

Changing the prose of the world

Fellows' exhibition at Villa Medici

June 28 – September 8, 2025

With the sixteen fellows in residence at Villa Medici:

Haig Aivazian, Bianca Bondi, Jérôme Printemps Clément-Wilz, Nicolas Daubanes, Abdessamad El Montassir, Alessandro Gallicchio, Amalia Laurent, Pierre-Yves Macé, Clovis Maillet, Nicolas Sarzeaud, Claudia Jane Scroccaro, Seynabou Sonko, Ana Vaz, Pierre Von-Ow, Lise Wajeman, and Louisa Yousfi

Curator: Lilou Vidal



VILLA MEDICI

As it does every year when summer is on the horizon, the French Academy in Rome brings together the projects produced by its sixteen fellows in a collective exhibition to mark the end of their year-long residence at Villa Medici. On this occasion, the artworks leave the intimacy of the studios for the exhibition spaces where they meet the public.

On display from June 28 to September 8, 2025, the exhibition curated by **Lilou Vidal** is entitled ***Changer la prose du monde (Changing the prose of the world)***, a reference to the text by the Italian poet Amelia Rosselli, whose rhythmic and dissident language disrupted the foundations of standardized language and dominant narratives. This invitation to take a fresh look at world writing echoes the workings of the artistic, poetic, political, and ecological stories behind the multi-disciplinary research carried out by the Villa Medici fellows in a group activity based on diverse voices and thoughts.

The main feature of the exhibition is the diversity of the artistic practices on show, from literature to music, as well as art history, the visual arts, photography, and cinema. This visual account is punctuated by phrases chosen by the fellows, like a deconstructed text in the pages of a book without beginning or end. In response to the Amelia Rosselli's words, this process of random co-writing spreads across the walls of the exhibition spaces, producing both a collective effort and the expression of sixteen individuals.

During their year in the Italian capital, the Fellows are encouraged to experience the residency as a laboratory in which to experiment, offering the chance to embark on long-term research, follow new paths, and to allow themselves to be surprised or guided by what the encounter with other artistic practices and geographies produces. The exhibition is the extension of this experience. It is also an opportunity to explore how to format projects that fall outside conventional exhibition categories. How can ongoing research be brought to life? How can the visual arts, the living arts and the literature be articulated?

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a performance section in which the Villa Medici fellows join forces. Activations, performances, workshops, and screenings involving the fellows will bring the exhibition spaces to life throughout the summer.

A cultural mediation program will be provided during the exhibition by nine students from **NABA**, Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti (July 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, and 20, 2025).

The exhibition scenography was created thanks to the graphic work of **Montasser Drissi**.

Publication

To coincide with the exhibition, the Empire publishing house and Villa Medici are co-publishing a book reproducing the projects created by the fellows during their year in residence in Rome, enriched with contributions from authors invited to put the fellows' work into perspective.

With contributions from: **Lily Bloom, Félix Boggio Éwanjé-Épée, Barbara Casavecchia, Chouf, Anne Egger, Haytham El-Wardany, Lise Guéhenneux, Léopold Lambert, Quinn Latimer, Stella Magliani-Belkacem, Michele Mele, Romain Noel, Zef Paci, Léa Rivière, Charles Robinson, and Elvia Wilk.**

Villa Medici's Fellows (2024-2025)

Haig Aivazian

Visual arts



Haig Aivazian (1980, Lebanon) is a visual artist based in Beirut. His work traverses moving image, sculpture/installation, drawing and performance, and explores how power integrates, affects and displaces people, objects, animals, landscape and architecture. Between 2020 and 2022, he was artistic director of the Beirut Art Center, where he founded and directed the digital publication thederivative.org.

His residency project explores the dynamic between darkness and artificial light, a powerful beam that shapes and reflects transactions of power and control in modern life. From its origins in policing, street lighting – a coding of the links between darkness and crime – has become a central tool of urban planning and public infrastructure. Haig Aivazian uses the magic lantern as basic material and tells the legal stories of who possesses and who is dispossessed of the right to inhabit the night, and of the emancipatory rituals of those driven to hide or to adopt reduced visibility.

Bianca Bondi

Visual arts



Bianca Bondi (1986, South Africa) is a visual artist based in Paris. Her practice involves the activation or elevation of mundane objects through the use of chemical reactions. The materials she works with are chosen for their transformative potential or intrinsic properties, emphasizing the interconnectedness of things in the world, their transience, and revealing the cycles of life and death. Her work has been exhibited at Lafayette Anticipations (2023), Fondation Louis Vuitton (2021), Casino Luxembourg (2020), and as part of the Biennales de Lyon 2019, Busan 2020, and Thaïlande 2021.

Her residency project is inspired by the concept of *rewilding*, a branch of conservation biology. By working with local actors, Bianca Bondi's main objective would be to broaden her visual arts language, which already incorporates life at the molecular level, to include other, more developed living elements. She would like to deepen her research into Roman antiquity and sanctuaries in particular, to experiment with new immersive installations encouraging the presence of life among forms inspired by the past. At the same time, she intends to work on her first monograph.

Jérôme Printemps Clément-Wilz

Screenwriting



Jérôme Printemps Clément-Wilz (France) is a writer-director who works mainly on documentary material. His films have been selected for the Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Toronto festivals, among others, and are included in the collections of the Cinémathèque Française. He was awarded the Grand Prize at DOXA and the Hong Kong Film Festival and a Star from LaSCAM. His work also extends from performance to photography and installation. With the La Tendre Émeute, Epectase and Carmel Miracle groups he has appeared, in particular, at the Zénith in Paris and the TRAFO Museum and has been exhibited at Circulation(s) and at Mécènes du Sud. He is also a founder member of the Ateliers Wonder.

His residency project is devoted to writing his first feature-length fiction film. What if St Paul were alive today, in contemporary France imbued with queerness? What if we could give a voice to the Christian and pagan communities he visited in the 1st century? Jérôme Clément-Wilz's *St Paul* explores a Christianity of the margins, shaped by fluidity and the desire for emancipation. Between epistles and social media, Paul interrogates the figures of the saint and the prophet, and positions himself as God's new influencer.

Nicolas Daubanes

Visual arts



Nicolas Daubanes (1983, France) is an artist living and working in Perpignan. For over 15 years, his work has revolved around the prison world (drawings, installations, videos), arising from immersive periods spent in detention centers. He was awarded the Mezzanine Sud les Abattoirs Prize in 2017, the Amis du Palais de Tokyo Prize in 2018, and the Drawing Now prize in 2021. He presented a large installation at the Lyon Biennale in 2022. In 2025, he will present a solo exhibition at the Panthéon in Paris.

His residency project is based on the Ribibbia prison, north of Rome. Borrowing its title directly from Goliarda Sapienza's novel, *L'Université de Rebibbia* refers to a single body of works and activations grouped in three sections: the *Codex*, *Universités des prisons*; *Cosa Mangiare* [What to Eat]; and the *Parloir* [Visitors' Room]. Each of these three projects has a graphic, editorial, and performative dimension at the same time. Each, from a specific angle, seeks to question, to shape, or to develop bridges between the inside and the outside of the prison.

Abdessamad El Montassir

Visual arts



Abdessamad El Montassir (1989, Morocco) is a visual artist. In collaboration with scientists, citizen-witnesses, and militants, he develops an artistic practice at the intersection of research and creation. His works are the fruits of a meticulous process in which the collection of intangible testimonies and collective narratives serves to revive oral memories that are very often buried and silenced by official history.

His projects explore the notion of trauma and the way in which acts of violence experienced, (un)transmitted, or anticipated are incarnated in the bodies of those touched by them. In this process, non-human entities such as plants play a central part.

His residency project *Âabide l'kadia* focuses on Maddahas, groups of poets in Mauritania. It plunges us into the spaces of resistance borne by those communities, through a rhizomatic narrative that connects testimonies of militants, songs of Maddahas, language as a tool of domination, hairstyles as cartography, all connected by the myth of a shell. On a broader scale, *Âabide l'kadia* offers a reflection on situations of domination, where new models emerge as spaces of emancipation constantly being reinvented.

Alessandro Gallicchio

Art history



Alessandro Gallicchio (1986, Italy) is a lecturer in contemporary art history at Sorbonne University, a member of the Centre André Chastel and a research associate at CETOBaC. With a PhD in art history from the universities of Florence, Paris-Sorbonne and Bonn (2016), he pursues his research following the methodologies developed by the social and political history of art. He is interested in the influences of nationalism and anti-Semitism in the construction of artistic discourse, and in the relationship between art, architecture and urban space in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. In 2021, he was awarded the André Chastel grant from Villa Medici for a research project entitled *The Albania Pavilion at the Prima Mostra Triennale delle Terre d'Oltremare in Naples (1940). Traces of a fascist "coloniality" device*. On April 21, 2025, he became Director of the Department of Art History at Villa Medici.

His residency project is dedicated to writing a book on Edi Hila. Adopting a transnational and transdisciplinary perspective, his project analyzes the work of an artist who has consistently sought to capture the ambiguities and complexities of contemporary Albania. Attuned to spatial dynamics and a keen observer of the socio-political changes that have shaped the country, Hila has developed a language that could be described as "paradoxical realism," which will be at the core of this historically and critically engaged reinterpretation.

Amalia Laurent

Visual arts



Amalia Laurent (1992, France) is an artist and researcher who lives and works between Paris and Nîmes. She addresses topographical, geographical, and cartographic themes that are both real and fantasized. Her obsession with alternative realities has given birth to a corpus of works – dyeings, installations, performances, sculptures – that makes the frontiers between real and/or parallel worlds tangible. She is currently conducting research at the EHESS on the links between architectural arrangements and processional practices, and she is also a member of the Javanese music group Genthasari from the Pantcha Indra association.

His residency project finds its inspiration in the *angklung*, a portable Javanese musical instrument that emits a single note for one person, often used in processions. Drawing on its radical nature, the central point of this artistic exploration, Laurent aims to question collective efficacy in an urban context and to grasp the way in which sound can transform and reveal spatial dynamics in the city. So this comparison seeks to explore the influence of walking and acoustic resonance on the perception and appropriation of space, while establishing parallels between Javanese and Western musical practices in the Middle Ages.

Pierre-Yves Macé

Musical composition



Pierre-Yves Macé (1980, France) is a composer. His work crosses electroacoustic and instrumental music with a method that borrows from *musique concrète*, taking recorded sound, the document or file, as a primary source. He releases discs on the Tzadik, Sub Rosa, and Brocoli labels. He writes scores for the *L'Instant donné*, *Les Cris de Paris*, and *Ictus* ensembles. He collaborates regularly with directors (Sylvain Creuzevault, Joris Lacoste), choreographers (Emmanuelle Hunh, Liz Santoro, and Pierre Godard), and writers (Pierre Senges, Mathieu Larnaudie). His music was the subject of a Portrait for the 2023 Paris Autumn Festival.

His residency project is devoted to writing the score of *Lady F.*, a dramatic musical work for voice (mezzo-soprano) and ensemble, with a libretto by Pierre Senges. The plot develops around the character who gives the piece its title (F. for Fenice), a successful pop singer, whom we see in her dressing room just before a concert, and who, for some mysterious reason, refuses to go on stage, a decision that causes a shock wave in the globalized world of networks. With this piece, the composer will project the recurrent issues present in his work – the interplay between presence and absence, the musicality of the spoken word, the influence of pop and rock music – in fictional form.

Clovis Maillet

Visual arts



Clovis Maillet (1981, France) has published *La parenté hagiographique* [Hagiographic Kinship] (2014) and *Les genres fluides* [Genderfluid] (2020). He has directed several issues of academic journals while conducting research on the uses of history in contemporary art (*Witch TV*, 2021; *Un Moyen Âge émancipateur* [An Emancipatory Middle Ages], with Thomas Golsenne, 2021). Clovis Maillet practices performance art and installation with Louise Hervé, and has been making films since the early 2000s. They have published *Attraction Étrange* [Strange Attraction] (2013), *Spectacles sans objet* [Pointless Shows] (2015) and *L'Iguane* [The Iguana] 2018. He co-wrote the show *Medieval Crack* with the Foulles group.

His residency project invites us to think about a historical condition (that of women and gender minorities who think violence and live with the dead), starting from a specific bereavement (the death of a mother crushed by antifeminism and dissolved in the water of a river). The project unfolds in three political phases. *Fare l'amore tutte le volte che si vuole* is inspired by the struggle of the Movimento di Lotta Femminile, which fought for sexual and contraceptive freedom in the 1970s. *Il lavoro di riproduzione* evokes the 1980s, antifeminism, conjugal and intra-family violence. *La ricostruzione* is the re-emergence of feminism, illuminated by trans studies and community mourning.

Nicolas Sarzeaud

Art history



Nicolas Sarzeaud (1992, France) is a graduate of the École du Louvre, with a doctorate from the EHESS, and an associate member of the Centre de Recherche Historique. In 2021 he defended a thesis on the cult of the Shrouds of Christ from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, to be published by Cerf in 2024. He has taught at the University Lumière Lyon II and the University of Lorraine and has published numerous articles on the cult of images in the late Middle Ages and the way they were shown, looked at, and disseminated through intensive production of copies, which he resituates in a long history of facsimiles.

His residency project, *Sur les traces du Christ à Rome (XIV^e-XVI^e s.) : culte des images et vérité visuelle à la fin du Moyen Âge* [On the Traces of Christ in Rome (14th–16th Centuries): The Cult of Images and Visual Truth in the Late Middle Ages], centers around the traces of Christ in Rome. In Rome, Christ can be tracked: as well as the Veronica, an imprint of the face of Christ on a cloth, several other Holy Faces coexist there with traces of his feet, left on the stone when he appeared on the Quo Vadis path, and other relics stained with his blood. Through this investigation of the intense devotion they received from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century and the discourses surrounding their dissemination in the form of representations and reproductions, Nicolas Sarzeaud aims to show the mutations at work in visual culture between the Middle Ages and the Modern Era.

Claudia Jane Scroccaro

Musical composition



Claudia Jane Scroccaro (1984, Italy) is an Italian composer based in Paris, where she teaches electronic music at Ircam. She seeks to achieve a coherent combination of instrumental and electronic writing structured through personal computer-assisted composition tools. Her music fluctuates between two extreme temporalities expressed through an alternation between unbridled, compulsive rhythms and immersive, introspective explorations, interwoven with the expressiveness of the spoken voice.

Her residency project is devoted to the composition of *Faro*, following the unique directions initiated by the poet Amelia Rosselli (Paris 1930–Rome 1996), a cycle for soprano, ensemble and electronics, which seeks to represent her literary and intellectual work in a more comprehensive way. The project therefore focuses on the essential mechanisms that are already at the heart of her work: the links between speech and music. The project envisages an international co-production between the soprano Johanna Vargas, the Musikfabrik ensemble, the Fondation Royaumont, the Fondation Pierre Boulez, and Ircam, and is expected to be premiered in Ircam's ManiFeste Festival in 2025.

Seynabou Sonko

Literature



Seynabou Sonko (1993, France) is an artist from the Senegalese diaspora, based in Paris. A graduate of UQAM in Montreal, ENSAV La Cambre in Brussels, and the University of Paris 8, her first steps in literature were marked by the publication of texts in magazines such as *Sabir*, *Muscle*, and *Sève*. In 2023 she published her first novel, *Djinns*, in Éditions Grasset, which won the Prix du Cheval Blanc and was shortlisted for the Porte Dorée prize. She also works as a musician, under the name Naboo. Her musical world, just like her writing, shows boundless creativity and an explicit desire to break down boundaries.

Her residency project uses the image of *tombolos*, those pieces of land that jut out into the sea, sometimes forming islands isolated from the mainland, to explore the dialectics of overflowing, whether in language, through the notion of creolization developed by the Martinican poet, novelist, and philosopher Édouard Glissant, or in the hybridism specific to *Giallo*, those Italian genre novels and films on the boundary between detective fiction, horror, and eroticism.

Ana Vaz

Photography/Film



Ana Vaz (1986, Brazil) is an artist and filmmaker born in the Brazilian Midwest, which is inhabited by the ghosts buried under its modernist capital: Brasília. Her provocative filmography questions cinema as an art of the (in)visible and an instrument capable of dehumanizing the human, broadening connections with non-human or spectral forms of life. Her artistic activities, resulting from or expanding on her filmmaking, are also embodied in writing, critical teaching, installations, or collective marches.

Her residency project is devoted to writing *ANHNANGUERA*, a screenplay under development for a tran(s/ce)historical fiction arising from the history of the colonization of the Brazilian Far West, which is Ana Vaz's birthplace and the central axis of her entire filmography. The film is based on a wild interpretation of the book *História da Terra e do Homem no Planalto Central* [*History of the Earth and Man in the Central Plateau*] by Paulo Bertran, a historical kaleidoscope that intermingles geological, pre-modern, and modern time. The archive of the Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, a Catholic congregation based in Rome that was responsible for the evangelization of the country, is one of the guides for the writing of this cosmopolitical Western.

Pierre Von-Ow

Art history



Pierre Von-Ow (1992, France) is a researcher in art history. His work is mainly concerned with the intersections between arts and sciences in the Early Modern era. He is currently completing his dissertation at Yale University on a history of perspective in Great Britain and the British Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In 2021, Pierre Von-Ow curated the virtual exhibition *William Hogarth's Topographies* for the Lewis Walpole Library. Among his publications, he has recently co-edited an anthology of Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's writings on film (*Propos filmiques*, Paris, Macula, 2021) as well as a special issue of the journal *Écrans* on *William Hogarth et le cinéma* (Paris, Garnier, 2024).

His residency project is devoted to writing two studies. The first is concerned with a tangible history of perspective. This project examines the various drawing machines, folding plates and other tactile devices developed for teaching geometry and the laws of perspective between the Quattrocento and the Enlightenment. The second study deals with the circulation of knowledge on anamorphosis between Italy, France, and Britain. His research attempts to determine how these “monstrous perspectives” were perceived in a British context marked by distrust of images.

Lise Wajeman

Literature



Lise Wajeman (1973, France) teaches comparative literature at Paris Cité University. She works on Renaissance literature and art, and has published, in particular, *L'Amour de l'art : Eroticism of the Artist and the Viewer in the Sixteenth Century* (Droz, 2015). Since 2016 she has also been following current developments in contemporary literature as a critic: she has published numerous articles in *Mediapart* and is a regular contributor to the podcast *L'Esprit critique*.

Her residency project, entitled *Seconde zone*, is devoted to writing a praise of commentary, of the reader, the viewer, the word that comes after, in second place: the word that stands in the shadow of the work. The text will be hybrid in form, combining first-person narrative, commentary on artworks, and literary theory. The ultimate aim is to destabilize the authority of the “I” that leads the narrative: pervaded by the otherness of works, it is a permeable person. It will be a question of turning this weakness into a self-assertion, a “pride”, against whoever claims to be the only one that makes sense – which is not without political considerations.

Louisa Yousfi

Literature



Louisa Yousfi (1988, France) is a journalist and literary critic. She is the author of *Rester barbare [Remaining Barbarian]* (La Fabrique, 2022), a work in which she appropriates the theme of “barbarism”, borrowed from the Algerian writer Kateb Yacine, to present a political and literary account of Black and Arab people in France (re)becoming barbarian. More recently she has participated in the collective book *Contre la littérature politique [Against Political Literature]* (with Pierre Alferi, Nathalie Quintane, Leslie Kaplan, Tanguy Viel, and Volodine, La Fabrique, 2024).

Her residency project is devoted to writing a work of fiction based on a Franco-Algerian family suffering the ordeal of the death of the father, a narrative that she will strive to bring into contact with traditions of writing other than testimonial form or archival documents, and in language driven by a radical syncretism. This will particularly involve lost stories, secret heritage, spiritual biology, and intergenerational telepathy between a people of indigenous ghosts and their descendants engaged in a series of “herculean labors” to be performed in an increasingly hostile world.

Click on the following link to discover the world of the 16 fellows: [The fellows 2024-2025](#)

Exhibition curator



Lilou Vidal is an exhibition curator and editor based in Turin. She has been responsible for several monographic and group exhibitions at various museums and institutions, such as *The Weight of the Concrete* **Ezio Gribaudo**, co-curated by Tom Engels, Museion Bolzano (2024) / Grazer Kunstverein (2023), *Ernesto de Sousa - Exercises of Poetic Communication & other aesthetic operators*, Galerias Municipais, Lisbon (2022); exhibition for the 22nd Prix Fondation Pernod Ricard, *Bonaventure, This Is My Body, My Body Is Your Body, My Body Is The Body of The Word*, Centre d'Art Le Delta Namur (2019–2020), *Guy Mees: The Weather is Quiet Cool and Soft*, MuZee, Ostend (2019) / Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2018).

In 2014, she founded and directed the Bureau des Réalités in Brussels, based on a program focused on language, poetry, and its embodied manifestations (2014–2019). She has recently edited several books and artist monographs, including *Tomaso Binga – Euforia* (Lenz Press, 2024), and works regularly with publishing houses and magazines such as Axis, Paraguay Press, Sternberg Press, Nero, and Mousse, to name but a few.

She is the co-founder alongside Cally Spooner of UNA SCUOLA AL CASTELLO DI RIVOLI, a new venue for artistic teaching since 2024 at the Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea. She is the artistic and academic director of the Archivio Gribaudo in Turin.

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 art historians of the highest caliber 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.

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

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