

Press release



SCRIBBLING and DOODLING From Leonardo da Vinci to Cy Twombly

3rd March – 22nd May 2022

Exhibition designed and organised by the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici and by the Beaux-Arts in Paris

With the support of the National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, Paris

In partnership with the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Rome

Curators:

Francesca Alberti, Director of the Department of Art History at the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, Professor of Art History at the University of Tours, CESR

Diane Bodart, Professor of Art History at Columbia University

Associate curator:

Philippe-Alain Michaud, Art Historian and Curator at the National Museum of Modern Art – Centre Pompidou, Paris

Associate curator for the Beaux-Arts in Paris:

Anne-Marie Garcia, Curator and responsible for the collections at the Beaux-Arts in Paris

Curator for partner institute:

Giorgio Marini, Art Historian, Curator designated by the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Rome

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From **3rd March** to **22 May 2022**, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici presents a special exhibition: ***Scribbling and Doodling. From Leonardo da Vinci to Cy Twombly***, conceived by two curators **Francesca Alberti** (Villa Medici) and **Diane Bodart** (Columbia University), along with **Philippe-Alain Michaud** as associate curator (Centre Pompidou).

The exhibition will have two complementary presentations, both autonomous and unique, one in Rome, and the other in Paris: the **first will be at the Villa Medici, from 3rd March until 22 May 2022**, the second at the **Beaux-Arts in Paris, from 19th October 2022 to 15th January 2023**.

Through a collection of almost **300 original works dating from the Renaissance to the modern era**, the two presentations of the exhibition will shed light on one of the most unconventional and overlooked aspects of the practice of drawing. By exploring the multiple features of the practice of scribbling and doodling, from sketches scribbled on the backs of canvases to expansive doodles conceived as artworks in themselves, the exhibition unveils how these **experimental, transgressive, regressive or liberating graphic gestures**, which appear to flout all laws and conventions, have punctuated the history of artistic creation.

The Renaissance period, in order to escape the constraints of Drawing (il Disegno) that what would later be referred to as "academic", produced free-flowing, instinctive and gestural graphic forms that may recall the rudimentary drawings of children, the wandering calligraphy found at the margin of manuscripts or the graffiti scrawled by unknown hands on city walls. Picasso had the habit of saying, regarding children: "it took me a lifetime to learn to draw like them"; Michelangelo had already amused himself by imitating the stick-like figures scrawled on the façades of Florentine homes. The exhibition thus explores this **hidden side of artistic creation**, by inviting visitors to **shift their view** toward the back of paintings or on the walls of artists' studios, to look at the margins or the verso of drawings sheets or beneath detached fresco decorations...

By displaying works by masters from the early modern period - **Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Titian, Bernini, etc.** - next to those of major modern and contemporary artists - **Picasso, Dubuffet, Henri Michaux, Helen Levitt, Cy Twombly, Basquiat, Luigi Pericle, and many others** - the exhibition reconsiders chronological classifications and traditional categories of art history (such as margin and centre, official and non-official, classic and contemporary, artwork and document) and places the practice of scribbling at the heart of artistic *making*.

Born from a research project undertaken by the two curators, this exhibition (co-produced with the **Beaux-Arts in Paris**) is the result of internationally coordinated effort. It has been made possible through the support of the **Centre Pompidou in Paris**, as well as a partnership with Rome's **Istituto Centrale per la Grafica**, a national Italian institution dedicated to graphic arts.

Scribbling and Doodling. From Leonardo da Vinci to Cy Twombly exhibition has been loaned many remarkable artworks from some of the most prestigious Italian and European institutions, including: the **Galleria degli Uffizi**, Florence; **Gallerie dell'Accademia**, Venice; **Museo e Real Bosco di**

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Capodimonte, Naples; **Biblioteca Reale**, Turin; **Opera Primaziale Pisana**, Pisa; **Musée du Louvre**, Paris; **Staatliche Museen**, Berlin; **Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis**, Porto; **Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève**, Paris; **Casa Buonarroti**, Florence; **Archivio Nazionale di Stato**, Rome; **Musée du Petit Palais**, Paris, and others.

Both the exhibitions in Rome and in Paris will offer a unique and yet unseen selection of artworks, as well as an original display. The Rome exhibition will present **almost 150 works**, across **six thematic sections** designed to create a dialogue between renaissance and contemporary artworks:

1. In the shadow of the workshop

A profusion of stunning drawings and graphic indulgences, most of which are unknown lie hidden on the back of panels and canvases of the most celebrated Renaissance masters, on the margins or versos of their drawing sheets, beneath detached frescoes. The exhibition gathers and unveils this hidden aspect of artistic creation.

2. Drawing at play

Drawing is at play during moments of relaxation and recreation when artists allow themselves free experimentations and develop a "scribbled style." Such "controlled regression" underlies the development of caricature which will become an artistic form in its own right.

3. Untidy compositions

Componimento inculto: this oxymoron, conceived by Leonardo da Vinci, refers to quick, crude and rudimentary sketches used to bring out the figure, its movements and attitudes. The drawing sheets of the masters are filled with wanderings and crossing-outs that become as illegible as stains capable of generating potential images.

4. The Childhood of art

With his *Portrait of a Child with a Drawing*, Giovanni Francesco Caroto inaugurates a series of paintings that play upon the inherent and often ironic *mise en abyme* of infantile drawing. In these artworks, fleeting and apparently insignificant scribbles, acquire a new and elevated status, introducing a theoretical reflection on the birth of art and creative impulse.

5. Childishness

In the early twentieth century, European avant-gardes while seeking primitive spontaneity looked at children's drawings in order to regenerate their art through a newfound vitality. On the one hand, the motif of the stick-figure and the grotesque Ubu character, and on the other, the instinctive and spiralling scribbles, serve as a source of inspiration to be broken down and reinterpreted.

6. The call of the wall

Graphic impulse is attracted by smooth plaster just as much as by old walls that present potential forms asking to be completed. The wall's temporal sedimentation fascinates modern artists who seek a repertoire of shapes and symbols in their unevenness and the inscriptions drawn upon them.

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In Rome venue there will be some exceptional exhibits: the extraordinary palimpsest of drawings sketched on the back of Giovanni Bellini's ***Triptych of the Madonna***, lent by the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, that the public will have the opportunity to view for the first time, along with drawings by **Titian, Pontormo, Fra Bartolomeo, Michelangelo, Benozzo Gozzoli, and Simone Cantarini**, as well as the works of **Carracci** and **Bernini**. Also featured is a grotesque head by **Leonardo da Vinci**, loaned for the occasion by the Beaux-Arts de Paris, as well as the school notebook of **Delacroix** belonging to the National Institute of Art history in Paris (INHA).

Several artworks, featured in both venues, will underscore the link between the Rome and the Paris exhibitions, such as the studio walls of **Mino da Fiesole** and **Giacometti studios**; the *Portrait of Child with a Drawing* by **Giovanni Francesco Caroto**; photographs by **Brassaï** and **Helen Levitt**, as well as several iconic works by **Cy Twombly, Asger Jorn, the Cobra group, Luigi Pericle**, and other modern masters such as **Giacomo Balla**.

THE CATALOGUE

An exhibition catalogue featuring all of the 300 artworks exhibited in Rome and in Paris will be published in both Italian and French, co-edited by the Villa Medici and Beaux-Arts de Paris editions. This reference publication on one of the most overlooked aspects of the practice of drawing offers a richly documented overview of the the two exhibitions.

Conceived and introduced by the curators of the exhibition, Francesca Alberti and Diane Bodart, the catalogue is divided into seven chapters and features inedited contributions from seventeen authors: Emmanuelle Brugerolles, Baptiste Brun, Angela Cerasuolo, Hugo Daniel, Vincent Debaene, Dario Gamboni, Anne-Marie Garcia, Tim Ingold, Giorgio Marini, Philippe-Alain Michaud, Anne Montfort-Tanguy, Mauro Mussolin, Gabriella Pace, Maria Stavrinaki, Nicola Suthor, Alice Thomine-Berrada, and Barbara Wittmann.

Graphic design: Mauro Bubbico

EXHIBITION EXTRAS: PROGRAM OF EVENTS

The exhibition at the Villa Medici will be accompanied by a **series of conferences and projections of artists' films from the collection of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.**

Invited by the curators, six researchers, art historians, philosophers, anthropologists and museum curators will share their knowledge of the practice of scribbling from the perspective of their own field of research:

- **THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2022**
Francesca Alberti (Art Historian and Director of the Department of Art History at the French Academy in Rome, IT), **Diane Bodart** (Art Historian, Professor at Columbia University, USA)
- **WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 2022**
Tim Ingold (Anthropologist, Emeritus Professor at the University of Aberdeen, UK)
- **THURSDAY 14 APRIL 2022**
Mauro Mussolin (Architect and Art Historian, Professor at the Università di Chieti Pescara, ITA)
- **THURSDAY 21 APRIL 2022**
Vincent Debaene (Historian of literature and anthropology, Professor at the University of Geneva, CH)
- **THURSDAY 5 MAY 2022**
Anne Montfort-Tanguy (Curator of the Cabinet d'art graphique at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR)
- **THURSDAY 19 MAY 2022**
Philippe-Alain Michaud (Curator of the film collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR)

Each of these meetings will be preceded by a guided tour of the exhibition by the two curators. Details of all these events can be found on the Villa Medici website: www.villamedici.it.

Themed visits and workshops for families and school groups will also be offered throughout the duration of the exhibition.

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CURATORS



Francesca Alberti is the Director of the Department of Art History at the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, as well as professor of Art History at the University of Tours and the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance. Her research focuses on the visual culture of the first modern era in art, as well as art theory, and the practice and culture of laughter in the Early Modern period. She is the author of *La Peinture facétieuse: Du rire sacré de Corrège aux fables burlesques de Tintoret* (Paris, 2016) and co-editor of two volumes: *Rire en images à la Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2018) and *Penser l'étrangeté, L'histoire de l'art de la Renaissance italienne entre bizarrerie, extravagance et singularité* (Rennes, 2012). Francesca Alberti was a Fellow at the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici (2014-2015), Fulbright visiting scholar at Columbia University (2016), grant holder of the Centre Allemand d'histoire de l'art à Paris (2013), as well as a member of the research council for the Fontainebleau Festival of Art History (2016 and 2021) and the Rendez-vous de l'Histoire in Blois (2020).

Photography © Gilles Raynaldy



Diane Bodart is David Rosand Associate Professor of Italian Renaissance Art History at Columbia University. She was educated in Art History at the University La Sapienza in Rome and at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. The recipient of fellowships from the French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici, the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte in Paris, and the Harvard University Center for Renaissance Studies (Villa I Tatti) in Florence, she was teaching at the University of Poitiers before moving to Columbia. Her research focuses on the arts theory and practice in Italy and in the territories of imperial Spain in the early modern period. She is the author of *Tiziano e Federico II Gonzaga* (Rome, 1998) and *Pouvoirs du portrait sous les Habsbourg d'Espagne* (Paris, 2011), and has co-edited *François Lemée. Traité des statues* (Weimar, 2012); *Rire en images à la Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2018); *Wearing Images* (2018); *Le grand âge et ses œuvres ultimes* (Rennes, 2020).

Photography © Gilles Raynaldy

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ASSOCIATE CURATOR



Philippe-Alain Michaud is curator at the National Museum of Modern Art - Centre Pompidou – in charge of the film collection – and professor of History and Theory of cinema at the University of Geneva. He is the author of *Aby Warburg et l'image en mouvement* (Macula, 1998), *Le peuple des images* (Desclée de Brouwer, 2004), *Sur le*

Film (Macula, 2016), *Âmes primitives. Figures de film, de peluche et de papier* (Macula, 2019) and has written numerous articles on the relationship between film and visual arts. He has also curated several exhibitions, including: *Comme le rêve le dessin* (Musée du Louvre/Centre Pompidou, 2004), *Le mouvement des images* (Centre Pompidou, 2006), *Nuits électriques* (Museum of Photography, Moscow and Laboral Art Centre, Gijon, 2007), *Tapis volants* (Villa Medici, Rome and Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, 2010), *Images sans fin, Brancusi photographie, film* (Centre Pompidou, 2012, with Quentin Bajac and Clément Chéroux), *Beat Generation* (Centre Pompidou, 2016), *L'œil extatique: Sergueï Eisenstein à la croisée des arts* (Centre Pompidou-Metz, 2019).

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→ 3rd March – 22nd May 2022, French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

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A co-production:



BEAUX-ARTS
DE PARIS

VILLA MÉDICIS
ACADÉMIE DE FRANCE
À ROME



With the support of:

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About the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

Founded in 1666 by Louis XIV, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is a French establishment located, since 1803, in the Villa Medici, a 16th-century villa surrounded by a seventeen-acre park, on the Pincio Hill, in the heart of Rome.

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

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

About the Beaux-Arts de Paris

The Beaux-Arts de Paris is a place of education and artistic experimentation as well as an exhibition and conservation centre for both historical and contemporary collections, and a publishing house. As the heir to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the Beaux-Arts de Paris houses more than 450,000 works and one of the largest libraries in Paris dedicated to contemporary art. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, its college trains artists of the highest level and has a key position on the contemporary art scene.

In compliance with the pedagogical principles that have always prevailed at the Beaux-Arts, training is provided in workshops, under the supervision of renowned artists, supplemented by a range of theoretical and technical courses. As the Beaux-Arts de Paris are steeped into economic and social reality, they also aim to build bridges between student life and professional life, encouraging meetings with the people who work in the art field.

About the Centre Pompidou

Since 1977, the Centre Pompidou has been deeply rooted in the city and open to the world and to innovation. Its iconic building is home to Europe's richest and one of the world's largest collections of modern and contemporary art, in addition to exhibitions, symposiums, festivals, shows, projections, and workshops for young people. Its extremely rich program at the crossroads of art forms and audiences attracts more than 3.5 million visitors every year. True to its ambition to make culture

and creation available to as many people as possible, the Centre Pompidou also develops its regional and international presence.

About the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica

The Istituto Centrale per la Grafica preserves, studies and promotes one of the widest Italian collections of drawings, prints, engraving plates and photographs, through multiple initiatives and scientific projects carried out in collaboration with the main national and international institutions operating in this field, these include exhibitions, conferences, internships and seminars, as well as the digital resources. The Institute's collections of plates, prints, drawings and photographs are complemented by conservation spaces and a printing laboratory.

For more than 45 years, the Istituto has been constantly promoting research into its collections, defining its central role in Italy in matters of study, conservation and promotion of graphic works.

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The French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici thanks HALTADEFINIZIONE for its support in making possible the presence of the work *Ritratto di Fanciullo con disegno* by Giovanni Francesco Caroto within the exhibition.

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