

## Press Release

The Villa Medici Film Festival 2023 unveils its program.



Today, the ontological question of cinema is no longer "What is a true image?" ", but "What is a real image?". Machine-generated images are literally embedded in our world, modifying the relationship we have with reality to create a third territory in which the filmmaker's gaze must reinvent itself to exist and assert a point of view on the world.

As part of the third edition of the Villa Medici Film Festival to be held in Rome from **Wednesday 13 to Sunday 17 September 2023**, twelve films will be presented **in the international competition**. These productions of all lengths and genres include 2 films shown as their world premieres and 10 shown as their Italian premieres. In parallel with the twelve films of the international competition, films out of competition will be presented in the **Focus** section, including *cartes blanches* from the members of the jury. Finally, five open-air screenings on the **Piazzale** of the Villa Medici will punctuate the evenings of the festival.

Once again this year, artists, filmmakers and thinkers from all continents gather in September at Villa Medici to celebrate the **vitality of contemporary film practices** through a selection of offerings – **arthouse films, essay films, fiction films or documentaries** – distinguished by the singularity of their purpose or form.

The festival's jury, composed of **Alice Diop, Cyprien Gaillard** and **Chiara Parisi**, will unveil its winners during the gala evening on Saturday 16 September. They will award two prizes: the **Villa Medici Prize for Best Film** and the **Jury Prize** for a film that has particularly caught the jurors' attention. These prizes, awarded, will offer both filmmakers the opportunity to undertake a creative or research residency at Villa Medici.

## **12 films in the international competition**

### **18,000 WORLDS by Saodat Ismailova (2023, Uzbekistan, Netherlands, 30')**

*World premiere*

According to the 12<sup>th</sup>-century mystic Shihab al-Din Yahya al-Suhrawardi, the world we live in is just one of the 18,000 worlds that make up the universe. The film *18,000 Worlds* is designed as a video tale that draws attention to a world that is losing contact with its ancestors, and where the danger of losing forms of knowledge is real.

### **ABATTOIR U.S.A.! by Aria Dean (2023, USA, 10')**

*World premiere*

*Abattoir, U.S.A.!* examines the inside of an empty slaughterhouse designed using a 3D video game technology engine (Unreal engine), presenting it as a site where the boundary between man, animal and machine is produced and where the intimacy of modernism with death is laid bare.

***BANEL & ADAMA* by Ramata-Toulaye Sy (2023, France, Senegal, Mali, 87')**

*Italian premiere*

Banel and Adama are madly in love. This young married couple lives in a remote village in Senegal. Yet their perfect love clashes with the customs of their community. Because in this world, there is no place for passion, let alone chaos.

***CAPITAL* by Basma al-Sharif (2023, Egypt, Italy, Germany, 17')**

*Italian premiere*

A ventriloquist, songs and commercials depict an apparently bygone fascist period.

***EL AUGE DEL HUMANO 3 (THE HUMAN SURGE 3)* by Eduardo Williams (2023, Argentina, Portugal, Brazil, Netherlands, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Peru, 121')**

*Italian premiere*

Several groups of friends wander in a dark, rainy and windy universe. They spend time together, trying to escape their depressing jobs and make their way to new horizons.

***HOW I BECAME A COMMUNIST* by Declan Clarke (2023, Ireland, 55')**

*Italian premiere*

Through a European folk tale, the film evokes the disappearance of the political movement of the unified left. It also depicts the daily life of an elderly woman who holds a farm on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

***LA IMATGE PERMANENT (THE PERMANENT PICTURE)* by Laura Ferrés (2023, Spain, France, 94')**

*Italian premiere*

Antonia, a teenage mother, disappears in the middle of the night, leaving her baby behind. Fifty years later, Carmen, an introverted casting director, is looking for people to share their experiences. In her quest, Carmen will meet Antonia.

***MAST-DEL* by Maryam Tafakory (2023, Iran, United Kingdom, 17')**

*Italian premiere*

A love song that would never pass through the censors, Mast-del is about forbidden bodies and desires, both inside and outside post-revolution Iranian cinema.

***MON PIRE ENNEMI* by Mehran Tamadon (2023, France, 81')**

*Italian premiere*

Mojtaba, Hamzeh, Zar and others have undergone ideological interrogations in Iran, at different periods of their lives. Mehran Tamadon, the director, asks them to question him, as an agent of the Islamic Republic could do.

## **NAFURA by Paul Heintz (2023, France, 27')**

*Italian premiere*

A road movie that takes place on a winter evening somewhere on the Arabian Peninsula. Three friends, to overcome their boredom, embark on a verbal joust that leads to a reflection on power and prohibitions.

## **PACIFIC CLUB by Valentin Noujaïm (2022, France, 16')**

*Italian premiere*

In 1979, the Pacific Club opened in the basement of La Défense in Paris, becoming the first nightclub to welcome Arabs from the suburbs. Azedine, who was 18 at the time, tells us the forgotten history of this club.

## **REVOLUTION DER AUGEN (REVOLUTION OF THE EYES) by Friederike Pezold (Pezoldo) (2022, Austria, 75')**

*Italian premiere*

Too many images, too fast, too strong, which scatter our gaze, torpedo perception and inflame the brain. *Revolution of the Eyes* prescribes "LOOK-PAUSES" to counter the "overdose of shitty digital images": concentration of the gaze by means of images reduced to the essential, images celebrated for their style and their duration.

## **6 "Focus" sessions**

The **Focus** section presents films by artists out of competition and 'cartes blanches' (white cards) that will allow festival-goers to engage in unique explorations of the art of cinema with the judges, artists and filmmakers.

- **3 white cards to the members of the jury:**  
**Alice Diop, Cyprien Gaillard and Chiara Parisi**

'Les cartes blanches' invites the public to enter the cinematographic and artistic universe of the members of the jury **Alice Diop, Cyprien Gaillard and Chiara Parisi**, during an unprecedented session, made up of films chosen from their own corpus, others that have inspired them or that they want to allow us to (re)discover.

- The filmmaker Alice Diop presents a selection of the Cinémathèque des banlieues: **L'Amour existe** (Maurice Pialat, 1960), **La voix des autres** (Fatima Kaci, 2023) with her **Vers la tendresse** (2016).
- The artist Cyprien Gaillard screens two of his films **Cities of Gold and Mirrors** (2009) and **Ocean // Ocean** (2019), in dialogue with the astonishing **L'Ordre** by Jean-Daniel Pollet (1973).
- The director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, Chiara Parisi, invites the audience to discover **Strates** (Bintou Dembélé, 2016), **Sue** (Elisabetta Larosa, 2021) and **All-in** (Mohamed Bourouissa, 2012).

- **Contrechamp Ismaïl Bahri / Marguerite Duras / Francis Alÿs**

The artist **Ismaïl Bahri**, a 2023-2024 fellow of the Villa Medici, offers a reflection on the appearance of the image as well as a tentative crossing of Tunis, *Apparition* (2020) and *Orientations* (2010) with regard to the films *Les Mains négatives* (1979) by **Marguerite Duras** and *Reel-Unreel* by **Francis Alÿs** (2011), both of which attempt a crossing of the city, Paris at dawn and Kabul.

- **Contrechamp Madison Bycroft / Suzan Pitt**

The artist **Madison Bycroft**, a 2023-2024 fellow of the Villa Medici, performs in her film *Charlotte* (2023) the confusion of genders and species, in a re-visitation of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century character, the Chevalier d'Éon, a diplomat keen on botany, but also a historical enigma. The film dialogues with *Asparagus* (1979), a surprising animation by the American **Suzan Pitt**.

- **Contrechamp Mali Arun**

*La Maison* (2019), is a documentary film by the filmmaker **Mali Arun**, a 2023-2024 fellow of the Villa Medici, who put his camera in a singular house, open to people, the living, the wise and the crazy, but also to the wind, the rain.

## **5 Piazzale evenings**

In parallel with the official competition 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 – including many previews – but also restored classics of cinema. For this third edition of the festival, the film *Mauvais Sang* by Leos Carax, restored with the support of CHANEL, will be the subject of a special session on Thursday 14 September, in the presence of the director. A special meeting will also be held with the director during the week of the festival.

Full programme to come on [www.villamedici.it](http://www.villamedici.it)

## **THE VILLA MEDICI FILM FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS:**

- Exceptional projections from 13 to 17 September 2023
- 5 days of the festival in the historic spaces of the French Academy in Rome
- 3 cinema rooms, including 1 outdoor screen that can accommodate up to 500 spectators each evening
- Nearly 40 international film screenings
- 2 prizes awarded at the end of the festival
- Masterclasses and meetings with filmmakers
- Nearly 3,500 entries during the 2022 edition of the festival
- A selection of books on cinema by Librairie 7L

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## THE VILLA MEDICI FILM FESTIVAL 2023

### THE ORGANISATIONAL COMMITTEE:

The organisational committee for the Villa Medici Film Festival is made up of **Alizée Alexandre** (in charge of cultural programming at the French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici), **Lili Hinstin** (programmer and artistic director of festivals), **Laurent Perreau** (author and director), **Sam Stourdzé** (director of the French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici) and **Véronique Terrier Hermann** (art historian and programmer).

### THE 2023 SELECTION COMMITTEE:

Each year, a selection committee is appointed to select the films for the competition.

**Leonardo Bigazzi** has been curator of the Festival Lo Schermo dell'Arte since 2008 and of VISIO - European Programme on Artists' Moving Images since 2012. Since 2020 he has also been working as a curator at the Fondazione In Between Art Film, where he is responsible for commissioning and producing artists' films.

**Mathilde Henrot** is a producer of art films (namely of the art films of artist Camille Henrot) and a curator, namely of the Locarno and Sarajevo film festivals. She is also the founder of the websites Festival Scope and Festival Scope Pro, along with Alessandro Raja.

**Lili Hinstin** is a programmer and artistic festival director. In charge of cinema at Villa Medici between 2005 and 2009, she became a programmer for the Cinéma du Réel festival from 2010 to 2013. Lili Hinstin then became artistic director of the Belfort Film Festival (2013-2018), then of the Locarno International Film Festival (2018-2020). She is the director of programming for the Biarritz International Festival - Nouvelles Vagues.

**Valentine Umansky** has worked for various visual arts institutions and is currently curator at the Tate Modern in London. 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, Cincinnati. She is also a curator and author.

### Contact:

film.festival@villamedici.it

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## **CHANEL and cinema**

CHANEL is proud to support the Villa Medici Film Festival for the second year in a row. This event in favour of the seventh art is part of the continuity of CHANEL's links with cinematographic creation and in particular with Italian cinema, initiated at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Gabrielle Chanel. She maintained creative friendships with the major filmmakers of her time and dressed actresses on screen and in the city, including Romy Schneider in Luchino Visconti's *Il lavoro*, the third part of the film *Boccaccio '70*, as well as Jeanne Moreau when she played with the Italian actress Monica Vitti in Michelangelo Antonioni's *La Notte*.

CHANEL encourages the creation, conservation and restoration of cinematographic masterpieces. The version of *Mauvais Sang* by Leos Carax, restored thanks to the support of CHANEL, will be the subject of a screening in the presence of the director on 14 September, as part of the festival. The House also supported the production of *Annette* (2021) and the restoration of *Boy Meets Girl* (2022) by the same director.

## **About the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici**

Founded in 1666 by Louis XIV, the French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici is a French institution that has been housed since 1803 at the Villa Médicis, a 16<sup>th</sup> century villa surrounded by a seven-hectare park and located on Mount Pincio in the heart of Rome.

A national public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici today fulfils three complementary missions: to welcome high-level artists, creators and art historians in residence for long stays of one year or shorter periods; to set up a cultural and artistic programme that integrates all the fields of the arts and creation and that is aimed at a wide audience; to conserve, restore, study and make known to the public its built and landscape heritage as well as its collections.

The French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici is directed by [Sam Stourdzé](#)

## **Cinema at Villa Medici**

Since 1974, The French Academy in Rome has been hosting fellows, scriptwriters and visual artists who make films. Among them are Théodora Barat, Éric Baudelaire, Xavier Beauvois, Yasmina Benabderrahmane, Clément Cogitore, Benjamin Crotty, Caroline Deruas, Mitra Farahani, Lola González, Evangelia Kranioti, Nora Martirosyan, Valérie Mréjen, and Thomas Salvador. Since 2021, the Villa Medici has partnered with the video-on-demand platform Tënk to create the Villa Medici x Tënk Documentary Residencies to support the production of contemporary documentaries.





**RÉPUBLIQUE  
FRANÇAISE**

*Liberté  
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**French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici**

viale della Trinità dei Monti, 1 - 00187 Rome

T. +39 06 67611

[www.villamedici.it](http://www.villamedici.it)



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**Press contacts:**

**France and international**

Agence Dezarts

[agence@dezarts.fr](mailto:agence@dezarts.fr)

Lorraine Tissier Rebour : T. +33 6 75 83 56 94

Anaïs Fritsch : T. +33 6 62 09 43 63

**Italy**

Elisabetta Castiglioni

[info@elisabettacastiglioni.it](mailto:info@elisabettacastiglioni.it)

T. +39 328 4112014

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