

## Re-enchanting Villa Medici 3 redesign projects and 2 new spaces open to competition

The French Academy in Rome announces the artists, designers and creative craftspeople chosen for the refurbishment of four spaces at Villa Medici, made possible through the Fondation Bettencourt Schueller, a leading patron of the crafts at Villa Medici, and the partnership with the Manufactures nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier national.

**India Mahdavi**, invited to design the project for the Turkish Room and Studiolo 29

**Edgar Jayet**, invited to design the project *Lo Scigno* project for Room 27  
**Acte Deux (Hugo L'ahélec and Johanna Lapray)**, winner studio of the competition for the refurbishment of Room 19 with the project *Still Life* and more than **twenty applied arts professionals** associated with the projects

In addition, the *Re-enchanting Villa Medici* program continues with the launch of a new call for projects from May 7 to August 24, 2026 for the refurbishment of two spaces: Studio 5 bis and Studiolo 26.



# VILLA MEDICI

## Re-enchanting Villa Medici

Launched by Sam Stourdzé in 2022, Re-enchanting Villa Medici is the most extensive refurbishment project in the recent history of Villa Medici since the works carried out by the painter Balthus, director of the institution from 1961 to 1977.

This ambitious project brings together major international names in design and architecture and young contemporary creative figures, with a particular focus on the applied arts. Four years after its launch, it has already made it possible to refurbish twenty spaces – salons, rooms and gardens – involving more than 100 French and European architects, designers, and applied artists.

In 2026, the project is continuing with the refurbishment of sixteen new spaces, thanks to the **Bettencourt Schueller Foundation**, a major partner in the re-enchantment of Villa Medici from the outset, and with the support of **Manufactures Nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier National**.

The artists, designers, and craftspeople called upon to refurbish four of these spaces – the **Turkish Room** and **three spaces** in the Villa's historic building – have just been chosen: **India Mahdavi**, **Edgar Jayet** and **Acte Deux (Hugo L'ahélec and Johanna Lapray)**. The new design of these spaces will be unveiled in 2027.

## New call for projects

A new call for projects is open from May 7 to August 24, 2026 to select the architects and designers who will refurbish another two spaces in the Villa, in collaboration with applied arts professionals: **Studio 5 bis** (a 21 m<sup>2</sup> apartment with a terrace, located at the edge of the gardens) and **Studiolo 26** (a 38 m<sup>2</sup> space in the historic building).

Consult the call for projects

<https://villamedici.it/appels-a-projets-reenchanter-la-villa-medici/>

# The Turkish Room and Studiolo 29

To be unveiled in 2027

**India Mahdavi**, architect, designer, and scenographer, Paris (France)

Partners: **Craman Lagarde** (furniture), **Pierre Frey** (textiles), **CC Tapis** (rugs), **Gebrüder Thonet Vienna** (furniture), **TRECA** (mattresses and bed linen).

In collaboration with: **Atelier d'Offard** (handcrafted wallpaper), **Hermine Torikian** (artistic cabinetmaking and marquetry), **Lesage Intérieurs** (handmade embroidery), **Pascal Michalon** (woodworking and cabinetmaking)

*Non-exhaustive lists; complete lists to follow*



The Turkish Room before refurbishment

India Mahdavi was invited by Sam Stourdzé, Director of Villa Medici, to refurbish the Turkish Room and studiolo 29 located on the lower floor.

As part of the Re-enchanting Villa Medici program, India Mahdavi continues the dialogue initiated during her first intervention on the *piano nobile* in 2023. Where her previous project unfolded across a succession of rooms conceived as an enfilade and experienced as a journey, this new chapter is set within one of the two towers of Villa Medici.

At the top, the Turkish Room, designed in 1833 by Horace Vernet, embodies an imagined Orient, recomposed from multiple references. Born of the Romantic imagination, it freely blends Arabo-Andalusian motifs, Ottoman vocabulary and naturalistic elements in a composition that owes more to collage than to faithful reconstruction. More than a historical record, this space is a projection — a fictional setting expressing a fascination with a reconstructed elsewhere. Over time, the room has been continuously reinterpreted, each era inscribing its own imaginaries and desires upon it.

This new project extends into the adjoining rooms, set beneath the slope of the roof, where the constraints of volume and geometry call for a more intimate approach. Faced with this heritage, India Mahdavi seeks neither to erase nor to reconstruct, but to continue. Her intervention enters into dialogue with the existing space, which she approaches as an "appropriation of an appropriation". Drawing on the motifs and decorative intensity of the original room, she composes a personal universe, nourished by her own cultural heritage and plural memory.

Colours, materials and patterns are layered to the point of an assumed saturation, asserting a contemporary reading of this subjective Orient. Where Horace Vernet projected an external gaze, India Mahdavi develops an interior vision, shaped by lived experience, in which visual density becomes language. This is neither a restoration nor a quotation, but a sensitive response to a space that has never laid claim to authenticity.

On the lower floor, studiolo 29 extends this reflection in a more pared-back, almost condensed form, offering a counterpoint to the decorative richness of the spaces above.

Building on her first intervention at Villa Medici, India Mahdavi surrounds herself with French and European artisans and houses of excellence, continuing a close collaborative work around craftsmanship and the handling of materials.



### **India Mahdavi**

Architect, designer, and scenographer India Mahdavi lives and works in Paris. Her studio, founded in 2000, is notable for the diversity of its international projects, which range from architecture to interior design, scenography, and furniture and object design, displaying genuine transdisciplinarity – with particular attention to craftsmanship and know-how, as a way of celebrating the bonds that unite gesture, memory, imagination, the eye, and materials. Known for her unique settings, all of which, in their own way, celebrate a cosmopolitan art of living, India Mahdavi expresses a modern vision of comfort and elegance – not without a certain sense of humor. Multilingual and multi-faceted, she has become a benchmark, developing a highly personal vocabulary through each of her creations.

# Room 27

## Lo Scrigno Project

To be unveiled in 2027

**Studio Edgar Jayet**, architects, Paris (France) and Venice (Italy)  
**Rinck**, interior designers and decorators, Paris (France)

And three winners of the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®:

**Nicolas Marischael**, silversmith, Paris (France)

**Nicolas Pinon**, lacquer artist, Paris (France)

**François-Xavier Richard**, **Atelier d'Offard**, dominotier (craft wallpaper maker) and “ennobler of paper”, Tours (France)

Partners: **Sofa Industries** (tapware/washbasins), **ClassIcon** (bathroom/mirror wall lights), **Meljac** (switches/sockets), **Anna Lari** (bedside lamps), **TRECA** (mattresses/bed linen)  
In collaboration with: **Chiarastella Cattana** (fabrics and linen), **Cosi Tabellini** (bathroom accessories).



Room 27 before refurbishment

Edgar Jayet was invited by Villa Medici to refurbish room 27.

Nestled in the South Tower of Villa Medici, overlooking Rome like a well-kept secret, Room 27 – a symmetrical counterpart to Studiolo 29 – possesses the charm of a discreet hideaway. The *Lo Scrigno* (“Casket”) project originated in the coming together of exceptional craftspeople and continues the history of Villa Medici, evoking the *studiolo*, a place of study and introspection in which to meditate, rest, and create – a constant source of inspiration for an artist at work. At the top of the tower, you are still thinking about strolling in the garden. It is through the project’s orientation, its materiality, enriched with acanthus leaves and other botanical references, that an interior landscape emerges, enabling us to enter into dialogue with the spirit of Villa Medici.

For the *Lo Scrigno* project, Edgar Jayet has teamed up with Rinck, an interior design and decoration company, and with three applied arts professionals who have been awarded the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®: silversmith Nicolas Marischael (2015 prize), lacquer artist Nicolas Pinon (2020 prize), and François-Xavier Richard for Atelier d’Offard, a creator of handcrafted wallpapers (2009 prize).



### **Edgar Jayet**

Winner of the Grand Prix Van Cleef & Arpels in 2021, Edgar Jayet founded an interior architecture and design studio in Paris and Venice. The firm roots its projects in history and traditional techniques, fostering a dialogue with outstanding artisans. It creates spaces and pieces without compromising on quality and craftsmanship, working hand in hand with French workshops. This exacting approach has led to the creation of collections acquired by the Mobilier National and prestigious institutional commissions for the Fondation Carmignac and the Château de Chantilly.



### **Rinck**

Rinck, a French interior design and decoration company, designs and manufactures exceptional interiors and collectible pieces, a tradition of prestige it has maintained since 1841. Rinck conducts its activities through its interior architecture and design agency, as well as its furniture and configuration workshops. Valentin Goux is Rinck's president and artistic director.



### **Nicolas Marischael**

Founded in 1924 by Édouard Marischael, Maison Marischael Orfèvre upholds a tradition of outstanding craftsmanship. Its creations with their refined designs complement the precious antique objects restored by the silversmith. Drawing on his solid experience, Nicolas Marischael continues to place this expertise in the service of the most distinguished museums and collectors. In 2015 he was awarded the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®.



### **Nicolas Pinon**

A graduate of the École Boulle, Nicolas Pinon trained in traditional techniques before specializing in Japanese *urushi* lacquer. His apprenticeship in Europe and Japan, particularly under master Nagatoshi Onishi, gave him a unique expertise. As an independent lacquer artist, he now combines restoration, contemporary creation, and technological innovation. Nicolas Pinon was the 2020 winner of the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®.



### **François-Xavier Richard, Atelier d'Offard**

Atelier d'Offard continues to practice the traditional skills of block-printed wallpaper and *carton pierre* (stone-effect pasteboard). Founded in 1999 by François-Xavier Richard, it combines contemporary creation with heritage preservation. Driven by a passion for paper, the workshop explores all its richness and potential. François-Xavier Richard was the 2009 winner of the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®.

# Room 19

## *Still Life* Project

To be unveiled in 2027

**Acte Deux, Hugo L'ahélec and Johanna Lapray**, designers and interior architects, Paris (France)

**CRAFT**, Centre for Research on the Arts of Fire and Earth, Limoges (France)

**Manufacture de Digoin**, stoneware and pottery factory, Digoin (France)

Partners: **Atelier de la Boiserie** (artistic woodworking and cabinetmaking), **Kann** (furniture design and manufacture), **Laurent Juteau x MAAS** (decorative coatings), **rvb®** (tapware), **Viabizzuno** (lighting solutions), **TRECA** (mattresses and bed linen).

In collaboration with: **Atelier Tras - Naïs Campedel** (low-warp tapestries), **Kvadrat** (fabric for curtains), **Giovanni Capuano** (making curtains).



Room 19 before refurbishment

Hugo L'ahélec and Johanna Lapray (Acte Deux) are the winners of the competition for the refurbishment of room 19.

The *Still Life* project showcases ceramics through the artisanal production of coatings, furniture, and accessories that revisit the still life genre of painting. It organizes the space in successive phases of composition and sets up a visual interplay with the visitor. Surfaces tiled in deep colors form a backdrop of shimmering drapes whose glaze evokes a painterly touch. Modeled in bas-relief, these drapes recall classical representations, as well as an almost trivial sign of the ordinary. Small elements, borrowed from painting and rendered in trompe-l'oeil, lead the eye from one place in the room to another.

*Still Life* refers to the genre of painting that depicts inanimate natural or human-made objects. It literally means “motionless life”, but Acte Deux suggests another possible interpretation: “there is still life here”. The references, materials, and execution employed aim to give the occupant the feeling that the place where they have taken up residence is “inhabited”. Acte Deux thereby seeks to locate this project as a continuation of the various interventions that have taken place in Villa Medici since Balthus, in a tension between artistic ghosts of the past and contemporary creation.



### **Acte Deux**

Acte Deux is a Paris-based design studio for objects and spaces. Hugo L'ahélec and Johanna Lapray have developed a cross-disciplinary practice, designing in close, sometimes mischievous, proximity to the visual arts and their history. Their practice plays on the juxtaposition of references, between abstraction and evocation, sophistication and spontaneity. More than functional uses, they aim to think of situations, domestic or professional, in which functions are integrated into a narrative made of forms, materials, and details that appeal to memories, sensations, even emotion.



### **CRAFT**

CRAFT (the Centre for Research on the Arts of Fire and Earth) was founded in 1993 on the initiative of the French Ministry of Culture. As a studio for contemporary creation in ceramics, CRAFT hosts creative figures from the international art scene and invites them to develop experimental projects at its workshop in Limoges. By taking on artistic challenges and combining creativity, innovation, and collaboration with local industry, CRAFT has become a leading center for current ceramic art. For Room 19 at Villa Medici, CRAFT produced the stoneware bas-reliefs, the wall lights, the mirror, and other accessories for the project in Limoges porcelain. Ceramicist Tristan Dassonville created the initial models for the bas-reliefs.



### **Manufacture de Digoin**

Founded in Burgundy in 1875, the Manufacture de Digoin is an iconic craft company, renowned for its expertise in working with Burgundy stoneware. For nearly 150 years, it has been designing and manufacturing everyday objects for tableware, gardens, and interior decoration, upholding a legacy of excellent craftsmanship. The Manufacture is notable for total control of its production chain. It develops its own stoneware clay and glazes, for example. Today, its artisans put their expertise at the service of prestigious brands, combining tradition and innovation in demanding collaborations. For Room 19 at Villa Medici, Manufacture de Digoin produced the tiles, the basin, the sink, and the coffee table.

### **The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici**

Founded by Louis XIV in 1666, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is a French institution housed since 1803 in Villa Medici, a sixteenth-century building surrounded by a seventeen-acre garden and located on the Pincian Hill, in the heart of Rome. As 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 host artists, creators, and researchers of high caliber in residence for long stays of a year or shorter periods; to implement a cultural and artistic program encompassing all areas of the arts and creative disciplines and aimed at a wide audience; and to preserve, 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.

Find out more about the *Re-enchanting Villa Medici project*.

### **The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation**

“Let us give wings to talent”

Both a family foundation and a recognized public-interest organization since its creation in 1987, the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation aims to “give wings to talent” in order to contribute to France’s success and influence. To this end, it seeks out, selects, supports, assists, and promotes women and men who are imagining tomorrow’s world today, in three areas that contribute tangibly to the common good: life sciences, the arts, and social inclusiveness. In a spirit of philanthropy, the Foundation acts through prizes, donations, personalized support, enriching communication, and co-constructed initiatives. Since its creation, the Foundation has awarded 676 prizes and supported over 1,400 projects carried out by talented individuals, teams, associations, and organizations.

The Foundation and the applied arts

They are at the heart of our heritage, but never let themselves remain confined to the past. Throughout their history, French applied arts have been precious tools for the vitality and future of creativity. Prompted by this conviction, the Foundation decided in 1999 to support this exceptional craft tradition by creating the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand®. Alongside this award, it pursues its pioneering patronage through an ambitious policy of donations to numerous institutions, in both France and other countries. This structured, long-term commitment is unquestionably contributing to the prestige and revitalization of French applied arts.

Further information on [www.fondationbs.org](http://www.fondationbs.org) | Instagram: @fondationbettencourtschueller | Facebook: @bettencourtschuellerfoundation | #talentsfondationbettencourt.

### **Manufactures Nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier National**

Born of the merger between Mobilier National and Cité de la Céramique – Sèvres & Limoges, the Manufactures Nationales were created on 1 January 2025 to promote the excellence of French craft skills and showcase the richness of this tangible and intangible heritage, with more than 53 applied arts practiced within its factories and workshops. Unique in the world, this new public body devoted to the decorative arts, applied arts, and design combines heritage and creativity to play a central role in implementing the national strategy for the applied arts sector.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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