in which they present their vision for the Soil Art Tale and proposal to foster deep emotional connections. The award for selected artists will include an artist fee of 6.000,00 € and reimbursement of production costs and materials not exceeding 3.000,00 €.

#### **Project objectives**

The SOIL ART TALES call looks for artworks facing soil, water and land-related issues at all levels through innovative methodologies, which build on novel approaches at the nexus of arts, science, and technology, considering both traditional and new soil-related technologies. The artworks must address different targets and different audiences, and create a direct, strong, multi-level, and extensive engagement dimension.

The term soil literacy concerns the perception of the potential role of soil in solving societal and environmental problems because life on Earth depends on healthy soils and today the promotion of a soil ethic is more necessary than ever. Water is also a key component of fertile and productive soils. Water and soil are key to properly address the current environmental and climate challenges humankind faces to take care of the future and well-being of the earth.

Art can promote soil literacy by contributing to the reflection on the societal role of soils, and the impact of individual decisions on them. This is because art can not only promote discussions, new knowledge and communication but it also helps to move from intellectual paradigms of scientific information to more affective, motivational and emotional connections to natural resources (feelings, attitudes, emotions, and values related to learning and acting). Expanding the realm of soil science research with visual, cultural, and symbolic forms of inquiry, art can raise awareness and engage citizens in the protection and preservation of soil, which is considered the cheapest and safest option to ensure future life security, preventing soaring costs for the remediation of degraded soils.

## **Production of a multidisciplinary artistic soil tale**

Artists can contribute to expanding the realm of soil science research with visual, cultural, and symbolic forms of inquiry, offering new ways of visualizing, interpreting, and interacting with soil. At the same time, the soil science community can offer the art world a new analytical lens to examine soil and environmental protection issues. In this task, a multidisciplinary artistic soil tale composed of four different art works (invited artists from the fields of digital arts, plastic arts, and photography) will prepare their productions at the nexus of arts, science, soil and water and film teasers to present their vision (which will be used both to promote soil literacy and disseminate the open call for initiatives). After the selection of artists, a six-month phase for production will start, following which digital video teasers are expected to be recorded. The tale (4 artworks) will be showcased as a travelling exhibition. At the end, a booklet of artistic tales and teasers will be produced. This resource, together with the teasers and other related materials will be made available to end-users through the Global Network of Water Museums and its members. They will also be accessible to soil museums and natural history museums in Europe. Agreements will be made with several museums to increase soil literacy.

## **Open call for artists and selection process**

Artists from all fields are invited to participate, including video, photography, performance, installation, and Digital arts. Selection criteria include the quality and innovation of the project, the engagement of the public, the relevance to the issues of traditional uses of soil, sustainability, use and reuse of materials, and previous experiences and artworks related to soil and ecosystems literacy.

Concerning eligibility criteria, there are no limits on nationality, age, race, ethnicity, religion and gender, and the active participation of underrepresented societal groups is encouraged.

There is a particular interest in participatory approaches and proposals engaging the audience and triggering behavioural change. Project proposals that also focus on traditional uses of land and water that have nurtured the biodiversity of soils in Europe over the centuries, for example with terracing systems in agriculture and/or other land/hydraulic devices that involved historically the local communities in direct land management also highlighting how human activities fostered local ecosystems. In this frame, proposals linked to Nature-Based Solutions (NBSs) and so called Ancient Hydro-Technologies (AHTs) will be considered as an added value.

The sustainability of artistic projects is also a relevant matter, and a short supply chain and the practice of reuse and zero miles will be prioritized in the selection of best proposals for art installations. A sustainable transport/reproduction of the work will be considered too, as the selected artworks will be disseminated through a travelling exhibition.

The selected four artists will be invited to develop artworks that will be exhibited in different museums in order to increase soil literacy and better understanding of soil ecosystems. Artworks must be produced in a timeframe of six months, starting from April 2025, and will be exhibited from November 2025 in seven different locations across Europe in line with the ambitions and the objectives of the project.

## **Selection and evaluation of art proposals**

A commission composed of evaluators from the WAMU-NET network and the SoilTribes project is appointed to select the four artists. The judgment of the Commission is final and not appealable.

The total maximum score for each proposal is 100 points, which are divided as follows:

- 1) Up to 30 points for innovative ideas and proposals on soil ecology
- 2) Up to 30 points for potential development of new narratives to restore our degraded relationship with soil and ecosystems
- 3) Up to 20 points for on-site production proposals and/or attention to sustainability and/or possible upcycling features
- 4) Up to 20 points for previous experiences and projects aimed at integrating art, science, technology

Priority will be given to work in the fields of video and photography, digital arts, collaborative and relational art, installations, plastic arts.

## Application to participate and submission deadlines

Interested artists are invited to send manifestations of interests through the Application Form including:

1. A letter of interest;
2. Curriculum vitae, including contact info;
3. The proposal of an artwork, including concept, detailed description (i.e. concerning materials, methodology), timeline and images (rendering or sketches);
4. Images and/or texts and/or links with examples of previous works on the subject

The message must not exceed 8 Mb. It is possible to use a transfer for bigger files. Each file name must contain the title SOIL ART TALE + surname and first name of the artist.

The manifestations **must be sent by 6 March 2025** with the object "Artist Selection Soil Tribes + Name of the artist" via email to: [communication@watermuseums.net](mailto:communication@watermuseums.net).

The selected artists will be notified by 31 March 2025.

The selected artists will sign an agreement with the Global Network of Water Museums concerning the use of images and artworks. Participating in this call, artists authorize the Global Network of Water Museums to use the images for the communication of the project.

*SOILTRIBES is a project led by INOVA+ (Portugal) and its artistic component is implemented by the Global Network of Water Museums. SOIL ART TALES is part of SOILTRIBES - Glocal Ecosystems Restoring Soil Values, Roles and Connectivity, a project co-funded by Horizon Europe. The Soil Art Tale is curated by WAMU-NET - a flagship initiative of UNESCO-IHP aimed at fostering water sustainability education and supporting institutions and museums to build a new culture of water.*

For further information: [communication@watermuseums.net](mailto:communication@watermuseums.net).

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