

Which social contract for the XXIst Century?

Call for projects

The Maison Rousseau et Littérature (MRL) aims to facilitate discussion of literature in all its forms, shared across the generations. Based in the house where Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was born in Geneva, the MRL aims to promote work by the author of the *Social Contract* (1762) and its relevance to today's world. In launching this international, interdisciplinary competition, the MRL seeks to reward projects that give Rousseau's *Contract* a new outlook for the future by creating a new model of society, suited to urgent contemporary crises.

A Social Contract for Apocalyptic Times

By affirming the principle of the people's sovereignty through a community of free subjects, advocating the liberation of the individual through education, and denouncing the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, Jean-Jacques Rousseau helped to set the coordinates of modern politics. His thinking could not have been closer to today's concerns. The climate crisis, a lack of equal opportunity, erosion of democracy through technological change, social exclusion, the restriction of individual and collective freedoms : at a time when our society is threatened, it is urgent that we invent a new paradigm for tomorrow, a social contract for the 21st century.

We are living in times of great upheaval. From famine to floods, fires, and heat waves, the catastrophic effects of climate change threaten our very existence. Poverty, war, violence, and discrimination continue to deprive millions of their most basic rights to health, food, security, and education. With the rise of populism and of cultural isolationism, more and more people are turning away from the values of trust and solidarity that bind humanity together. The democratic challenges, present and future, are certainly numerous.

The Competition

This international, interdisciplinary competition aims to promote projects that examine the *Social Contract* in light of contemporary crises and draft a design for tomorrow. By investigating avenues for a new social order serving the general interest, this competition should facilitate a collective rethinking of ecology, public health, participatory democracy, social justice, and any other key global factors, creating substantial impetus for a new model of society. Based on a theme crucial to Rousseau – contract, obligation, common good, public interest, citizenship, *amour des lois*, governmentality, property, security, corruption, secularism – entries to this competition, individual or collective, may come in any form, using any medium: theoretical text, work of art, film, practical project, etc.

Conditions for Participation

This initiative aims to encourage the highest possible public engagement with contemporary and future societal issues. It is open to young people and adults, artists, academics, interdisciplinary research groups, associations, NGOs, schools, and anyone else who is interested.

The Prize

A prize of \$20,000 for participants ages 25 and younger
A prize of \$20,000 for participants over age 25

The awards will provide participants with the time and resources to formulate innovative and relevant proposals that respond to our contemporary context of crisis and instability. One of the competition's main objectives will be to present the best projects to a national and international audience, both to share the results of this collective commitment and to encourage future generations to commit to a free participatory and inclusive society.

The project «A Social Contract for the 21st Century» is initiated by the MRL and the Domaine de Villette Foundation. It is supported by the latter.

Deadlines and Calendar

**The proposals will be accepted from
16 January – 28 June 2023.**

Deadline for submission: 28 June 2023, at midnight.

[Proposals should be sent through this link.](#)

The Jury

The members of the jury for the award were selected for their expertise in the fields of social and political sciences, art and culture, architecture and urban planning, education, law and economics, public health, natural and environmental sciences and gender studies.

Jury members: James Arvanitakis (Australia), Monika Bolliger (Switzerland), Beatriz Botero Arcila (Colombia), Corto Fajal (France), Denise Ferreira da Silva (Brazil), Samia Henni (Algeria), Olumide Idowu (Nigeria), Scott Langdon (United Kingdom), Maria Lind (Sweden), Aromar Revi (India), Martin Rueff, President (France).

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