

Press Release

Reenchanting Villa Medici

Call for proposals to refurbish the Villa Medici's guest rooms



The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is partnering with the Mobilier National, with the support and guidance of the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation, to promote contemporary creation in the fields of arts and crafts and design, through an exceptional call for proposals aimed at refurbishing and refurnishing the guest rooms of the historical building of Villa Medici.

Also supported by the Banque Populaire Foundation and Maison Tréca, this call for proposals will bring in **contemporary designers, architects and artists working together with artisans** to showcase their expertise and give a new identity to the rooms of Villa Medici.

After a two-month application period, the projects will be selected by a panel made up of **Alberto Cavalli**, Executive Director of the Michelangelo Foundation for Creativity and Craftsmanship and General Curator of the Homo Faber Event, **Hedwige Gronier**, Head of Cultural Patronage of the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation, **Hervé Lemoine**, President of the Mobilier national, **Christine Macel**, Director of the musée des Arts décoratifs, **India Mahdavi**, architect, designer and scenographer, **Isabelle de Ponfilly**, President of the Board of Directors of the École nationale supérieure des Arts décoratifs, and chaired by **Sam Stourdzé**, Director of the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici.

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The call, involving the refurbishment of three rooms by 2023, will be followed by two more calls over the coming months involving a total of nine rooms.

It is part of an **ambitious refurbishment project between now and 2025**, entitled "**Re-enchanting the Villa Medici**", which is underpinned by an unprecedented partnership with the Mobilier National, designed to bring together perspectives on design, architecture, interior design, tapestry and tableware.

This quintessentially French Roman Villa has been home to the French Academy in Rome since 1803, and is embarking on a transformation process that reflects a long **history of major refurbishment and decoration by previous directors of the Villa Medici**, from Horace Vernet to Richard Peduzzi and Ingres to Balthus.

This history continues today with an extensive project led by Sam Stourdzé, renewing the **relationship between heritage and modernity** and opening up the Academy to the world of design and arts and crafts.

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation's involvement with Villa Medici is part of a shared desire to promote contemporary creation in the field of arts and crafts. This is why the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici and the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation are launching a **residency programme dedicated to arts and crafts**. Within this framework are two artistic projects in which artisans will be hosted each year in residence at the Villa Medici. The first two residents selected are metal sculptor, **Mylinh Nguyen** and design duo, **Caterina and Marc Aurel**.

With this same objective, the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation also supports the Villa Medici's "**Résidence Pro**" educational programme in order to raise awareness of arts and crafts. This [educational scheme](#) for vocational and agricultural high school students in the French regions, initiated in 2021 by the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, will focus each year on an **expertise connected to the fields of excellence in the vocational streams** in order to explore all means of technical, social, artisanal and artistic expression. The first edition welcomed 300 students from 15 vocational high schools involved in the wood industry in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region. In 2023, 600 students will be welcomed at the Villa Medici from the Grand-Est and Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regions.

Driven by **a common desire to promote arts and crafts and design professions**, the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation, the Mobilier National and the French Academy in Rome, along with the Banque Populaire Foundation and Tréca, have joined forces to make the Villa Medici a **place where exceptional skills are passed on and tomorrow's heritage is invented**.

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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 institution housed, since 1803, at the Villa Medici, a 16th century villa surrounded by a seven hectare park on Mount Pincio, in the heart of Rome.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is a national public institution under the authority of the Ministry of Culture with a remit to: welcome artists, artisans, creators, historians and fine art historians in residence for short or long stays of up to one year; set up a cultural and artistic programme that integrates all fields of the arts and creation and is aimed at a wide audience; conserve, restore, study and make known to the public its architectural and landscape heritage and its collections.

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici is under the direction of Sam Stourdzé.

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About the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation:

The Bettencourt Schueller Foundation is a family trust and has been recognised as a public interest organisation since its creation in 1987. It aims to "give wings to talent" in order to contribute to France's success and influence.

To this end, it seeks out, selects, supports, guides and promotes men and women who are imagining tomorrow's world today across three fields that make a tangible contribution to the municipal good: the life sciences, the arts and humanitarian aid.

In keeping with the spirit of philanthropy, the foundation works through prizes, donations, personalised support, communication and co-constructed initiatives.

Since its creation, the foundation has awarded 634 prizes and supported more than 1,000 projects submitted by talented individuals, teams, associations and organisations.

The Foundation has been involved in the arts and crafts sector for over 20 years. It was one of the first actors to value the contemporary dimension of these crafts through the Liliane Bettencourt Prize for the Intelligence of the Hand®. It identifies this expertise as an internationally important asset that needs to be promoted abroad. It has contributed to the recognition of arts and crafts as a practical training eligible for international residencies. In this context, it has sponsored the Villa Kujoyama since 2014, the Villa Albertine since 2021 and now also the Villa Medici.

About the Mobilier National:

The Mobilier National has been supporting arts and crafts since the 17th century. Its mission is to ensure the conservation and restoration of its unique collections and to preserve and pass on exceptional expertise. A major heritage site, the institution is also a major stakeholder in contemporary creation and the promotion of French decorative arts.

The Mobilier National creates and restores tens of thousands of pieces of furniture and objects destined for the furnishing and decoration of public buildings in France and abroad. More than three hundred and forty men and women work daily to maintain, practise and promote the institution's excellent techniques, in Paris and across the country. The Gobelins and Beauvais factories are dedicated to tapestry, the Savonnerie factory to carpets and the Puy- en-Velay and Alençon workshops to lace. The Atelier de Recherche et de Création (ARC- Research and Creation Workshop) promotes creation and contemporary design in France.

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About the Banque Populaire Foundation:

Since 1992, the Banque Populaire Foundation has been the national sponsorship instrument of the 14 "Banques Populaires" and their members. It is involved in the fields of music, disability and, more recently, arts and crafts to help talented, inventive and determined people to launch their life projects.

It is one of the oldest foundations in the financial sector and is the only one to support individuals by giving them financial means, as well as the reassurance of a network of contacts and long-term support.

Mindful of the quality of its commitment with the persons it sponsors, the Foundation has sought out well-known figures in each field to form panels of experts. Listening, support and trust are the Foundation's bedrock. Over 30 years, 943 projects have been supported.

About Tréca:

A subsidiary of the Adova Group, a French artisanal group specialising in bedding, Maison Tréca embodies the art of sleeping 'à la française' thanks to the legacy of master craftsmen whose unique expertise has been passed down since 1935.

With creations inspired by the greatest palaces and designed by internationally renowned designers (Quaglio Simonelli, Andreas Weber, Christian Lacroix, etc.), Tréca offers a tailor-made comfort experience.

All the collections are made from natural, rare and precious materials, refined in the workshops in Reichshoffen (Alsace) and Mer (Loir-et-Cher), ensuring an excellent sleep.

Notices

Residency Programme Dedicated to Arts and Crafts

The French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici has joined forces with the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation to establish a new residency programme for professionals working in the field of arts and crafts.

Villa Medici is proposing an annual one-month residency programme for 4 artisans and/or designers who receive the Liliane Bettencourt Intelligence of the Hand prize between now and the end of 2023.

Through this research, creation and experimentation residency programme for people working in the fields of arts and crafts and design, Villa Medici seeks to extend access to its residencies to artisans

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and designers in a working environment that encourages emulation between artistic disciplines.

→ [Learn more](#)

The 2022 recipients of this residency programme are Mylinh Nguyen, a metal sculptor, and the design duo, Caterina and Marc Aurel.

Mylinh Nguyen:

Mylinh Nguyen has a double diploma in arts and crafts, in metal sculpture from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Appliqués et de Métiers d'Art Olivier de Serres and in textiles from the Ecole Supérieure des Arts Appliqués Duperré. She was trained by Fred Barnley and specialised in machining cuprous metals. In 2013, she received the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation's Intelligence of the Hand prize, in the exceptional talent category, for her series of *Medusa* sculptures. In 2015, she was a resident at Villa Kujoyama in Japan, where she transformed her craft by cultivating new skills related to modelling. In 2017, she was appointed Academician for the Hermès Foundation. Her work is currently being exhibited in the 27 Concept gallery.

In Rome, the ultimate city of stone, Mylinh Nguyen will work on the fissures. After wandering around the city looking for fissures in unusual places, she will make casts using natural materials in order to create long plaster panels. She will then try to develop ways of repairing, ennobling and enhancing these fissures created by the passage of time, as a nod to *kintsugi*, a Japanese repair technique using golden lacquer to beautify cracks in ceramics.

Check out her profile: [Nguyen | Fondation Bettencourt Schueller](#)

Caterina and Marc Aurel:

Marc Aurel trained at the School of Fine Arts and Architecture in Marseille then joined Wilmotte & Associés in Paris from 1989 to 1994, where he was responsible for urban design projects. Alongside his work as a teacher in an art school, he founded the Aurel Design Urbain studio in Cassis in 1995, which has also operated in Paris since 2018.

Caterina Aurel trained at the Florence School of Architecture and then at the École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées (National School of Civil Engineering) in Paris. She specialises in urban design and the development of public spaces. After working with SCET as an urban planner (Groupe Caisse des Dépôts) from 1994 to 2002, she joined Studio Aurel Design Urbain as a partner. In 2021, she studied urban ecology at the Natural History Museum in Paris.

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Caterina & Marc Aurel have chosen to make their experience available to as many people as possible by tackling urban design using innovative natural materials in conjunction with artisanal expertise, the relationship between urban and natural environments and the use of recycled materials. In 2014, they were recipients of the Bettencourt Schueller Foundation's Dialogue Prize for their collection of ceramic furniture designed for the Souks of Beirut. In 2015 and 2018, their "Beirut and Onda" collections will be included in the permanent collections of the Adrien Dubouché museums in Limoges and Sèvres.

Check out their profile: [Beirut | Bettencourt Schueller Foundation](#)

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