

Science & Spirituality

An interdisciplinary dialogue between the natural sciences and the humanities on the physical and metaphysical questions related to the origin of life and the Universe.

Genesis

Created by the Yves and Inez Oltramare Foundation (family foundation), the Institute À Ciel Ouvert – Science et Spiritualité (Open Sky Institute – Science and Spirituality) is a Swiss non-profit foundation registered in Geneva and incepted under the supervision of the Swiss Cantonal Supervisory Authority for Foundations.

It is a patronage organization in favor of research and teaching whose goal is to promote the development and sharing of academic knowledge at local, national, and international levels.

The Foundation Board is the higher body responsible for the strategic management of the Institute and its good governance according to its statutes. Its members combine extensive experience in the academic, legal, philanthropic, science, and technology fields.

The executive management is responsible for the operational and financial management of the Institute to adequately pursue its mission. The director is a seasoned professional in public-private partnerships and in managing national and international philanthropic projects.

The Founder

Yves Oltramare is a Genevan personality as much by his family trajectory – his Italian ancestor Antoine, who took refuge in Geneva in 1595, was the first to anchor this patronym at the heart of the city – than by his unfailing involvement in the economic, academic and cultural influence of the city.

In addition to his long career in private banking, Yves Oltramare has served on the boards of directors of the largest institutions of Swiss and international economic life, including thirty years on the investment committee of the United Nations Pension Fund.

In the scientific field, he notably chaired the Louis-Jeantet Foundation for Medicine.

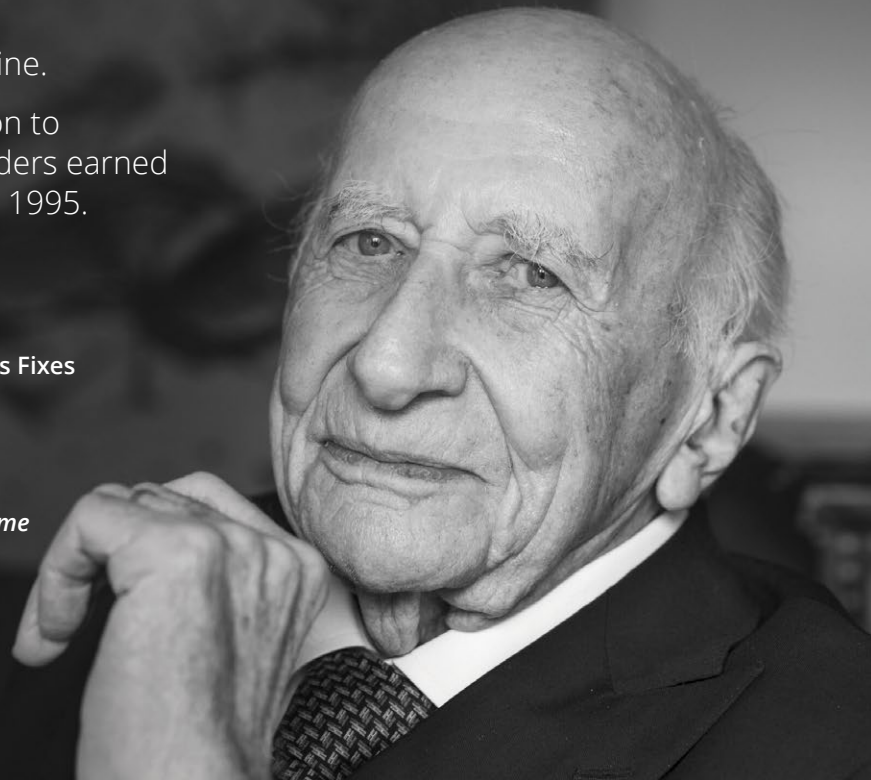
His deep humanism and his contribution to the influence of Geneva beyond its borders earned him the Foundation for Geneva Prize in 1995.



Portrait film on Yves Oltramare
Directed by the Association Plans Fixes
Geneva 2025



Book *Tu seras rencontreur d'Homme*
By Yves Oltramare
Ed. Labor and Fides, 2019



Our Philosophy

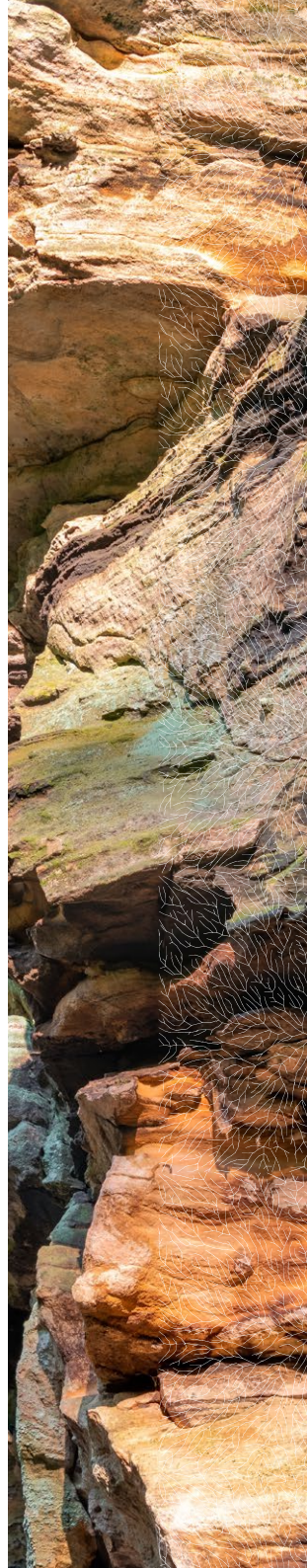
The origin of the “living” and of the Universe remains a mystery and an object of study for both natural sciences and human sciences.

This object is that of a quest – sometimes understood as search of meaning – which has long been expressed through prominent figures in the history of science.

These themselves integrate a fully-fledged ontological and metaphysical dimension into their scientific reflection.

Some themes of interest covered by the Institute include – but are not limited to – the following sample questions:

- What is the origin of the “living”?
- What were the triggers for the deployment of the Universe?
- Where did we come from?
- What is consciousness?
- What is time?
- How to describe the real?
- What is the relationship between humans and the rest of living beings?
- What is the nature of intelligence?
- What distinguishes the living from the inert?





Our Mission

As a non-profit body, the Institute aims to support scientific research, to encourage co-reflexion and interdisciplinary collaboration through academic partnerships, publications, and events.

Our Activities

We support interdisciplinary research within the academic community itself and facilitate knowledge sharing between the academic community and the general public.

Our initiatives are intended on the one hand for university researchers and on the other hand for the general public through events in open access. Our initiatives are implemented in a rigorously academic framework.



Teaching

Since 2021, we have been supporting a biannual cross-disciplinary course at the University of Geneva under the guidance of the Faculty of Theology and the Department of Astronomy.



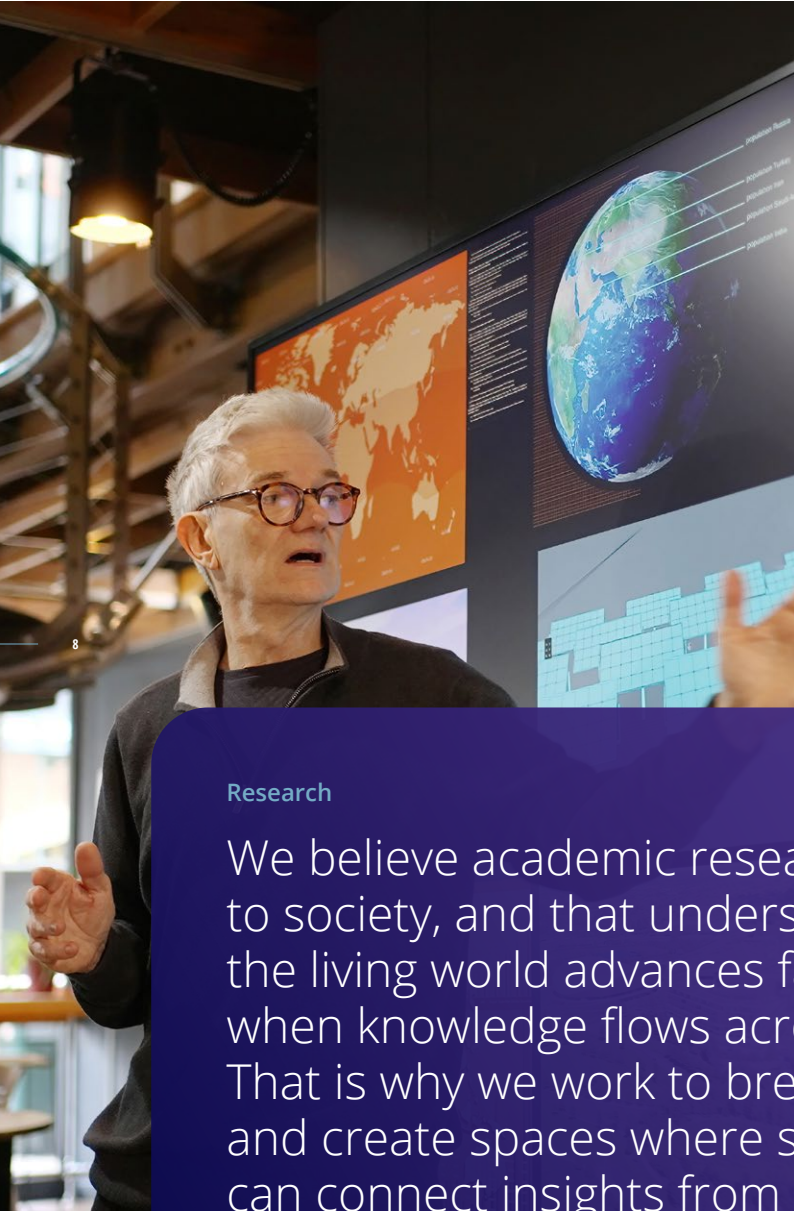
This interdisciplinary course fosters dialogue between astronomy, theology, philosophy, history, law, sociology, physics, mathematics, biology and other fields.

It is open to students of all disciplines – who may have it credited in their main curriculum – as well as to non-enrolled auditors.

A different theme is explored each year.

Past themes include the following concepts:

- ▶ Open Sky Cosmologies
2021 [🔗](#)
- ▶ Experience(s) and Truth
2022 [🔗](#)
- ▶ Return to the Sense of Boundaries:
an Emergency?
2023 [🔗](#)
- ▶ Travels to the Heart of Time
2024 [🔗](#)
- ▶ Thinking the Anthropocene:
The Meaning of Being Human on Earth
2025 – 2026 [🔗](#)



Research

We believe academic research is vital to society, and that understanding the living world advances faster when knowledge flows across disciplines. That is why we work to break down silos and create spaces where scientists can connect insights from different fields.



Researchers' Seminar

Format: A group of researchers at the University of Geneva meets monthly to conduct an interdisciplinary reflection bridging theology and astronomy.

Their focus: the origin and unfolding of the Universe and of life, the interplay of contingency and necessity, the question of purpose, and humanity's place within it all.



Scientific Retreat

Format: The Institute invites ten researchers from various countries and disciplines – astrophysics, biology, geology, philosophy, theology, philosophy of science, anthropology, *etc.* – to a week-long scientific retreat in Switzerland for collaborative work on the nature of the inert and the living.



Symposium

Format: The University of Geneva research group organises a symposium exploring the notions of experience and truth as understood across the human and social sciences (law, philosophy, theology) and the natural sciences (physics, astrophysics, mathematics).

The event's deeply interdisciplinary format fosters rich exchange between fields.



Fellowship

Format: A fellowship programme enables a young researcher to explore – within an international university network – a research theme related to the nature of the living, the nature of reality, an anthropological approach to science, or the dialectic between science and spirituality (where scientific discoveries inspire metaphysical reflection, or ontological inquiry motivates scientific exploration).



Events

The Institute fosters academic dialogue and public engagement through regular open-access events throughout the year.





Academic Conferences

Within the framework of the University of Geneva, researchers from various disciplines and prestigious research laboratories are invited to give lectures.

The themes addressed include:

- › Time
- › Infinity
- › Artificial Intelligence
- › (Cyber)Consciousness
- › The Anthropocene

Personalities include physicists, astrophysics, mathematicians, economists, psychiatrists, lawyers, historians, philosophers, theologians, *etc.*

Past Conferences



Annual Round Table

Within the University of Geneva, an interdisciplinary dialogue is held every year for 90 minutes between three to five guests on a chosen theme addressed from the perspective of their respective disciplines.

This round table is filmed live and broadcast several times on the local television channel.

The themes addressed include:

- › The Enigma of Origins
- › The Enigma of Reality
- › The Enigma of Matter
- › Artificial Intelligence
- › The Anthropocene

Past Round Tables





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE GET IN TOUCH:

MARIE-GABRIELLE CAJOLY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RUE DU VIEUX-COLLÈGE 10BIS
1204 GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

+41 22 316 01 91

FONDATION@ACIELOUVERT.SWISS
WWW.ACIELOUVERT.SWISS



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