

Villa Medici Film Festival

September 11–15, 2024

The Villa Medici Film Festival announces its full programme. Nearly 40 screenings will take place indoors and outdoors, with many international artists and filmmakers invited.



VILLA MEDICI

Since its creation in 2021, the Villa Medici Film Festival has been exploring the links between film and contemporary art, setting out to discover new kinds of cinematic discourse. The fourth edition of the festival will be held from 11 to 15 September 2024 and aims to adopt a groundbreaking approach by encouraging encounters between pluralistic works that question, revolutionize, deflect, or re-enchant our relationship with images.

Some thirty films will be shown at Villa Medici on three screens, one of them open-air, offering a unique experience under the sky of Rome, the city of film par excellence. Between Via Veneto and Piazza di Spagna, Villa Medici celebrates the moving image: artists' films, experimental, fictional, and documentary films, whether short, medium, or feature-length. The festival accommodates a wide variety of narratives, with no geographical or formal constraints.

The festival is made up of three sections: the **international competition**, with twelve recent films of all genres and lengths mixed up together, the **Focus** program, with artists' films out of competition, jurors' picks, and special meetings with the filmmakers, and finally the **gala evenings in the Piazzale**, with outdoor screenings of previews and restored classics.

The 2024 jury embodies this spirit of openness, combining three personalities from different artistic spheres: **Clément Cogitore**, director and visual artist, **Vimala Pons**, stage director and actress, and **Rasha Salti**, exhibition curator, researcher, and writer.

The jury will award two prizes: the *Villa Medici Prize for Best Film* and the *Special Jury Prize* for a distinctive film that caught the jurors' attention. These awards, endowed with €5,000 and €3,000 respectively, also offer the filmmakers the opportunity of a residency at Villa Medici. Along with the jury, the festival brings together a community of filmmakers and cinephiles at Villa Medici, who meet to foster collective thinking about cinema and its lines of development.

The festival program assembles a constellation of films that stand out for the distinctiveness of their subject-matter or their form and invite us to venture into worlds both near and far, illuminating the questioning of contemporary reality. These productions of all lengths and genres include **9 Italian premieres** and **3 Rome premieres**.



Programmed films

12 films of the international competition

A FIDAÏ FILM by Kamal Aljafari (2024, Germany, Palestine, Qatar, Brazil, France, 78')

Rome premiere

Investigating the looting of Palestinian films which took place in Beirut, at Palestine Research Center, in 1982, the film proposes a counter-narrative of a continuous history of appropriation.

BOOMERANG by Maïder Fortuné (2024, France, 13')

Italian premiere

The Canebière, a building raised in Marseille on the eve of the Algerian War, is conceived as a body explored by the camera. The building awakens through the sound of mixed voices, including that of James Baldwin.

DAU:AÑCUT (MOVING ALONG IMAGE) by Adam Piron (2023, US, 15')

Italian premiere

In 2014, the filmmaker discovered an Ukrainian man bearing the tattoo of a relative in traditional Amerindian dress. Stitched together from footage of the search for this man, the film explores the consequences of the loss of control over an image and time's circular ironies

È A QUESTO PUNTO CHE NASCE IL BISOGNO DI FARE STORIA by Constanze Ruhm (2024, Austria, Portugal, 96')

Italian premiere

Delving into the work of Italian feminist and co-founder of Rivolta Femminile, Carla Lonzi, the film takes us on a time-travel through a history of violence against women, while paying homage to feminist artists from the 17th century until today.

FAMILIAR TOUCH by Sarah Friedland (2024, US, 90')

Rome premiere

A coming of (old) age film, *FAMILIAR TOUCH* follows an octogenarian woman's transition to life in assisted living as she contends with her conflicting relationship to herself and her caregivers amidst her shifting memory, age identity, and desires.

HOW LOVE MOVES by Pallavi Paul (2023, India, 63')

Italian premiere

The film is set in an Islamic cemetery in the heart of New Delhi. It is where the scars of the pandemic, communal violence coexist alongside a transcendental beauty. A gravekeeper and his unwavering love for the dead become our portal into this world.

MAN NUMBER 4 by Miranda Pennell (2024, United Kingdom, 9')

Italian premiere

A confrontation with a disturbing photograph found on social media triggers questions about what it means to be an onlooker.

PEPE by Nelson Carlo de Los Santos Arias (2024, Dominican Republic, Namibia, Germany, France, 123')

Rome premiere

A voice that claims to be from a hippopotamus. A voice that does not understand the structural perception of time. A voice that from trance, goes across the languages of a historical event. "Is that my

sound that comes out of my mouth?” Or specifically, what is a mouth?” The only thing he knows for sure is that he is dead. The first and last hippopotamus killed in the Americas.

REAL by Adele Tulli (2024, Italy, France, 90')

Italian premiere

As human beings made of flesh, we now spend most of our time in a digital landscape, seeking happiness, wealth, relationships, knowledge, and experiences. What is today's reality made of?

THE PERFECT SQUARE by Gernot Wieland (2024, Germany, Belgium, 8')

Italian premiere

Wieland worked for twelve years with an animal trainer who taught birds to fly in circles or squares. The film examines how aesthetic norms influence our (Western) view of the world and why these norms lead to failure.

THE RETREAT by Gelare Khoshgozaran (2023, US, UK, France, 22')

Italian premiere

As a process based film, *The Retreat* delves into the temporal, spatial and relational effects migratory movements have on the body and mind of the exile.

VIỆT AND NAM by Trương Minh Quý (2024, Vietnam, Philippines, Singapore, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, 129')

Italian premiere

Before leaving Vietnam in a container alongside future migrants, Nam, a young miner, seeks to find the remains of his father, a soldier killed during the civil war. But Nam's lover, Việt, wishes they could stay forever in the depths of the coal mine.

The Focus sessions: *Cartes blanches* and *Contrechamp*

The Focus section is made up of screenings of out-of-competition films, as well as numerous meetings with international artists and filmmakers.

3 Cartes blanches

The cartes blanches, proposed by the members of the jury - **Clément Cogitore**, **Vimala Pons** and **Rasha Salti** - allow them to share special moments around films linked to their activities as artists, filmmakers, authors or curators.

- Director **Clément Cogitore** proposes a dialogue between his documentary film **BRAGUINO** and a short 16 mm film by English artist Ben Rivers, **ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES**. This portrait of a singular septuagenarian living in an isolated region of Inverness, with Darwin and his theories as his only companion, is combined with that of a family who have chosen to live a remote life in the forests of Siberia. Both are about inventing autonomous ways of living, new relationships with time, with others, and with keeping society at a distance in favour of a renovated understanding of nature, at once superb and cruel.
- To share her relationship with cinema, **Vimala Pons** presents two films: an animation musical movie, at once burlesque and melancholic (**MON FARDEAU**) and a film-essay, somehow a diary, with a hypnotic visual language (**HEART OF A DOG**). Two introspective films, of different conception, but weaving secret links, with the animal at their center.

- **Rasha Salti** invites us to discover the film directed by documentary filmmaker Ali Essafi, **AVANT LE DECLIN DU JOUR**. This film is a unique and masterful tribute to the artists resisting in 1970s Morocco, a period known for its struggles and collective dreams. This archival film uncovers the intense creativity that this spirit of revolt managed to free from the regime's violence.

2 Contrechamp

The *Contrechamp* session offers a dialogue between contemporary and historical films, with a special focus on Villa Medici artist-filmmakers.

- **Contrechamp Abdessamad El Montassir / Ana Vaz / Driss Aroussi**

APIYEMIYEKÎ? by Ana Vaz (2019, Brazil, France, Portugal, 29')

BORJ EL MECHKOUK by Driss Aroussi (2023, France, Morocco, 32')

GALB'ECHAOUF by Abdessamad El Montassir (2021, Morocco, 18')

It's hard to give a voice to landscapes, hard to make them tell their own Story, not the geological one, but that one shaped by mankind... it's also hard to let traces, images of it, appear through cinema. Yet this is the challenge that those three artist-cinematographers have taken up, starting from the lands of Brazil's Amazon rainforests and those of the Sahara desert.

- **Contrechamp Jérôme Clément-Wilz / Clovis Maillet & Louise Hervé**

ÊTRE CHEVAL by Jérôme Clément-Wilz (2015, France, 63')

UN PASSAGE D'EAU by Clovis Maillet & Louise Hervé (2014, France, 23')

The links between these two films go far beyond the animal-related aspects of **ÊTRE CHEVAL** and **UN PASSAGE D'EAU**: they are based on the body, its treatment, care and constraints, and the hybrid relationships between humans, animals and the environment, in terms of transformation, mutation, hybridisation and domination, suggesting a reflection on our desires and our becoming.

1 performed lecture

WORLD/ANTIWORLD: ON SEEING DOUBLE by Haig Aivazian (2017, Lebanon, 45')

Combining the visual forms of art and cinema, the Film Festival invites Lebanese artist Haig Aivazian to present his performance lecture **WORLD/ANTIWORLD**. From 3 explosions at the Stade de France in November 2015, this lecture maps the difficulty to differentiate between populations of colonies, war zones, and ghettos, and to delineate the territorial boundaries between them

5 Piazzale evenings

In parallel with the films screened during the day, festival-goers will enjoy nightly open-air screenings on the Piazzale, in front of the historic façade and gardens of Villa Medici, of recent films but also restored classics of cinema.

- **Wednesday evening, September 11**

ALLEGORIE CITADINE by Alice Rohrwacher and JR (2024, France, 21')

In the Allegory of the Cave, Plato wonders: what would happen if one of the prisoners managed to free themselves from their chains and escape from the cave? What if that prisoner were Jay, a little 7-year-old boy?

L'HISTOIRE DE SOULEYMANE by Boris Lojkine (2024, France, 93')

While cycling through the streets of Paris to deliver meals, Souleymane keeps rehearsing his story. In two days, he has his asylum interview, the key to obtaining his papers. But Souleymane is not ready.

- **Thursday evening, September 12**

PARIS, TEXAS of Wim Wenders (1984, Germany, France, 147')

Film restored with the support of CHANEL

Après quatre ans de disparition, Travis réapparaît du désert dans la vie de son frère Walt, qui croyait qu'il était mort et a élevé son fils Hunter. Travis cherche à reconnecter avec son passé et part au Texas pour retrouver sa femme, Jane.

- **Friday evening, September 13**

CLOUD by Kiyoshi Kurosawa (2024, Japan, 123')

Ryosuke Yoshii is an ordinary man who makes a living by selling things online. Gradually, he draws the resentment of those around him and will have to fight for his life.

- **Saturday evening, September 14**

EAT THE NIGHT by Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel (2024, France, 107')

Pablo and his sister Apolline share a deep bond over the video game *Darknoon*. When Pablo falls for Night, whom he introduces to his small-time dealings, he distances himself from Apolline. As the game nears its end, his choices anger a rival gang...

- **Sunday evening, September 15**

MONTESSORI - LA NOUVELLE FEMME by Léa Todorov (2024, France, Italy, 99')

In 1900 in Rome, Lili d'Alengy meets Maria Montessori, a doctor who is developing a revolutionary learning method for children then referred to as 'deficient.' As the paths of these two women cross, they will make History.

The 2024 Jury



Clément COGITORE

Clément Cogitore, born in Colmar (France) in 1983, is a Franco-German artist and film director who trained at the École Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Strasbourg and at the Fresnoy. He explores human interactions with images through films, videos, installations, and photographs, addressing themes such as rituals, collective memory, and the sacred.

His work has been shown at prestigious institutions such as the Palais de Tokyo and the Centre Pompidou. The winner of several awards, including the Grand Prix du Salon de Montrouge in 2011 and the Prix Marcel Duchamp in 2018, he was also a Fellow at the French Academy in Rome in 2012.

In 2015, his first feature-length film, *Ni le ciel, ni la terre (The Wakhan Front)* won an award at Cannes and was nominated for the César for Best First Feature Film. His staging of the opera *Les Indes galantes* in 2019 was widely acclaimed. In 2022, his second feature, *Goutte d'or (Sons of Ramses)*, received an award and was shortlisted to represent France at the Oscars. Since 2018, he has taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.



Vimala PONS

Vimala Pons is a circus artist and actress based in Paris. After studying art history at the Sorbonne and film history at the Vincennes-Saint-Denis University, she continued her training at Cours Florent, the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique in Paris (CNSAD), and the Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC).

Since 2013, Vimala Pons has pursued a distinguished career in independent and auteurist cinema, working with renowned directors such as Antonin Peretjatko, Bertrand Mandico, Christophe Honoré, Jacques Rivette, and Alain Resnais. In 2023, she acted in Stéphan Castang's *Vincent doit mourir (Vincent Must Die)* and will appear in *Mikado* by Baya Kasmi, *Le Beau Rôle (The Best Part)* by Victor Rodenbach, and *Le Voyage essentiel (Essential Journey)* by Alejandro Jodorowsky.

With Tsirihaka Harrivel, she has been creating performative circus-based shows since 2010. Their duo GRANDE toured for three years. As a solo artist, she created *Le Périmètre de Denver (The Denver Perimeter)* in 2022, accompanied by the sound fiction *Eusapia Klane*. In 2023, she released her first music video, "Feux Follets" ("Will-o'-the-Wisps"), for the musician Flavien Berger and was selected for a residency at Villa Belleville to develop a sound exhibition with the photographer Nhu Xuan Hua. In 2024, she has presented her first video installation *I PROMISE I'LL COME AND RESCUE YOU* at Galerie Anne Barrault in Paris, and she is working on a new solo performance scheduled for 2025.



Rasha SALTİ

Rasha Salti is an art and film researcher, writer, and curator, who lives and works between Beirut and Berlin. She has co-curated several film programs, including *Mapping Subjectivity: Experimentation in Arab Cinema from the 1960s until Now*, with Jytte Jensen (2010–12), presented at MoMA in New York, and *Saving Bruce Lee: African and Arab Cinema in the Era of Soviet Cultural Diplomacy*, with Koyo Kouoh, at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2018). She is currently commissioning editor for La Lucarne, Arte France’s program for experimental documentaries.

With Kristine Khouri, Rasha Salti also co-curated the archival and documentary exhibition *Past Disquiet*, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona (MACBA, 2015), the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (HKW, 2016), the Museo de la Solidaridad Salvador Allende in Santiago, Chile (MSSA, 2018), the Sursock Museum in Beirut (2018) and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2024). In 2022, Salti was one of the co-curators of the 8th Triennial of Photography in Hamburg and a member of the committee of curators for the 12th Berlin Biennale.



The 2024 Selection Committee

Every year, a selection committee is appointed to choose the films in competition, adopting an approach that is as open as possible to diversity of practices and authors, be they filmmakers or visual artists. For the 2024 edition of the festival, the selection committee is made up of **Lili Hinstin**, **Julian Ross**, **Valentine Umansky**, and **Jean-Marc Zekri**.

Lili Hinstin is a festival programmer and artistic director. Having been in charge of film at Villa Medici between 2005 and 2009, she was programmer for the Cinéma du Réel festival from 2010 to 2013, then artistic director of the Belfort Film Festival (2013–18) and the Locarno International Film Festival (2018–20). She is currently director of programming for the Biarritz International Festival – Nouvelles Vagues.

Julian Ross is a researcher, curator, and writer based in Amsterdam. He is co-programmer of Doc Fortnight 2024, the international festival of nonfiction film and media at MoMA in New York, and also of the Flaherty Film Seminar 2024 in Thailand. He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands and co-directs the ReCNTR interdisciplinary research center.

Valentine Umansky is a curator at Tate Modern in London, having worked for several visual arts institutions. Between 2015 and 2020, she held positions in the United States at the International Center of Photography, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati. She is also an exhibition curator and author.

Jean-Marc Zekri has for many years been the head of the arthouse cinema Le Reflet Médicis in Paris. He was the founding director of the Baba Yaga Films distribution company from 2009 to 2020 and is now a member of the endowment fund board of the Parisian community-run cinema La Clef. Since 2023, he has also been a member of the selection committee for the Quinzaine des Cinéastes (Directors' Fortnight).

The Festival Organizing Committee

Albane Dumas, coordinator of the Villa Medici Film Festival

Lili Hinstin, festival programmer and artistic director

Laurent Perreau, author and filmmaker

Sam Stourdzé, director of the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

Véronique Terrier Hermann, art historian and programmer

With the kind collaboration of **Mathilde Henrot** for Piazzale programming.



A look back at previous editions

2023

Jury: Alice Diop, Cyprien Gaillard, Chiara Parisi

Award winners:

- Villa Medici Prize for Best Film: *Mon pire ennemi* by Mehran Tamadon (2023, France, 81')
- Special Jury Prize: *El auge del humano 3* by Eduardo Williams (2023, Argentina, Portugal, Brazil, Netherlands, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Peru, 121')
- Jury Special Mention Award: *Banel & Adama* by Ramata-Toulaye Sy (2023, France, Senegal, Mali, 87')

2022

Jury: Marie Losier, Pietro Marcello, Sylvain Prudhomme

Award winners:

- Villa Medici Prize for Best Film: *Le Champ des mots* by Rania Stephan (2022, Lebanon, 70')
- Special Jury Prize: *Gigi la Legge* by Alessandro Comodin (2022, Italy, France, Belgium, 102')

2021

Jury: Mati Diop, Béla Tarr, Teresa Castro

Award winners:

- Villa Medici Prize for Best Film: *Inside the Red Brick Wall* by the Hong Kong Documentary Filmmakers collective (2020, Hong Kong, 88')
- Special Jury Prize: *El gran movimiento* by Kiro Russo (2021, Bolivia, France, Qatar, Switzerland, 85')



Pietro Marcello, 2022 Festival



Rebecca Zlotowski, 2022 Festival



Mathieu Amalric, 2021 Festival



Abel Ferrara, Sam Stourd z , Asia Argento, 2021 Festival



Chiara Parisi and Cyprien Gaillard, 2023 Festival



Alice Diop, 2023 Festival



Anamaria Vartolomei, 2023 Festival



Sam Stourd z , Mati Diop, B la Tarr, 2021 Festival



Leos Carax, Lili Hinstin, 2023 Festival

The festival at a glance

- Special screenings from 11 to 15 September 2024
- 5 days of festival in the historic spaces of Villa Medici
- 3 cinemas including one outdoor screen with room for up to 500 viewers every evening
- Nearly 40 screenings of international films
- 2 prizes awarded at the end of the festival
- Special meetings with filmmakers
- Nearly 4,000 admissions for the 2023 festival
- A selection of books about film by the 7L Bookshop

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici



Founded in 1666 by King Louis XIV, it is a French institution that has been housed since 1803 at Villa Medici, a 16th-century villa surrounded by a seven-hectare park on Mount Pincio in the heart of Rome. A national public institution under the authority of the French Ministry of Culture, it fulfills three complementary missions: to welcome artists, creators, and researchers of the highest level in residence for long stays of one year or more; to set up a cultural and artistic program that integrates all fields of the arts and creation aimed at a broad public; to conserve, restore, study, and make its built and landscape heritage, as well as its collections, known to the public.

French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is directed by Sam Stourdzé.

Since 1974, the French Academy in Rome has welcomed Fellows filmmakers, screenwriters and visual artists. Among them: Mali Arun, Ismaïl Bahri, Théodora Barat, Éric Baudelaire, Xavier Beauvois, Yasmina Benabderrahmane, Madison Bycroft, Clément Cogitore, Benjamin Crotty, Caroline Deruas, Mitra Farahani, Lola Gonzàlez, Evangelia Kranioti, Nora Martirosyan, Valérie Mréjen, Thomas Salvador.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is an establishment of the French Ministry of Culture.



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