

Present

Rifugi

Vanshika Agrawal, Emma Brunelli, Micol Gelsi, Davide Miceli, Giulia Romolo, Nadia Vallino

Group exhibition

Curated by Davide Lunerti and Marcello Smarrelli

As part of *6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti 2025-2026*
6th edition

Opening: Wednesday 18 February at 6 pm

5:00 PM - talk and guided tour with the artists

6:00 PM - opening

19 February – 18 April 2026

Fondazione Pastificio Cerere

Via degli Ausoni 7 – Rome

Press Release

On **Wednesday 18 February 2026**, **Fondazione Pastificio Cerere** presents ***Rifugi***, the group exhibition marking the conclusion of the residency for the winners of the **6th edition of 6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti 2025-2026**, realised for this edition in partnership with **RUFA - Rome University of Fine Arts**, with the support of the **Italian Ministry of Culture** and **SIAE** as part of the *Per Chi Crea* programme.

Curated by **Davide Lunerti** and **Marcello Smarrelli**, the exhibition features the six winning artists—**Vanshika Agrawal, Emma Brunelli, Micol Gelsi, Davide Miceli, Giulia Romolo, and Nadia Vallino**—and will be open to the public from Thursday 19 February to Saturday 18 April 2026.

Now in its 6th edition, the **6ARTISTA** programme, conceived in 2009 by **Marcello Smarrelli for Fondazione Pastificio Cerere**, has over the years welcomed some of the most compelling Italian artists on the international scene. This edition offered **six artists under 35**, selected by an expert jury, the opportunity to develop their research during a **three-month residency** in the ateliers of Pastificio Cerere, a former industrial building in the heart of Rome's San Lorenzo neighbourhood. The site has become a place of training and artistic creation following an urban regeneration process carried out by the artists who have worked there over the decades. "**6ARTISTA**," states **Marcello Smarrelli**, Artistic Director of Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, "is a major opportunity to renew our institution's commitment to training new

generations of artists, valuing the sharing of practice and experience in a place such as Pastificio Cerere, where art generates art, and which for over fifty years has been a crossroads of multidisciplinary experiences and figures. This significant action has shaped an area of the city dedicated to the contemporary, capable of activating connections, processes, and new possibilities for cultural growth on a global scale.”

The objective of *6ARTISTA* is to build a solid institutional network, offering participants opportunities for professional development and exchange at both national and international level. For the 6th edition, the **call launched in March 2025** was addressed to RUFA students and graduates (up to 2019), aged no more than 35, resident in Italy or abroad but holding Italian citizenship. During the residencies—which ran from May 2025 to January 2026—a rich programme of training activities, events, studio visits, and exchanges with sector professionals was organised. The artists also had free access to **seminars and workshops** offered by RUFA.

“For RUFA, collaboration with Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in *6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti 2025-2026*,” states **Melany Parasole**, Chief Executive Officer of RUFA, “represents a natural evolution of a shared path through which we have been committed for years to supporting young artists. Ours is an alliance founded on a shared vision and strengthened by the proximity of our locations, which encourages daily dialogue between training, research, and professional practice. Projects like this offer emerging artists an authentic context for exchange and experimentation, accompanying them towards conscious growth and active, critical engagement with the contemporary art system.”

The 6th edition of *6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti 2025-2026* pathway culminates in the exhibition of the winning artists’ works, realised during the residency with the ongoing support of the curatorial team. “The title *Rifugi*,” says **Davide Lunerti**, co-curator of the exhibition, “is intended to reflect the meaning of support and creation of an artistic community that Fondazione Pastificio Cerere has always helped to foster; it is probably for this reason that much of the work presented during the residency, by exceptionally young talents who have been able to inhabit and share these spaces, revolves around the idea of ‘refuge’: a place in which what is threatened from outside can instead take form.” A space of care and attention where fragile things can find safety, as in the cyanotypes of **Giulia Romolo**, which capture the ephemeral nuances of a landscape at risk, or the cultural memories interwoven in the woollen threads of **Vanshika Agrawal**. Political refuge, ontological resistance, as in the work of **Micol Gelsi**; a utopian place in which to imagine collaborative realities, as suggested by the practice of **Emma Brunelli**, weaving interspecies bonds between human and non-human. The sandcastles of **Nadia Vallino**, symbols of childhood fantasy destined for dissolution, solidify into concrete to guarantee their permanence: a refuge of the mind, a cradle for imagination, and at times even for madness, as occurs in the underground spaces of Spazio Molini, where the installations and sculptural portraits of **Davide Miceli** come to life as incarnations of conspiratorial obsessions.

The opening of the exhibition will be preceded, at 5:00 PM, by a talk and guided tour with the winning artists, with the participation of the two curators. The visit will also be enriched by a fanzine featuring texts on the artists’ practices and the works on display.

Proposing Organisations

Fondazione Pastificio Cerere

Fondazione Pastificio Cerere is a non-profit organisation, a laboratory of the contemporary, promoting freedom of expression and experimentation with artistic languages with strong national and international impact, contributing to a more contemporary vision of Rome. Since 2015 it has been part of the

Committee of Contemporary Art Foundations, established following an invitation from the MiC - Italian Ministry of Culture. In 2005, it inaugurated its headquarters within what was once the Pastificio Cerere, a former pasta factory built in 1905 and active until the post-war period. From the 1970s onwards, the disused factory was spontaneously repopulated by artists who chose to establish their studios there: places to inhabit in order to live daily experimentation. Over the years, critics, intellectuals and figures from the world of entertainment have also gravitated towards this forge, which became a point of reference for culture in general. From 2011 onwards, under the artistic direction of Marcello Smarrelli, the Foundation has increasingly oriented its activities towards artistic practices linked to cultural policy and the local area, developing public and participatory art projects, innovative educational programmes and residency bursaries for young artists and curators, as well as formative activities for students of different age groups.

RUFA, Rome University of Fine Arts

RUFA, Rome University of Fine Arts, is an institution of higher artistic education, multidisciplinary and international, legally recognised by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR). It offers accredited and innovative courses in the fields of the arts, design, visual communication, audiovisual, fashion, gaming, and multimedia arts. RUFA's formative approach is innovative and specialised, aiming to combine university curriculum with professional training: during their studies, RUFA students attend and participate in workshops, seminars, experiential lessons, exhibitions, presentations, and debates, all tools that enable the creation of a genuine connection with the labour market.

Related Projects

6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti // Curatore in residenza

6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti is a residency programme for young Italian artists, conceived by Marcello Smarrelli for Fondazione Pastificio Cerere in 2009. The project arose from the desire to address an evident gap in the city of Rome, where, despite a large number of residencies for foreign artists, opportunities for residencies for Italian artists are rare. The intention is to build over time a solid institutional network that allows young artists of future editions of the programme to benefit from increasingly qualified and comprehensive opportunities for their research and work. Over the years, the prize has become an important tool for the valorisation of Italian talent on an international scale. Winners of the *6ARTISTA Prize* have included: Riccardo Benassi, Tomaso De Luca (1st edition); Adelita Husni-Bey, Elisa Strinna (2nd edition); Francesco Fonassi, Margherita Moscardini (3rd edition); Davide Stucchi, Helena Hladilová (4th edition); Thomas Berra, Corinna Gosmaro (5th edition).

From 2011 to 2013, with the *Curatore in residenza* project, a young curator nominated by the Artistic Director was invited to develop a cultural pathway for the Foundation. The year-long residency involved the organisation of exhibitions and site-specific projects, studio visits and cycles of conferences, as well as the production of critical texts, monographs, and catalogues. Curators in residence were: Vincenzo De Bellis (2011), Michele D'Aurizio (2012), Alessandro Dandini de Sylva (2013).

Davide Lunerti (Rome, 1995) is a curator and doctoral researcher in Practices, Cultures and Communications of the Visual Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. His doctoral research focuses on science-fiction imaginaries in feminist literature and emerging queer artistic practices. He studied Cultural Heritage at the University of Bologna and Visual Cultures and Curatorial Practices at the Academy of Brera. In 2024 he worked as curator in residence under the artistic direction of Fondazione La Quadriennale di Roma, with a focus on editorial projects. He has curated the exhibitions *Ultraqueer* (Palazzo Merulana, 2022), *Rivoluzionari3* (Mattatoio, 2023), *Queer Pandemia* (BASE Milano, 2023), *D3CAM3RON3 - 3rd edition* (Palazzo Lucarini, 2025).

The *6ARTISTA. Progetto per giovani artisti 2025–2026* is realised with the support of the MiC and SIAE, as part of the *Per Chi Crea* programme.

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Con il sostegno del MIC e di SIAE,
nell'ambito del programma "Per Chi Crea"



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