

Oracles Beyond the Sea

Villa Medici Fellows' Exhibition

June 19–September 7, 2026

Featuring the 16 Fellows in residence at Villa Medici

Alia Bengana, Arianna Brunori, Diaty Diallo, Marin Fouqué,
Elitza Gueorguieva, Hugo Lindenberg, Giulia Lorusso, Paul Maheke,
Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, Randa Maroufi,
Farnaz Modarresifar, Baptiste Pinteaux, Enrique Ramírez, Ben Russell,
Camille Lévy Sarfati, Thu-Van Tran

Curators: Imma Tralli and Roberto Pontecorvo
Associate curator: Camille Coschieri



VILLA MEDICI

From June 19 to September 7, 2026, Villa Medici presents ***Oracles Beyond the Sea***, the collective exhibition marking the culmination of the sixteen Fellows' year-long residency at the French Academy in Rome.

The exhibition, containing the fruits of a year's work and interaction in the fertile context of a residency in Rome, showcases the meeting of multiple aesthetic languages, trajectories, and geographies. It gives material form to projects that break free from classical formats to set up a dialogue among the Fellows' practices, from visual arts to art history and theory and from architecture to literature, revealing creation in motion.

The exhibition walkthrough encourages visitors to imagine each work as a sybil: like those ancient prophetesses, the Fellows' creations are mysterious presences that we consult to change the way we look at the world, without thereby seeking fixed answers from them. Visitors are invited to wander through an unpredictable space where the boundaries between disciplines fade away. The works become gateways to narratives and visions that normally escape our perception.

The exhibition title is inspired by the work ***Oracles from the Sea* (1998)**, a piece by Palestinian visual artist **Vera Tamari**. The artists invited for the exhibition are **Nastasia Alberti, Jacques Kaufmann, Adriano Tramontozzi and Alice Visentin**.

The publication

To accompany the exhibition, Villa Medici is publishing a book that recreates the Fellows' research and projects during their year-long residency in Rome, enriched by contributions from authors invited to put the Fellows' work into perspective.

With contributions from **Nastasia Alberti, Alma Chaouachi, Eddy De Pretto, Adrienne Drake, Cécile Guilbert, Tamsin Hong, Karim Kattan, Maylis de Kerangal, Bernard Quirot, Laurie Laufer, Anne Montaron, Myriam Rabah-Konaté, Georgia René-Worms, Luisa Santacesaria, Öykü Sofuoğlu, Francesco Vitali Rosati**.

The exhibition curators



In 2021, **Imma Tralli and Roberto Pontecorvo** founded Marea Art Project, a residency program and curatorial platform on the Amalfi coast. Developed in dialogue with Stefano Collicelli Cagol, Director of the Pecci Center in Prato, and in collaboration with Carol LeWitt, Chair of the Governing Board of Yale University Art Gallery, this project revitalizes feminist, queer, and decolonial knowledge. From Southern Italy, Marea Art Project works to restore centrality to memories and practices that span the Mediterranean.

The Fellows in the class of 2025–2026

Alia BENGANA Architecture



Alia Bengana (1975, Algeria) is an architect, teacher, independent researcher, and author. For 15 years she has been exploring natural materials, with a predilection for raw earth and fibers. Combining architectural practice with knowledge transmission, she teaches in Switzerland and France, specifically at the EPFL in Lausanne, the HEIA Fribourg and the Université Paris-Est. Her writing, a blend of research and awareness-raising, argues for a transformation of the ways we build. She is the co-author of *Béton, la fin d'une ère ?* ("Concrete: The End of an Era?", Éditions Tana, 2021) and recently adapted this survey as a comic under the title *Béton, enquête en sables mouvants* ("Concrete: A Study on Shifting Sands", Actes Sud, 2023), an educational and lighthearted work that questions our dependence on concrete and explores sustainable alternatives.

Her residency project explores the reinvention of architectural gestures in response to the complexity of current modes of construction, dominated by industrialized and globalized products. Drawing inspiration from Roman architecture, she revisits fragments of ancient and contemporary buildings in Europe characterized by frugality of construction. Through the design of simple details — façades, floors, roofs — she explores an architecture rooted in raw materials and place. Her work will culminate in a handbook and a construction of architectural fragments, revealing the manufacturing process and interrogating an aesthetic that incorporates long time frames and reparability.

Arianna BRUNORI Art history/Art theory



Arianna Brunori (1993, Italy) has a doctorate from the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. In the course of her career she has made research visits to Paris, Oxford, Princeton, Cologne, Jerusalem and Naples. More recently, she has held fellowships at the American Academy in Rome, Villa I Tatti (Harvard University), and the Warburg Institute in London. Her research focuses on the notions of fault and will in late medieval thought, the reformulation of the hylomorphic paradigm between the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, and the links between alchemy and the visual arts. Her first book, *Imputazione e colpa. L'invenzione della volontà* ("Imputation and Fault: The Invention of Will") was published by Quodlibet in 2024.

Her residency project is devoted to writing a book exploring the relationship between alchemy and the visual arts between the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. Her aim is to shed new light by highlighting the philosophical implications of this interaction and questioning the often fragile and shifting distinction between creation and imitation in the Renaissance.

Diaty DIALLO

Literature



Diaty Diallo (1988, France) worked in the voluntary sector and popular education before becoming an author and artist. Today she reads, performs, and sings her poetic and political writings. She has published her first novel, *Deux secondes d'air qui brûle* ("Two Seconds of Burning Air", Éditions du Seuil, 2022), followed by numerous contributions to magazines, media, radio shows, collaborations with theater companies, and collective writing projects. She has a master's degree in Cultural Projects in the Public Space (PCEP) and a second master's in Creative Writing, and she also held residencies in the *Ecrivain·es en Seine-Saint-Denis* program in 2023–24 and Villa Albertine in 2024.

Her residency project is structured around a biographically inspired investigation into sexual dysfunctions, with the aim of writing a fictional work to be read and told. Where do the pains, blockages, and rejections of the body, silently governed by the head, originate? On the basis of multidisciplinary research, particularly on the impossibilities of miscegenation, heredity, and the transmission of trauma, she asks herself about the origin of the words that define symptoms and about care and healing beyond the restoration of the blocked body's penetrative function, in search of a cartography of memory and a sensual link between the mouths of the body.

Marin FOUQUÉ

Literature



Marin Fouqué (1991, France) is a novelist, poet, and performance artist. A former warehouseman, lover of opera and boxing, and graduate of the Cergy Art School, he first presented his texts on stage. The author of *77* (Actes Sud, 2019), *G.A.V.* (Actes Sud, 2021), and *À la terre* ("To Earth", XXIbis, 2023), his work has won numerous awards, including the Prix Écrivain from the Fondation Lagardère, the Jacques Toja grant from the Théâtre National de La Colline, the CCNC Compose grant, and the Alain Spiess Prize for best second novel. He is regularly invited to perform his texts in France and abroad, and now lives in Seine-Saint-Denis. His first novel is currently being adapted for the stage.

His residency project explores the different representations of masculinity through the ages, from Roman gladiators to masculinist influencers. This project will be structured in two sections, one novelistic and the other performative. Drawing inspiration from mythic figures of virility and dwelling more particularly on that of Maciste, an iconic figure in Italian cinema, this project will seek to highlight our various relations of domination and the violence they entail, while perhaps finding possible metamorphoses and points of escape for them, through the body and writing.

Elitza GUEORGUIEVA

Literature



Elitza Gueorguieva (1982, Bulgaria) lives near Paris, where she devotes herself to documentary filmmaking, literature, and its performance on stage. Her accent, fluctuating between remarkable gentleness and southern intonations — particularly on the words *content* and *Pantin* — impregnates her writing. She is the author of *Odyssée des filles de l'Est* (“Odyssey of Girls from the East”) and *Les Cosmonautes ne font que passer* (“The Cosmonauts are Just Passing Through”, Éditions Verticales, 2016 and 2024), as well as other texts. She directed the films *Chaque mur est une porte* (“Every Wall is a Door”, Cinéma du réel, 2017) and *Notre endroit silencieux* (“Our Silent Place”, Visions du réel, 2021), produced by Les Films du Bilboquet. In addition, she presents comic musical readings and lectures in which she exhibits stray images and words.

Her residency project is devoted to writing her next novel, which is partly inspired by her interview for French naturalization. At that interview, the Préfecture employee had given her a week to provide a certificate of attendance at work. Instead of complying, Elitza Gueorguieva immersed herself in the archives of a port city, where she discovered traces of a certain R.M., whose naturalization application had been rejected in 1939. This discovery will provide material for a tragicomic text structured around a central question: what is a “useful woman”?

Hugo LINDENBERG

Literature



Hugo Lindenberg (1978, France) is a writer and clinical psychologist, having spent fifteen years as a magazine journalist. He is the author of two novels, *Un jour ce sera vide* (“One Day It Will Be Empty”, Bourgois Editeur, 2020, Prix du Livre Inter 2021) and *La nuit imaginaire* (“The Imaginary Night”, Flammarion, 2023).

His residency project is devoted to exploring the archives of the former Santa Maria della Pietà psychiatric hospital in Rome, which for a long time was the largest in Europe, accommodating more than a thousand patients, before being closed in 1999 in the context of the dismantling of institutional psychiatry in Italy. This research will provide material for a novel built around the motif of kneeling, presenting a reflection on madness, religion, tourism, and the way in which language conditions the body.

Giulia LORUSSO
Musical composition



Giulia Lorusso (1990, Italy) is an Italian composer based in Paris, who trained at the Paris Conservatoire and at IRCAM. Her work covers a broad spectrum of musical forms, ranging from instrumental and electro-acoustic pieces to interdisciplinary projects, installations, multimedia works, and musical theatre. Engaged in a critical dialogue with tradition, she explores new ways of conceiving musical form and the listening experience, the role of the audience, interaction between performers and listeners, and the relationship with space. Collaboration is at the heart of her approach: she works with philosophers, visual artists, and researchers.

Her residency project is devoted to writing *Cercle*, a musical work for choir, percussion, electronics, and video, inspired by the myth of the sorceress Circe and its reworking by Madeline Miller. Following a movement of descent and re-emergence that symbolizes transformation, *Cercle* is divided into two tableaux. The first, immersive, unfolds in a Roman grotto and invites introspective submersion. The second, ritualistic and collective, stages the discovery of a new self in relation to others. Music, voice and video weave a sensory narrative in which the audience becomes actively involved in an experience that questions the search for identity and metamorphosis.

Paul MAHEKE
Visual arts



Paul Maheke (1985, France) lives and works in Montpellier. Through various forms and media he pursues a long-term exploration of the ways in which marginalized bodies, narratives, and histories are made visible and invisible. In his work, this artist summons up ghosts and non-human beings to invite us to reorientate the way in which we are able to perceive. His works have been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, The Renaissance Society (Chicago), Mercer Union (Toronto), Performa (New York), the Centre Pompidou and the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), and Tate Modern, Baltic Triennial, Chisenhale Gallery, and The South London Gallery (London).

His residency project, *Les ombres des gisant.e.s se tiennent debout* (*The shadows of those who lie recumbent stand up*), focuses on with the representation of marginalized people in relation to death, exploring funerary practices and post-mortem social violence. Interweaving ancient and contemporary history, from medieval Rome to the transatlantic slave trade, he interrogates the way in which certain communities are kept in an in-between state – neither alive nor dead. At Villa Medici, he will create a series of paintings and drawings on these standing recumbent bodies, invisibilized figures of resistance, and will explore the tensions between oblivion and commemoration, violence and reparation, visibility and invisibility.

Marie-Claire Messouma MANLANBIEN

Visual arts



Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien (1990, France) is a visual artist who graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Paris-Cergy in 2016. Winner of the Prix 1% Marché de l'art in 2022 and the Prix Grand FORTE grant in 2019, she also did a residency at Gasworks in London. Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris) in 2023 and the Orangerie du Sénat (Paris) in 2021. More recently, her works have been presented in collective shows at the Centre Pompidou Metz, the Centraal Museum (Utrecht), the Toledo Museum of Art, the Fondation Hermès (Brussels), and Manifesta 15 in Barcelona. She has also participated in the Venice Biennale, as part of the Ivory Coast Pavilion, and in the Sydney Biennale.

Her research and creation project revolves around a tapestry with soothing properties. The project will involve studies of Italian tapestries stemming from ancient traditions as well as research conducted in workshops and museums and conversations with local craftspeople, artists, and technicians. This will supplement the work she began some ten years ago in Europe, Africa, and Australia. The research focusing on textiles will be coupled with a study of the Italian pharmacopoeia. The aim is to create tapestries whose operative power is to create bonds and care: in short, modern golden fleeces.

Randa MAROUFI

Photography/film



Randa Maroufi (1987, Morocco) is a visual artist and director whose practice steers a course between photography, video, and installation art. She is a graduate of the Institut National des Beaux-Arts in Tétouan, the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Angers, and Le Fresnoy – Studio National des Arts Contemporains, and is interested in the staging of the body in public or intimate spaces. Her often political approach invokes ambiguity to question the status of images and the limits of representation.

Her residency project is based on a film about her mother's first job, as a "factotum" in an Italian-Monégasque family involved in industrial processing of anchovies in the Mediterranean. Through her formal research and experimentation, she will examine the relationships between feminism, colonialism, and social struggles, by interrogating the way in which the creative process and the work itself can support these dynamics and become part of a form of collective resistance.

Farnaz MODARRESIFAR

Musical composition



Composer, santurist and poet Farnaz Modarresifar (1989, Iran) grew up surrounded by Western classical and traditional Persian music. She trained at the National Conservatoire and the University of Teheran, before pursuing her studies in composition, improvisation, and musicology in France. The recipient of awards from the Académie de l'Orchestre de Chambre de Paris and Georges Aperghis's workshop, she won the Grand Prix Lycéen des Compositeurs in 2023 and the 2024 Prix Claude Arrieu from SACEM.

Her residency project, “Farnaz Modarresifar”, will take the form of a new orchestral and choral composition, in dialogue with Igor Stravinsky's opera *Oedipus Rex*. The influence of this major work will be decisive in developing a creation in which music and poetry are interwoven. In drawing inspiration from the Oedipus myth, she does not confine herself to a reinterpretation but explores the themes of fate and tragedy through a resolutely contemporary approach. Her personal journey — marked by exile, religious oppression, and an unceasing quest for artistic freedom — finds a profound echo in this timeless story.

Baptiste PINTEAUX

Art history



Baptiste Pinteaux (1992, France) is an art history researcher, editor, and independent exhibition curator. He co-edits the journal *octopus notes* and Daisy Editions. From 2018 to 2023 he contributed to arranging the program at Treize, an independent exhibition space. His most recent research focuses on the work of the artist and novelist Pati Hill (1921–2014), the filmmaker Jean Painlevé (1902–1989), and the New York art critic Lil Picard (1899–1994). These projects have been supported by the Centre National des Arts Plastiques and the Institut Français.

His residency project is devoted to publishing a book on the work of PaJaMa, a trio of American artists made up of Paul Cadmus, Jared French and Margaret Hoening French. These three, painters by training, developed a remarkable corpus of photographs, from 1937 to the early 1950s, on the beaches of Fire Island, Nantucket, and Provincetown. This year of research aims to reintroduce their work by illuminating it from new perspectives, particularly by exploring their links with Italy.

Enrique RAMÍREZ

Visual arts

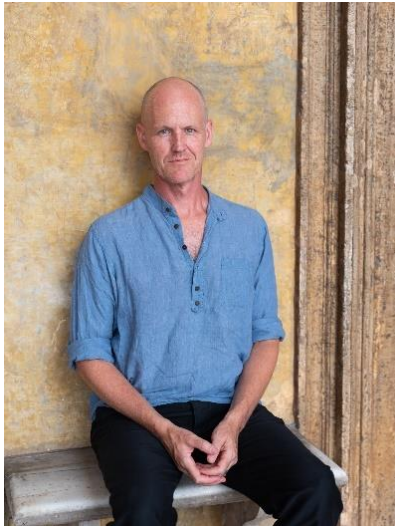


Enrique Ramírez (1979, Chile) lives and works between Paris and Santiago de Chile. After studying music and film, he joined Le Fresnoy – Studio National des Arts Contemporains. He was awarded the Prix Découverte by the Amis du Palais de Tokyo in 2013, and subsequently exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo, the Museo de la Memoria, and the 2017 Venice Biennale. In 2020, he was nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp. His work combines video, photography, sound, and installation art, exploring memory, migration, and the sea as a narrative space, where history and the present are intertwined in an equilibrium between the poetic and the political.

His residency project, “Ánan”, is a research and creation project that explores the links between memory, migration, and representation through the study of a Yagan canoe — a traditional vessel of the indigenous people of South America — preserved at the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome. By linking the history of the indigenous peoples of Patagonia to contemporary migrations, Enrique Ramírez interrogates the sea as a space of memory and travel. His project combines archives, sound, and installation art to create an immersive work. At Villa Medici, his thoughts will be focused on developing a metaphor of a world adrift in search of a new course.

Ben RUSSELL

Photography/film



Ben Russell (1976, United States) is an artist, filmmaker, and curator based in Marseille. His work is located at the intersection of experimental cinema, visual anthropology, and documentary images. He has exhibited at documenta 14 (2017) and his work has been shown at the Centre Pompidou, the Musée d’Art Moderne in Paris, and Tate Modern, as well as in prestigious festivals, including the Mostra in Venice and the Berlinale. At the same time, he pursues curatorial activity with projects such as *Magic Lantern* (Providence, RI, USA, 2005–07), *BEN RUSSELL* (Chicago, USA, 2009–11), *Hallucinations* (Athens, Greece, 2017), and *Double Vision* (Marseille, France, 2024–).

His residency project combines writing, research, and developing a non-fiction film/installation entitled *Le Fantôme souriant* (The Smiling Ghost), a work that reimagines the contemporary ruins of Rome through the eyes of a ghost. From the underground network of Rome’s abandoned historical sites to the above-ground reconstructions of ancient Rome, from the decrepitude of modern stadiums to the dynamic squats of the *Centri Sociali Occupati Autogestiti*, his project seeks to discover the forms through which the present reframes, transforms, and inhabits the past.

Camille LÉVY SARFATI

Exhibition curation



Camille Lévy Sarfati is a curator and author, based in Tunis. Her research concerns the artistic practices of resistance and survival of the Afro-Asian continents and their diasporas. She is currently working on directing a film about the experience of return, interrogating the (ethno)nationalist narratives linked to the Jewish history of Tunisia. Formerly director of 32bis in Tunis, she has worked with Kadist, Villa Medici, the Palais des Papes, and Selebe Yoon. Her recent projects include the first monographic exhibition of Miss.Tic (in Avignon) and collaborations with Thania Petersen, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Ismaïl Bahri, and Emné Nasereddine. She is the co-founder of the Tunisian collective Nessij.

Her residency project aims to imagine and bring together a pluriversal assembly of women — artists, researchers, and activists — exploring the interactions between art, ritual, and politics through a counter-cartographic and counter-ethnographic approach. Her research focuses on rituals (and their artistic translations) as spaces of resistance and survival, tools of political struggle in the face of (national and nationalist) strategies of erasure and domination. This residency will be an opportunity to create the conditions for a space of collective thought and production, in the form of a range of activations: publication, meetings, performances, exhibition...

Thu-Van TRAN

Visual arts



Thu-Van Tran (1979, Vietnam) develops an artistic practice that questions the concepts of contamination, identity, and language. Having been discovered at the Venice Biennale in 2017, she was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2018. In 2022, she produced a major commission of works for the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. In 2023, she exhibited at the Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection in the *Avant l'orage* (Before the Storm) show and the MAMAC in Nice devoted an important solo exhibition to her. The same year, she received the prestigious Rosa Schapire Prize awarded by the Kunsthalle of Hamburg.

Her residency project consists of continuing her series *Les Couleurs du Gris* (The Colors of Gray), paintings created using minerals collected across Italy, from Lombardy to Tuscany, right up to the slopes of Mount Vesuvius. This project is guided by *Le Marin de Gibraltar* (1952) by Marguerite Duras, and more particularly the revelation felt by the narrator in front of Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* in Florence. "It's this plot, the story of a sudden awakening, of a breath of life, that it is important to me to transpose to our times, to adapt and address to our generation, traveling all over Rome in search of that being who will embody our depression and of that work of art that will bring him out of it", she explains.

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