Press release

The 15 Fellows selected for 2026–2027 at the French Academy in Rome



VILLA MEDICI

An artists' residency, a multidisciplinary art center, and a Renaissance heritage site, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici welcomes over **70 artists, creators, authors, and researchers** each year for stays of varying lengths, including 15 Fellows in residence for one year.

The selection process for the 2026-2027 Fellows has just concluded. Following a selection procedure in which **798 applications were submitted**, the jury selected 16 laureates. This new cohort of Fellows, representing nine artistic disciplines and six nationalities, will be welcomed to Villa Medici starting in September 2026 for a one-year residency dedicated to creation, experimentation, and research. The Fellows will benefit from a residency grant, accommodation, and a workspace.

Fellows Selected for the 2026-2027 Year

Louidgi BELTRAME - Photography/film

Oren BONEH - Musical composition

Louise CHENNEVIÈRE – Literature

Lydiane CHOMIENNE - Art history/Heritage restoration

Jean CLARACQ - Visual arts

Neïla CZERMAK ICHTI and Ibrahim MEÏTÉ - Visual arts

Marie DE QUATREBARBES - Literature

Amandine GAY - Scriptwriting

Charlotte HOUETTE - Visual arts

Vanasay KHAMPHOMMALA - Stage direction/Choreography

Nina LEGER - Literature

Olivier ROHE - Literature

Aïcha SNOUSSI - Visual arts

Valentine UMANSKY - Art history/Art theory

The Jury

The selection jury was composed of **Sam Stourdzé**, Director of the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici and President of the Jury ; **Delphine Fournier**, from the Directorate General for Artistic Creation of the Ministry of Culture, as well as six qualified personalities: **Martin Bethenod**, Director of the Cnap ; **Mathieu Larnaudie**, writer ; **Noriko Baba**, composer ; **Chloé Quenum**, visual artist ; **Chloé Siganos**, Head of the Performing Arts Department at the Centre Pompidou ; and **Maria Stavrinaki**, Professor of Contemporary Art History at the University of Lausanne. To analyze the applications, the jury relied on the expertise of seventeen figures appointed from within the Ministry of Culture, its public institutions, and various associations.

The Residency

During their one-year stay at Villa Medici, the Fellows work alongside the Residents—artists, creators, authors, and researchers on short-term stays. In total, more than 70 artists—both Fellows and Residents—are welcomed each year to Villa Medici.

Throughout their year in Rome, the Fellows are invited to share their work during public, resolutely multidisciplinary artistic events:

- Thursday, November 26, 2026: Nuit Blanche offers an initial public presentation of their projects throughout Villa Medici and its gardens, showcasing visual installations as well as performance pieces for one evening.

- Throughout the year, concerts, readings, lectures, performances, and events are organized at the initiative of the Fellows, frequently involving guest artists.

- An end-of-residency exhibition, from June 18 to September 7, 2026—a highlight of the summer program—invites the public to discover the research and works developed by the Fellows during their residency.

Key figures

Applications to the competition

- Out of the 798 applications received representing 847 candidates, there are 430 women, 397 men, 20 non-binary individuals, 46 duos, and one collective of four people.

Fellows' class of 2026-2027

- One duo.
- Seven disciplines represented: visual arts, musical composition, screenwriting, literature, staging/choreography, photography/film, art history, art theory, and restoration.
- Five nationalities, including one dual citizen.
- The class includes ten women and five men.
- The average age of the fellows is 40.

The Fellows in the class of 2026-2027

Louidgi BELTRAME
Photography/Film



Louidgi Beltrame (1971, France) has been pursuing an artistic practice that lies at the intersection of cinema and contemporary art. His work, represented by the Jousse Entreprise gallery in Paris, has been featured in solo exhibitions in Europe and Latin America. It is also presented regularly at major institutions, such as international Biennials and film festivals. In 2026, more specifically, he will be taking part in the exhibition *Looking through a Circle in a Circle of Looks* at the Artium Museum in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain), the Chengdu Biennial and the Cinéma du Réel festival in Paris.

His residency project, entitled *Chambre à Rome*, consists of a film that interacts closely with the work of the Peruvian poet and artist Jorge Eduardo Eielson, who spent a significant part of his life in Italy. After immersing himself in Eielson's legacy during a number of residencies in Peru — where Eielson enjoys legendary status as an exile —, Luigi Beltrame is continuing his exploration in Rome with the aim of making a Super 8 film conceived as a sort of daily diary. The project echoes the collection of poems *Habitación en Roma,* written by Eielson between 1951 and 1954.

Oren BONEH
Musical composition



Oren Boneh (1991, USA) is a composer who has lived and worked in Brussels since 2020. His music has a unique energy, and explores extreme contrasts, oscillating between abrasive or mechanical textures and gentler, more playful registers. His compositions have been performed by leading ensembles, such as the Ensemble Intercontemporain, Klangforum Wien, Proton Bern and Alarm Will Sound. He is very interested in working across a range of disciplines and regularly collaborates with artists from diverse backgrounds, as was the case with his work *La Voix du Trait* (2024), created in collaboration with calligrapher Frank Lalou.

His residency project draws inspiration from his great passion for sound effects — a form of sound art that operates in the shadows, often unseen. For some time now, the composer has been fascinated by the world of Foley artists, those creators of imaginary worlds who use everyday objects and ingenious devices to create a variety of soundscapes.
Exploring the boundary between sound, gesture and meaning, he gives life to "musical characters" whose interactions are by turns absurd, dramatic or comic. During his residency, he will focus on creating a new show that explores the narrative possibilities of sound. For this project, he will collaborate with Foley artist Élodie Fiat and the musicians of the Glow Collective.

Louise CHENNEVIÈRE
Literature



Louise Chennevière (born 1993, France) is a writer and musician. She has published three works with P.O.L. editions, and her next book, *Faire la peau*, is due to be published in September 2026. Parallel to her literary work, she writes about art history, with a special focus on the role of women as both artists and subjects – a journey that has led her to collaborate with the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre Museum and the Van Gogh Foundation. As well as writing, she is also a musician: she has been performing on stage for several years and is currently working on a self-produced album.

Her residency project continues to explore the collective unconscious related to the female sphere through the mythical figure of Electra. In the artist's view, Electra embodies a universal psychological dilemma: that of hatred for one's own mother that remains unresolved, since the character never actually carries out the act, but merely fantasises about murdering her mother. Through a theatrical reinterpretation of Sophocles' play, the author offers Electra the chance to cross that symbolic threshold, allowing her, at last, to find fulfilment in her own freedom.

Lydiane CHOMIENNE
Art History/Heritage Restoration



Lydiane Chomienne (1979, France) is a restorer of paintings. A graduate of the Institut national du patrimoine, she is a pioneer in the field of restoring tempera paintings on monumental canvases. As the creator of innovative techniques, she has profoundly revolutionised the way these large-scale works are managed. Under the auspices of the Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF), she oversees major restoration projects for public collections, particularly for extensive complexes of 16th-century French art. Working at the intersection of heritage and contemporary practices, she has developed an approach to restoration that is conceived as a space for research, experimentation and dialogue with contemporary artistic creation.

Her residency project centres on the study of significant Roman collections, some of which have never been shown before, forming part of the corpus of monumental tempera paintings. The focus on these *faux tapestries* reveals the existence of a flourishing production in Rome during the 13th century. Studying these works could shed new light on the history of painting techniques and inspire contemporary artistic practices. At Villa Medici, she will alternate between selecting works from the collections, conducting on-site material analysis, and engaging in scholarly discourse on intervention protocols. The project also involves the creation of an international network of researchers and the restoration of one of these works in public.

Jean CLARACQ
Visual Arts



Jean Claracq (1991, France) paints miniatures and icons. His work creates a dialogue between traditional painting and the digital world, combining models drawn from social media with prominent references from art history, particularly the Northern European schools. Heavily focussed on traditional techniques, such as oil painting on panel, he portrays our relationship with screens and urban solitude with surgical precision. His works have been exhibited at prestigious institutions, including the Musée Delacroix, the Fondation Louis Vuitton, the Centre Pompidou-Metz, the Louvre-Lens and the X Museum in Beijing.

His residency project involves an archaeology of the future aimed at connecting antiquity to the contemporary by using the image of decay, a metaphor for the fragility of power. Drawing inspiration from the work of Martin Wong, the artist juxtaposes the dilapidated buildings of 1970s and 1980s Manhattan with the ruins of ancient Rome. For Villa Medici, he intends to create architectural fragments, halfway between models and paintings, in which imperial propaganda and contemporary advertising are juxtaposed. These installations superimpose everyday reality onto narratives of destruction, highlighting the persistent vulnerability of civilisations and the systems that generate them.

Marie DE QUATREBARBES
Literature



Marie de Quatrebarbes (1984, France) has published several collections of poetry, including *Les Éléments* (P.O.L, 2024), *Vanités* (Éric Pesty Éditeur, 2023), *Les vivres* (P.O.L, 2021) and *Voguer* (P.O.L, 2019), as well as a novel entitled *Aby* (P.O.L, 2022). Many of her works have been translated into English, Spanish and Portuguese. Alongside her work as a writer, she is co-director of the publishing house Corti.

Her residency project involves writing a short story entitled *Être réelle*, conceived as a literary exploration of the legacy of the Cuban-American artist Ana Mendieta. Adopting an approach that is both documentary and dreamlike, Marie de Quatrebarbes explores the presence and death of this leading figure in performance art and Body Art.

Neïla CZERMAK ICHTI and Ibrahim MEÏTÉ SIKELY
Visual arts





Neïla Czermak Ichti (1996, France) is a visual artist who lives and works in Marseille. Her works mainly depict intimate scenes — a meal, a siesta, a chat — where her friends and family appear surrounded by strange creatures. Her canvases combine line drawing and painting, creating a fusion of reality, monsters and hybrid figures borrowed from horror films or folk tales. These fantastical creatures are not threatening: they act as guardians who keep family secrets and translate the memories and emotions passed down from generation to generation into visual form.

Ibrahim Meïté Sikely (1994, France) uses painting to juxtapose classical masterpieces with the world of manga, comics and video games. His paintings, with their vivid and luminous colours, depict Black people in epic settings or in moments of absolute repose. Through majestic portraits and battle scenes inspired by pop culture, his work reinterprets historical painting to address themes of justice and resistance. By incorporating fantastical elements, he explores contemporary struggles and the path to healing.

Their joint residency project involves merging these two worlds to create collaborative works, in the form of large-scale paintings and self-produced books. Their aim is to combine their research to show how the imagination can serve as a tool for political and social resistance. By merging their techniques and references, they give life to a new visual language that transforms inner worlds into collective narratives that can offer an alternative vision of history.

Amandine GAY
Screenwriting



Amandine Gay (1984, France) divides her time between filmmaking, writing and social activism. Director and producer of the documentaries *Ouvrir la voix* (2017) and *Une histoire à soi* (2021), she is also the author of several essays, including *Une poupée en chocolat* (La Découverte, 2021). A militant activist and a key promoter of Mois des Adopté·es, she defines her approach as that of a political writer. In 2025, she published her second essay, *Vivre, libre* (La Découverte), while her first documentary series, *Ballroom*, was broadcast on France Télévisions. In 2026, the Italian edition of her first essay was published by Fandango.

Her residency project is the screenplay for a speculative, fictional feature film about the life of Bakhita, a young woman of Sudanese origin who was enslaved from childhood and who, in 1889, was granted the right to remain in Italy to enter a convent. Bakhita was later canonised in the year 2000, becoming the first modern Catholic saint from sub-Saharan Africa. With this project, entitled *Servante, Sainte, Femme?*, Amandine Gay continues her exploration of the concept of freedom for Black women in Europe. Her work strives to restore full agency to this historical figure, moving beyond the roles of saint or servant that have been attributed to her over time.

Charlotte HOUETTE
Visual Arts



Charlotte Houette (1983, France) lives and works between Paris and La Courneuve. A graduate of the Paris Academy of Fine Arts and the Art Center College of Design (Pasadena), she uses optical motifs to subvert our visual reference points, creating a tension between the surface of the painting and its depth. Her works have been exhibited, among other venues, at High Art (Arles, Paris), the Fondation LUMA (Arles) and the CAC Brétigny. She is also co-founder of the experimental school The Cheapest University and promoter of the alternative education program EAAPES.

Her residency project explores the Baroque style as a veritable “machine for seeing” designed to strike awe in viewers. In Rome, she is studying some spectacular historical installations, such as Andrea Pozzo’s scenographic device in the church of the Gesù, where a painting is lowered by a mechanical system to reveal a statue beneath it. At Villa Medici, Charlotte Houette intends to create “painting-installations” inspired by these systems: mechanical paintings that visitors can walk through, around or activate. These mobile works are the artist’s reflection on the way in which images capture our attention and give centre stage to power.

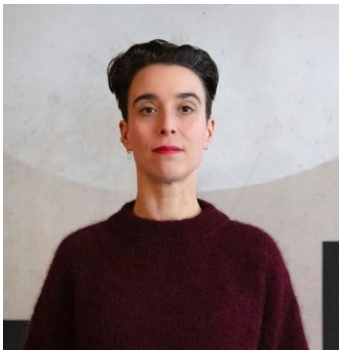
Vanasay KHAMPHOMMALA
Direction/Choreography



Vanasay Khamphommala (1980, France) is a playwright, performer, writer and translator. After studying singing and music, she pursued a distinguished academic career (École normale supérieure, Harvard, Oxford) before training as an actress at the Classe libre du Cours Florent. Since 2018, together with her company Lapsus chevelü, she has created performances and shows such as *L'Invocation à la Muse*, *Écho*, *Je viens chanter chez toi toute nue en échange d'un repas* and ສຽງຂອງຍ່າ [*La voix de ma grand-mère*]. Her work explores European mythologies from a postcolonial and post-gender perspective.

Her residency project consists of a research-based performance centred on the mythological figure of Ganymede. The artist is interested in the transformations this myth has undergone over time and its central role in the European erotic and pederastic imagination. At Villa Medici, Vanasay Khamphommala is exploring how this figure resonates in contemporary queer communities, attempting to understand how this ancient tale continues to shape the bodies and identities of today.

Nina LEGER
Literature



Nina Leger (1988, France) is a writer. In 2017, she published *Mise en pièces* (Gallimard), winner of the Anaïs Nin and Fondation de la Vocation prizes. With *Antipolis* (Gallimard, 2021), she is beginning a series of counter-epics on the creation of places, a journey that took her to California as an artist-in-residence at Villa Albertine to write her novel *Mémoires sauvées de l'eau* (Gallimard, 2023). Along with her literary work, she received a PhD in Art History from the Université Paris-8 and currently teaches at the École des Beaux-Arts in Marseille, as well as writing regularly for and with artists.

Her aim with her residency project is to create a dialogue between Renaissance painted architecture and data centres – digital factories where the servers that host our global data are stored and developed. Through the perspectives of an engineer and a set designer, her forthcoming novel will range across three theatres of memory: Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel, Palladio's Teatro Olimpico and the ROM1 data centre, currently under construction in Rome. The narrative will explore how our contemporary images are managed and how they influence our lives.

Oliver ROHE
Literature



Oliver Rohe (1972, Lebanon) is a writer. He is the author of several works, including *Défaut d'origine* (Allia, 2003, new edition 2023), *Terrain vague* (Allia, 2005) and *Un Peuple en petit* (Gallimard, 2009). His is a founding member of the collective and magazine *Inculte*, and also writes radio plays and contributes to numerous anthologies. His books have been translated into several languages, including English, German and Italian. His latest work, *Chant balnéaire* (Allia, 2023), was awarded the Prix France-Liban.

His residency project focuses on two cases of unlawful and covert detention that took place in 2003 in Germany and Italy. Set against the backdrop of the Second Iraq War and its repercussions across Europe, this work combines documentary research with fiction to explore the conflicts between law and sovereignty. The aim is to provide a broader description of the foreigner's condition in its political, material and linguistic aspects.

Aïcha SNOUSSI
Visual arts



Aïcha Snoussi (1989, Tunisia) is a visual artist who lives and works in Sète. Her work explores the construction of stories, the authority of knowledge, and the power dynamics that shape our relationship with history, starting from its margins. Through the element of fiction, the artist constructs counter-mythologies populated by machines and artefacts to explore the themes of memory and oblivion. Winner of the 2020 edition of the Prix Sam pour l'art contemporain and the Prix de la Fondation Rambourg, her works have been exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris), the Fondation Zinsou (Ouidah), the Mo.Co. (Montpellier), the BISO Biennial (Ouagadougou), the Medelhavsmuseet (Stockholm), the Centre Pompidou-Metz and the Macaal (Marrakech).

Her residency project focuses on the creation of a film, halfway between documentary and fiction, that explores the underground worlds of Rome, imagined as the inverted mirror of ancient monuments. Like a descent into the underworld inspired by the works of Dante, the story follows the search for a missing object that connects the city's underbelly to the ghosts of Carthage. Guided by the figure of the stray dog and punctuated by excavations and encounters with the voices of the underworld, this archaeological quest strives to shed a light on the shadowy areas of history.

Valentine UMANSKY
Art History/Theory of the Arts



Valentine Umansky (1989, France) is a curator and writer. Director of the Department of the Moving Image and European and Photographic Acquisitions at the Tate Modern in London, she also co-organised the retrospective dedicated to Ana Mendieta and several exhibitions featuring artists such as Belkis Ayón, Roy DeCarava and Rosa Barba. Drawing on her experience at the International Center of Photography and MoMA in New York, she also co-curated the Gjon Mili Biennial in Kosovo and the EMAP x Frieze Film Biennial in Korea in 2025, as well as the LagosPhoto festival in Nigeria in 2018. At the same time, she oversaw the English translation of the collection *Pierres*, by Roger Caillois.

Her residency project, entitled *Sitôt écrit. Systèmes de notations en art* contemporain, examines modes of interpellation — in other words, the ways in which artists use instructions to invite action. Drawing on performance and sound art, this research project analyses artistic scores and the creation of alphabets specific to each artist. The aim is to study how these systems make it possible to formalise and disseminate intangible works, whether they are intended to be performed by the artist themselves or by other professionals.

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.

The Fellowship competition

Every year, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici organizes an international competition to select Fellows based on a criterion of excellence. The competition is open to confirmed French-speaking artists, creators, and researchers, regardless of nationality. Candidates may apply in any of the disciplines of creative arts and crafts, as well as history and theory of the arts and restoration of artworks or monuments. Applications are examined by a jury of qualified persons of standing. The competition takes place in two stages: a first phase of examining the applications and a second phase of interviews with the shortlisted candidates. Information on the terms and conditions and the dates of the next competition can be found on the Villa Medici website.

The 2027-2028 competition will be open from September 4th to October 16th, 2026. More information to come.

The full list of former Fellows can be consulted here.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is an institution of the Ministry of Culture

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