



Re-enchanting Villa Medici: A New Chapter The Fellows' Pavilions

The French Academy in Rome is pleased to announce the architects, designers, and creative craftspeople selected following a call for projects to design the interior refurbishment of six fellows' pavilions, as well as a new line of furniture for these pavilions, thanks to the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation, a major patron of applied arts at Villa Medici, and to a partnership with Manufactures Nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier National. The new interior designs and the furniture line will be unveiled starting in 2027.

The **Septembre** practice, run by Sami Aloulou, Mémia Belkaïd, and Lina Lagerström, has been selected to renovate a group of three pavilions.

The **UHO Architects** studio, led by Max Turnheim and Max Utech, has been selected, in collaboration with **2A+P/A Associates**, directed by Gianfranco Bombaci and Matteo Costanzo, to redesign another group of three pavilions.

The **Robert Stadler** studio has been selected to design a common line of furniture to be used in all the pavilions.

In addition, the *Re-enchanting Villa Medici* program continues with the launch of a new call for projects from **June 22 to October 30, 2026** for the interior refurbishment of the last three fellows' pavilions.



Fellows' pavilions seen from the outside, before refurbishment

Re-enchanting Villa Medici, launched by Sam Stourdzé in 2022, is the most extensive refurbishment program in the recent history of Villa Medici. 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, guest rooms, and gardens — involving more than 100 French and European architects, designers, and applied artists.

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

After the guest rooms, the Villa Medici re-enchantment project is now turning its attention to the fellows' pavilions, spaces that epitomize the foundational mission of the French Academy in Rome, which now hosts 16 fellows in residence each year. The fellows' pavilions, created in 1956 by architect Jacques Carlu (himself a fellow in 1920), are nine individual dwellings located in the gardens of Villa Medici, in an area — the *braccheria* — historically devoted to horticultural production activities. Each pavilion has an adjoining exterior space, offering the fellows independence and privacy during their year of residency.

Following a call for projects launched in October 2025, the jury selected the **Septembre** practice, run by **Sami Aloulou, Mémia Belkaïd, and Lina Lagerström**, to renovate the first three pavilions, and the **UHO Architects** collective, led by Max Turnheim and Max Utech, in collaboration with the **2A+P/A Associates** firm directed by **Gianfranco Bombaci and Matteo Costanzo**, for the next three. They will work closely with the **Robert Stadler** studio, selected to design a new common line of furniture to be used in all nine dwellings.

The project selection panel was chaired by **Sam Stourdzé**, director of the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, and consisted of **Hedwige Gronier**, director of cultural patronage at the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation, **Guillaume Houzé**, executive director of Image and Innovation at the Galeries Lafayette Group, **Hervé Lemoine**, president of Manufactures Nationales – Sèvres & Mobilier National, **India Mahdavi**, architect, designer, and scenographer, **Sébastien Martinez-Barat**, architect and founder of the MBL Architectes studio, and **Marie-Cécile Zinsou**, president of the Zinsou Foundation and of the Board of Directors of the French Academy in Rome.

New call for projects

Villa Medici is opening a new call for projects from **June 22 to October 30, 2026** to select the architects and designers who will refurbish the last three fellows' pavilions.

See the call at:

<https://villamedici.it/en/call-for-projects-re-enchanting-villa-medici-2026/>

In addition, the call for projects for the refurbishment of two apartments at Villa Medici (Studio 5bis and Studiolo 26) is still open until August 24, 2026. See the call at:

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

Interior refurbishment of 3 + 3 pavilions

Septembre, Sami Aloulou, Mémia Belkaïd, and Lina Lagerström, architects, Paris (France)

UHO Architects, Max Turnheim, Max Utech, architects, Paris (France)

2A+P/A Associates, Gianfranco Bombaci, Matteo Costanzo, architects, Rome (Italy)



Interior of a pavilion before refurbishment.

For the first three pavilions, **Septembre** draws inspiration from the historical stratification of Rome and puts reuse at the center of its architectural strategy. At the heart of each residential unit, the studio has designed a contemporary aluminum and fabric canopy: this multifunctional device, at once sturdy and flexible, ensures that the layout can be reconfigured to meet the needs of each fellow. Merging Roman heritage with a low-tech approach, the intervention frees up the spaces and elevates the raw materials, offering a living and working environment that can be adapted to a creative community. For this project, Septembre has brought together a team of experts: G. Demumieux, OEP, Zerm, R. Marilleau, C. Rosenberg, and E. Doutres, combining design, visual narration, and refinement through textiles.

For the interior renovation of the next three pavilions, **UHO Architects** place use and durability at the forefront of their thinking, with a project structured around a compact central core, entirely accessible to people with reduced mobility (PRM) while improving natural lighting and thermal comfort. In this project, UHO Architects is collaborating with **2A+P/A Associates**, a Rome-based studio specializing in urban complexes and landscaping. The woodworking has been entrusted to **Giordana Paziienza**, whose family business in Rome upholds a tradition of expertise stretching back more than 70 years, uniting industrial technology and superb craftsmanship.



Septembre

Septembre, led by Sami Aloulou, Mémia Belkaïd, and Lina Lagerström, uses domesticity as a catalyst for urban transformation, amalgamating different scales. For the Villa Medici project, the firm has assembled a multidisciplinary team that combines design, visual narration, and refinement through textiles to construct precisely judged, ecological, sustainable solutions.



UHO Architects

UHO is a Paris-based architecture studio directed by Max Turnheim and Max Utech, dedicated to increasing Use and “Free Space” while minimizing cost and carbon footprint. Their work spans all scales with a focus on maximizing the potential of existing structures. Alongside their practice, they are both actively involved in teaching architecture across Europe. Their intuitions are gathered in the book “The Use of Space”.



2A+P/A Associates

2A+P/A is an architectural practice founded by Gianfranco Bombaci and Matteo Costanzo, based in Rome. The firm works in the fields of architecture, urban planning, and landscape, focusing particularly on nature and the conditions of contemporary cities. It carries out a wide range of projects, encompassing public and private buildings, residential complexes, urban spaces, event pavilions, and temporary installations, as well as interior design.

Creation of a furniture line for the pavilions

Robert Stadler Studio, designer, Paris (France)

The task of creating a line of furniture for all nine pavilions has been entrusted to **Robert Stadler**, an Austrian designer based in Paris. His project is structured around the dualities inherent in a residency at Villa Medici: he draws inspiration from the fellows' lifestyle, fluctuating between work and leisure, solitude and socializing. Robert Stadler is thus designing furniture that transforms the pavilions into hybrid spaces, suitable both for seclusion and for entertaining. By virtue of their visual lightness, these pieces interact with the geometry of the spaces while also offering great scope for reconfiguration.

This new furniture line will make it possible to meet the functional requirements associated with hosting the artists and researchers in residence with their families, offering comfort, adaptability, and durability. It will also help to introduce contemporary design into the fellows' living and working spaces, in dialogue with the legacy of Jacques Carlu and with the new interventions designed by Septembre, UHO Architects, and 2A+P/A Associates.



Robert Stadler Studio

Founded in 2001, the Robert Stadler studio works with clients such as Drucker, Fabbian, Ghidini1961, Hermès, Lobmeyr, Marsotto, Thonet, and Vitra. It also creates numerous pieces in limited editions for the Carpenters Workshop Gallery. His works are to be found in the permanent collections of the Centre Georges Pompidou, the MAK in Vienna, the MAD in Paris, the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art, the National Foundation for Contemporary Art (FNAC), the Kunstmuseen Krefeld, and the Vitra Design Museum. Robert Stadler was the winner in the “Dialogues” category of the 2012 Liliane Bettencourt Prize for Intelligence of the Hand® with the leatherworkers and upholsterers Bernadette N’Guyen, Maurice Barnabé, and Jean-Paul Mahé, from the Siegear company.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, founded by Louis XIV in 1666, is a French institution housed since 1803 in Villa Medici, a sixteenth-century mansion surrounded by a seventeen-acre park, located on the Pincian Hill, 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 roles: to accommodate artists and art historians in residency for long stays lasting a year or shorter periods; to implement a cultural and artistic program embracing all artistic and creative fields and aimed at a wide audience; to conserve, restore, study, and publicize both its architectural and landscape heritage and its collections.

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

More information about Re-enchanting Villa Medici project:

<https://villamedici.it/en/reenchanter-la-villa/>

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation

"Giving wings to talent"

Both a family foundation and a registered charity (recognized as a public utility) 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 achieve this, it identifies, selects, supports, accompanies, and promotes the women and men who are imagining tomorrow's world today, across three areas that concretely contribute to the common good: life sciences, the arts, and solidarity. In a philanthropic spirit, the foundation operates through prizes, donations, personalized support, high-profile communication, and co-constructed initiatives. Since its inception, the foundation has honored 676 laureates and supported nearly 1,400 projects led by talented individuals, teams, associations, and organizations.

The Foundation and Fine Crafts

They are at the heart of our heritage but are never trapped in the past. Throughout their history, French *métiers d'art* (fine crafts) have been invaluable tools for the vitality and future of creation. Driven by this conviction, the Foundation decided as early as 1999 to support this exceptional craftsmanship by creating the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for the Intelligence of the Hand® (*Prix Liliane Bettencourt pour l'Intelligence de la Main*®). Alongside this Prize, the Foundation pursues this pioneering patronage through an ambitious donation policy benefiting numerous institutions, both in France and abroad. This structured commitment, designed for the long term, undeniably contributes to the prestige and renewal of French fine crafts.

More information at 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 artistic crafts practiced within its factories and workshops. Unique in the world, this new public body devoted to the decorative arts, arts and crafts, and design combines heritage and creativity to play a central role in implementing the national strategy for the crafts sector.

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