

CURIOSOIL Artathon 2025 - Exploring the Art of Soil

Open call for artists – Artathon

The artathon is an event, in which a diverse group of artists and other interested participants (around 25) compete (alone or in collaboration with others) to create a work of art that will spark curiosity and engage people with the topic of soil.

The event will consist of an introduction day on **Thursday 5 June** with a multi-sensorial component to stimulate collaboration and spark inspiration. The introduction day will be in a **hybrid form**, so participating online is possible. After this event, participants are given time to develop a concept. The deadline for sending in the concept will be **Monday 30 June**. After this date 8 concepts will be shortlisted, and the artists will be informed.

Note: It is also possible to send in a concept even if you did not participate on 5 June.

On **Friday 4 July** a second artathon day will be organized in Wageningen. The 8 selected concepts will be presented by the artists to the group. The concepts will be evaluated by a jury and the winners (**maximum of 4**) will be announced at the end of the day. The selected artists will be given time to develop their concept to creation until **Friday 28 November**.

The winning artworks (maximum of 4) will be awarded a prize of 5000 euro (time and material). Also, the selected artworks will be exhibited in the Interactive Soil Exhibition, starting in **January 2026** in the ISRIC - World Soil Museum in Wageningen, the Netherlands, and after that in the Fábrika Centro Ciência in Aveiro, Portugal in 2027. Possibly, the exhibition will travel to a venue in Switzerland.

The art pieces should fit in the World Soil Museum space (an alternative venue will also be considered and explored) and will have to be suitable for a travelling exhibition.



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Selection process

We welcome artists of all disciplines and from all levels (both professional and amateur) to participate. Selection criteria include the quality of the project, capacity for public engagement, level of the use of the senses (multisensory) and artworks related to enhancement of soil health and ecosystems literacy. **The artist must be based in Europe.**

Both individual and group approaches and proposals are eligible. Proposals that engage the audience and trigger behavioural change are favoured. The selected artworks will be part of the interactive exhibition that will be organised in the Netherlands (Wageningen), Portugal (Aveiro) and then will continue as a travelling exhibition. The exhibit will be presented in digital/digitized format online. The exhibition aims to increase soil literacy and better understanding of soils and associated themes. Artworks must be produced in a timeframe of six months, starting from June 2025, and will be exhibited from February 2026 in Wageningen, Netherlands, and after that in Aveiro, Portugal.

Selection and evaluation of art proposals

The evaluation of the submitted concepts for proposed artworks is done by a commission. A maximum of four concepts are selected from the submissions. The artists of the selected concepts are then invited to develop their proposed artwork. The judgment of the Commission is final and not appealable.

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

1. Up to 30 points for innovative ideas and proposals that generate curiosity, excitement or discussion on the topic of with soil health,
2. Up to 30 points for the capacity to stimulate public engagement/interactivity,
3. Up to 20 points for robustness of the art for public display and adequacy for travelling between exhibition venues,
4. Up to 20 points for previous experiences and projects aimed at integrating art, science, technology.

Co-creation of art of participants from different disciplines is favoured. Proposed art may include work in the field of video and photography, digital arts, collaborative and relational art, installations, sculptures, plastic arts. The art may be targeted on the youth (<12 yrs), on adolescents and adults



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(12-18 yrs and > 18 yrs) or both. The selected artists will get support from an art Mentor who will be available throughout the duration of the process of development of the art to provide guidance and feedback (Swiss based curator).

About the interactive travelling exhibition on Soil Health

To engage the wider public an interactive exhibition will be displayed in the World Soil Museum of ISRIC starting early 2026, and after that in Aveiro, Portugal, on the Campus of the University of Aveiro, notably, in the Science education centre, the Fábrica da Ciência) in 2027. The interactive exhibition will leverage on best educational practices and artistic pieces from the artathon. Before the exhibit in Portugal a second artathon will be organised. The interactive exhibitions will target two main age groups: below and above 12-years-old. Artists develop a concept in their own environment. A curator will be hired to guide the process of exhibition and the integration of the art into the exhibition plan.

An exhibition design plan will specify the layout of the exhibition, the content (text, visuals), required materials and objects (and owners of the objects), and the (time)planning. Materials of the exhibitions will include movable panels (with text and images and QR codes that link to audio-visual files, hand pieces such as soil materials (may include lacquer peels), documents, or maps. The physical exhibition will also be accessible as a digital and online exhibit, amongst others through the website of the World Soil Museum and will be available for other CURIOSOIL project activities. All physical components of the exhibition will also be produced in digital format.

All the materials will be archived and be accompanied by an exhibition catalogue. Upon request, both physical and digital materials will be made available for utilization by other museums or science shops, incurring no expenses except for transportation and potential insurance charges. After the exhibitions in the Netherlands and Portugal, the Exhibition will be accessible on demand (pop-up), facilitating increased public exposure.

About CURIOSOIL

CURIOSOIL is a four-year project co-funded by the European Union, with the motto “Awakening Soil Curiosity to Catalyse Soil Literacy”. Although soil is essential for life on Earth, it is under severe pressure from population growth, changing consumption habits, and climate-induced changes to land use and cover.



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CURIOSOIL aims to revolutionise soil education by addressing the urgent need to understand soil dynamics in the face of increasing human pressures. The project seeks to improve soil health awareness among students, teachers, citizens, policymakers, and practitioners. By tackling soil illiteracy, CURIOSOIL aims to promote sustainable soil use and foster a more soil-literate society.

ISRIC World Soil Museum

ISRIC–World Soil Information is an independent science-based foundation with a mission to serve the international community as a custodian of global soil information. We support the development and use of soil information to address global challenges through capacity strengthening, awareness raising and direct cooperation with users and clients. The World Soil Museum – part of ISRIC - informs and educates about the nature and the diversity of soils in the world and what that means for society and for science. From the volcanic ash soils from Andes to the black soil of the Russian steppes. The World Soil Museum is located in an eye-catching building on the Wageningen University Campus. It has the shape of a sod of soil. The outside walls of the building are coated with clay loam to give the building a natural soil appearance. As a partner of CURIOSOIL, ISRIC is leading the artathon organisation.

Contact

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