



## Press release

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici launches the *Villa Medici Film Festival*  
Cinema and contemporary art

The French Academy in Rome and its director Sam Stourdzé launch the **Villa Medici Film Festival**, a new film festival dedicated to artists and filmmakers who explore contemporary practices of the moving image. The first edition will be held in Rome, at the Villa Medici, from **Wednesday September 15 to Sunday September 19, 2021**.

For more than a decade, the links between cinema and contemporary art have continuously intensified and generated new film writings. The role of the Villa Medici is to foster a dialogue between the arts and to open up these new territories of creation. The festival will show films that invent their own form and embody a freedom to think, seek and share as many approaches to the world as possible.

The **international competition** will present about fifteen films, of all lengths and genres (documentary, fiction, essay), produced in 2020 or 2021. Two prizes will be awarded by a jury appointed each year: the **Villa Medici Prize** for best film and the **Jury Prize** for a unique film that caught the attention of the jurors. These endowed prizes will also offer the two authors the opportunity to complete a writing residency at the Villa Medici.

For five days, this new festival will also present open-air evening screenings in the gardens of the Villa, performances and installations, different focuses on established filmmakers or artists, *carte blanche* to institutions defending contemporary creation, talks about the films shown and about thematic issues regarding the conditions of production and distribution, bringing together programmers, curators, gallerists and collectors.

The festival will take place in the spaces of the Villa, two indoor movie theaters, an open-air cinema, installations, meeting places, to make this remarkable venue in Rome a showcase dedicated to cinema. Its inclusion in the Italian cultural territory will materialize, in a spirit of collaboration, through partnerships with key institutions such as the **Romaeuropa Festival**, the **Fondazione Cinema per Roma** and the **MAXXI**.

The pandemic has plunged theaters around the world into darkness for months on end; but next September, at the Villa Medici, we are setting out again in search of new stories, those which still favor the poetics of images.

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## The Festival Team

**Olivia Cooper-Hadjian** (Selection committee) is the selection coordinator at the Cinéma du Réel festival in Paris. She co-programs the "Essais" section of the Tënk platform. She is also a critic and member of the editorial board of *Cahiers du cinéma*.

**Arthur Godard-Saulgeot** (Organizing Committee) is in charge of the cultural programming and production of Villa Medici. He is interested in the artistic links between France and Italy as well as the specific role that residences play in the creative process.

**Hou Hanru** (Selection Committee) is a prolific author and curator established in Rome, Paris and San Francisco. He is currently the Artistic Director of MAXXI (National Museum of the Arts of the 21st Century), Rome, Italy.

**Lili Hinstin** (Organizing Committee & Selection Committee) is a programmer and artistic director. Responsible for cinema at the Villa Medici between 2005 and 2009, she becomes deputy artistic director of Cinéma du Réel in 2010 and until 2013. Lili Hinstin then took over the artistic direction at the Belfort Film Festival (2013 - 2018), then at the Locarno International Festival (2018 - 2020).

**Evelyne Jouanno** (Selection Committee) is an exhibition curator and researcher in contemporary art based in Rome, Paris and San Francisco. Her work focuses on the place of art as an apparatus of institutional restructuring and social transformation.

**Laurent Perreau** (Organizing committee) is an author and director for cinema and television. He also stages visual art projects for the Rencontres d'Arles Festival.

**Sam Stourdzé** (Organizing Committee) specializes in images and the relationships between art, photography and cinema. He is the curator of numerous exhibitions and author of several reference books. Since 2020, he is the director of the French Academy in Rome - Villa Medici.

**Véronique Terrier Hermann** (Organizing Committee) is a teacher and responsible for the Support Program for Research (Beaux-arts de Nantes, Institute for Photography in Lille). She notably co-directed *Jeux sérieux, cinéma et art contemporains transforment l'essai*, Head / Mamco editions, 2015.

# VILLA MÉDICIS

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## About the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

Founded in 1666 by Louis XIV, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is a French establishment located, since 1803, in the Villa Medici, a 16th-century villa surrounded by a seventeen-acre park, on Mount Pincio, in the heart of Rome.

A national public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici fulfils three complementary missions: to welcome high-level artists, creators and art historians in residence for one-year stays or shorter; to set up a cultural and artistic programme that includes all fields of the arts and creation and is aimed at a broad audience; to conserve, restore, study, and make its architectural and landscape heritage, as well as its art collections, known to the public.

## Cinema at the Villa Medici

Since 1974, the French Academy in Rome has welcomed resident filmmakers or screenwriters (Clément Cogitore, Mitra Farahani, Benjamin Crotty, Thomas Salvador, Nora Martirosyan, Xavier Beauvois, Rémy Belvaux...) and artists making short and feature films (Éric Baudelaire, Valérie Mréjen, Lola González). Since the early 2000s, Villa Medici has been showcasing cinematographic creation and its history, with programming initiatives such as Cinemondo, Re | visioni or Cinema all'aperto festival.



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## **The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici would like to thank the sponsors and partners who support its annual artistic program:**

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