

**Open call – Expressions of Interest**  
**Seeking artists to mark the 50th anniversary of the discovery of**  
**hydrothermal vents**

**Opening date: 01/05/2026**

**Closing date: 21/06/2026**

The Organising Committee for celebrations around the 50th anniversary of the discovery of hydrothermal vents, in collaboration with the Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI) Art, Science and Policy Task Force, invites artists from a wide range of disciplines to submit expressions of interest for a unique artistic initiative.

We welcome proposals from artists interested in engaging with the deep ocean, whether through collaborative, co-created processes with scientists or through independent artistic interpretations inspired by hydrothermal vent ecosystems.

This call aims to foster artistic work that deepens public understanding of hydrothermal vents and the extraordinary life they sustain, while also drawing attention to the environmental challenges and emerging threats facing these remote and fragile ecosystems.

A component of this initiative is the opportunity for co-creation between artists and ocean scientists. In this context, co-creation is understood as a process of mutual exchange, where ideas are developed collaboratively and disciplines intersect. Artists and scientists engage as equal partners, each contributing their knowledge, perspectives, and methods. At the same time, artists who prefer not to co-create directly with scientists are equally encouraged to apply, bringing their own independent vision to the theme.

#### **Exhibition Vision**

Selected works will contribute to a multi-artist exhibition to be launched in the Azores during the 8th International Symposium on Chemosynthesis-Based Ecosystems planned from 14-18 June 2027, with the ambition of touring internationally thereafter.

#### **Funding Status**

Please note funding for this initiative is not yet fully secured.

We are currently actively seeking financial support to realize the exhibition and to support participating artists. Building a strong and compelling portfolio of interested artists and proposed projects is a critical step toward securing this funding.

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**We invite artists to join us at this early stage—help shape the vision, strengthen the proposal, and contribute to an ambitious interdisciplinary project at the intersection of art, science and deep-ocean stewardship.**

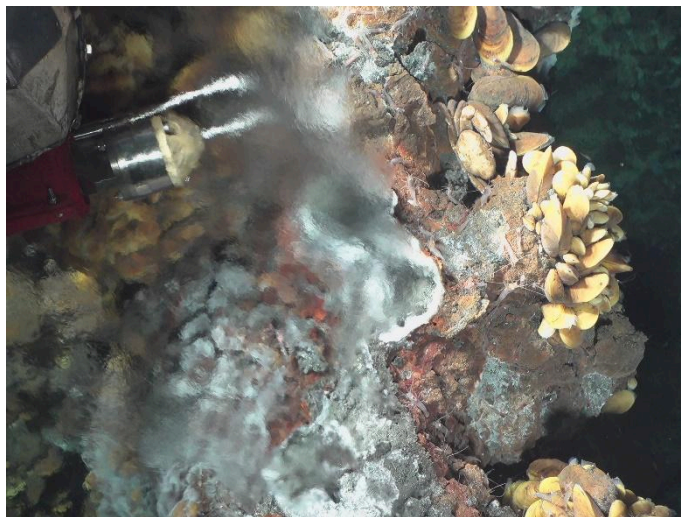
## Context

*The first discovery of hydrothermal vents in the ocean remains one of the remarkable scientific breakthroughs of the 20th century — a prolific meeting of fire and water.*

*In 1977, scientists exploring the deep ocean aboard the submersible DSV Alvin descended nearly 2,500 meters beneath the surface along the Galápagos Rift, near the Galápagos Islands. The team expected signs of geothermal activity - warm water escaping from newly formed ocean crust, perhaps linked to volcanic processes.*

*Instead, their lights revealed towering mineral chimneys spewing dark plumes into the deep sea. These structures, later named black smokers, form when seawater seeps into cracks in the oceanic crust and is heated by underlying magma. As the water circulates through hot rock, it dissolves metals such as iron, copper, and zinc. When these superheated fluids rise back to the seafloor and meet the cold seawater, the metals precipitate, slowly building chimney-like towers that can reach tens of meters high.*

*While these mineral-rich water may reach temperatures up to 400°C, the greatest surprise was not geological — it was biological.*



Sampling hot fluids emitted from hydrothermal vent at the Lucky Strike vent field on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

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*Despite crushing pressure and total darkness, the vents were surrounded by dense oases of life. Scientists discovered thriving communities of previously unknown organisms: giant tubeworms, clams, mussels, shrimp, crabs, and thick mats of bacteria. In this sunless world, life does not depend on photosynthesis. Instead, microorganisms form the base of the food web through chemosynthesis, using chemical energy - especially hydrogen sulphide from the vents - to produce organic matter. Many larger animals live in close symbiosis with these microorganisms, housing them within specialized organs.*

*The discovery of hydrothermal vents transformed our understanding of life on Earth by revealing that ecosystems can thrive using energy from Earth's internal heat and chemistry, challenging the previous assumption that all ecosystems ultimately depend on sunlight. It*

*also expanded ideas about the limits of life, reshaped theories about how life may have begun on early Earth, and continues to influence the search for life beyond our planet.*

*Nearly fifty years later, hydrothermal vents remain a major focus of research in geology, chemistry, and biology, with new vent fields and remarkable organisms still being discovered. Each deep-sea expedition reveals previously unseen species - reminders that vast parts of our planet remain unexplored.*

### **How to apply?**

Your letter of intent should follow the outline below. Please send your contributions to [DOSIOffice0@gmail.com](mailto:DOSIOffice0@gmail.com) by 21 June 2026.

### **Letter of intent outline - 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of hydrothermal vents**

Please include the following:

1. Artist's last name (in capital letters) and first name
2. Pseudonym, if applicable
3. Artistic field(s)
4. Country of establishment
5. Provide links or files showcasing your work (e.g. Website, Instagram, other social media) with at least 5 examples of recent works (e.g. jpeg 72 ppi, MP3, MP4).
6. Provide a short CV.
7. Describe your specific artwork proposal idea to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the discovery of hydrothermal vents. Include details of proposed media type and approximate size/duration (if applicable). Please also include potential collaborations with scientists (if any / desired). (500-word limit).
8. Detailed budget (including art materials, transport of artwork and personal travel expenses to the Azores). (4000 Euros Max).