

PRESS RELEASE

**Mario Merz Prize, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition**

The only international prize for art and music

**Fondazione Merz announces finalists for the Mario Merz Prize, 5th Edition**

**Art Category: Elena Bellantoni (Italy), Mohamed Bourouissa (France/Algeria), Anna Franceschini (Italy), Voluspa Jarpa (Chile), Agnes Questionmark (Italy)**

**Music Category: Arturo Corrales (El Salvador), Natalia Domínguez Rangel (Colombia/Holland) e Luigi Morleo (Italy)**

Fondazione Merz is pleased to announce the five artist finalists for the Mario Merz Prize, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition's Art category, and the three composers shortlisted for the Music Category.

**Elena Bellantoni (Italy), Mohamed Bourouissa (France/Algeria), Anna Franceschini (Italy), Voluspa Jarpa (Chile), Agnes Questionmark (Italy)** are the artists selected by this year's jury composed of Beatrice Merz (President, Fondazione Merz); Claudia Gioia (Independent Curator) and Samuel Gross (Special Project Manager Musée d'Art e d'Histoire, Geneva).

In late spring 2025 Fondazione Merz will present a group exhibition of the shortlisted artists in Turin. The winner will be commissioned to produce a new site-specific solo exhibition at the Foundation.

A final jury composed of Caroline Bourgeois (Curator Pinault Collection, Paris), Manuel Borja-Villel (former Director Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid), Massimiliano Gioni (Artistic Director New Museum, New York - Artistic Director Fondazione Trussardi, Milan), Beatrice Merz, together with the public vote, will choose the winner of this fifth edition.

**Arturo Corrales (El Salvador), Natalia Domínguez Rangel (Colombia/Holland) and Luigi Morleo (Italy)** are the composers selected by this year's jury composed of Davide Bandieri (clarinet Solo Orchestre de Chambre, Lausanne), Gianluca Cangemi (composer and music curator) and Diego Chenna (lecturer chamber music Hochschule für Musik, Friburg).

The three finalists will present a score to be performed in a concert or, alternatively a soundtrack for a museum space.

A final jury composed of Thomas Demenga (cellist and composer), Philip Samartzis (sound artist and professor Melbourne University), Helena Winkelman (violinist and composer), Willy Merz (composer and conductor), together with the public vote, will choose the winner of this fifth Edition.

The winning composer in the music category will be commissioned a piece for string orchestra to be performed in a concert or as soundtrack for a museum space.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **Mario Merz Prize**

Held every two years, the **Mario Merz Prize**, was established to identify and celebrate key figures in the field of contemporary visual art and music composition. It is the only international prize for art and music. The Mario Merz Prize, inaugurated by the Fondazione Merz with the collaboration of an organising committee and supported by an authoritative international committee of honour, has been awarded the Medal of the President of the Italian Republic.

Winners of the Mario Merz Prize previous editions: Art: Wael Shawky (Egypt), 1st Edition; Petrit Halilaj (Kosovo), 2nd Edition; Betille Bak (France) 3rd Edition Yto Barrada (France/Morocco) 4<sup>th</sup> Edition – Music: Cyrill Schürch (Switzerland), 1st Edition; Geoffrey Gordon (USA) 2nd edition, Jay Schwartz (USA) 3rd Edition, Fusun Köksal (Turkey) 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

## **SHORTLISTED ARTISTS**

**Elena Bellantoni** (1975) is an artist and professor at ABAQ L'Aquila, ABA Roma, and NABA in Rome. Graduated in Contemporary Art History, she studied in Paris and London, earning an MA in Visual Art from the University Art of London in 2007. In 2007, she co-founded the Platform Translation Group in London, and in 2008, she opened the 91mQ art project space in Berlin. Her artistic research focuses on the concepts of identity and otherness - exploring territories and communities - employing the body and language as means of interaction. The exploratory devices that the artist uses range from video to photography, installations, sculptures, and drawing.

In 2023 she was chosen and appointed as the Best Italian Artist of the Year by the contemporary art magazine *Artribune*. Bellantoni opened the *Dior spring-summer 2024* fashion show with the NOT HER installation at the Tuileries Gardens in Paris in 2023. Among the awards and residencies she has received, in 2020 she won the *ArtTeam Cup Award*; in 2018, she won the *Nctm and the Arte Studio Legale* prize with residencies in Belgrade, Athens, and Istanbul; in 2017, she participated in *The Subtle Urgencies* at the Pistoletto Foundation and the ArtHouse, Italy/Albania; in 2016, she was selected by *Soma Mexico* for a residency in Mexico City; in 2009, she participated in *As long as I'm walking*, a residency with Francis Alÿs and Cuauthémoc Medina, curated by 98weeks, in Beirut. In 2018, she was among the winning artists of the *IV edition of the Italian Council* of the MIBACT; in 2019, she presented the book of her project at the MAXXI in Rome with a focus on her video production. In 2018, she was selected for the Collateral events of Manifesta12 in Palermo. In 2014, she won the special *Repubblica.it Prize* at the Talent Prize; in 2012, with *In Other Words, the Black Market of Translation – Negotiating Contemporary Cultures*, she won the NGBK competition in Berlin with an exhibition at the Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien. In 2009, she won the *Movin'up Worldwide* from the GAI (Giovani Artisti Italiani) of the Italian Prime Minister's Office for a residency in Santiago, Chile; in 2006, she won the Tempelhof-Schöneberg Kunstpreis in Berlin.

Among her exhibitions: *The Great Italian Vision. Farnesina Collection*, The Arts House of the Old Parliament, Singapore, Tokyo, New York 2023; *Invisible (in)visible Stories between Heaven and Earth*, Reial Cercle Artistic, Barcelona 2023; *If there were light it would be beautiful*, Dino Zoli Foundation, Forlì 2023; *Imperfect Sea*, CUBO and Unipol Tower, Bologna 2022; *Wandering Words: Tomaso Binga and Elena Bellantoni*, Ambassador's Residence, Bern, Switzerland 2022; *Video makes you happy / video art in Italy*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni 2022, Rome; *In-finito*, Italian Cultural Institute in Madrid, 2022; *Performative 0.1*, MAXXI L'Aquila, 2021; *Farnesina Collection, an open window on Contemporary Art*, Italian Cultural Institute, Paris, 2020; *Les paralleles du sud Manifesta13*, Marseille, 2020; *You got to burn to shine* La Galleria Nazionale Roma 2019; *Elena Bellantoni VideoGallery*, MAXXI, Rome 2019; *Analogue Eye Harboured*, Cape Town 2018; *The Picture Club*, in "Across the Board: parts of Whole", American Academy in Rome, Rome 2016. Her works are present in public and private collections, including the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs La Farnesina*, the *Central Institute for Graphics*, the *Filiberto Menna Foundation*, and the *Pietro and Alberto Rossini Foundation collection*. Her video works are included in the Italian Area Contemporary Archive curated by Viagarini in Milan. Among her monographs: *Parole Passeggere: artistic practice as the semantics of existence*, Castelveccchi 2023; *Elena Bellantoni, On the breadline* Quodlibet 2019; *Elena Bellantoni an invisible match with the public*, Postmedia Books, 2018.

Born in 1978 in Blida (Algeria), **Mohamed BOUROUISSA** lives and works in Paris.

Preceded by a long immersion phase, each of Mohamed Bourouissa's projects builds a new enunciation situation. With a critical take on mass media images, his artworks reintroduce complexity in contemporary society's representations.

The subjects of his photographs, sculptures and videos are often people "left behind", at the crossroads of integration and exclusion.

His work has been exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions, at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2024), LaM - Lille Métropole Musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, Lille, France (2023); Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London, UK (2021); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, Denmark (2021); ar/ge kunst, Bolzano, Italy (2020); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2020); Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles, France (2019); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France (2018); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (2018); Musée National Eugène Delacroix, Paris, France (2017); Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, PA (2017); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2016); Savannah College of Arts and Design, Atlanta, GA (2011); Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA (2011), among others. His work is represented in notable public collections worldwide including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki, Finland; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France; Fonds National d'art contemporain, Paris, France; FRAC Bretagne, Rennes, France; FRAC Franche-Comté, Besançon, France; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Pinault Collection, Paris, France; Sammlung Philara, Düsseldorf, Germany; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands; among others. Bourouissa's work has been commended with numerous prizes including the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Prize (2020); Prix Fondation Blachère (2010); Prix Studio Collector, Fondation Antoine de Galbert (2007); and First Prize, Les Rencontres d'Arles (2007). He was also nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp (2018) and selected for the Prix Pictet, international photography award (2017).

**Anna Franceschini** works in a wide variety of media: from film to performance, from kinetic sculpture to photocopy. Her videos and films have been presented at numerous festivals including Locarno Film Festival; IFFR/Rotterdam Film Festival; TFF/Torino Film Festival, Courtisane in Ghent, Lo Schermo dell'Arte in Florence, the FIFA in Montreal, and the Vilnius Film Festival. Solo exhibitions and performances include: Triennale, Milan; Istituto Svizzero, Milan; Emanuel Campoli Gallery, Paris; Casa FlashArt, Milan; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Spike Island, Bristol; Museion, Bolzano; Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp; GAM, Turin; Fiorucci Art Trust, London; Almanac, London; KIOSK, Ghent; Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice; Peep Hole, Milan; and Vistamare Milan/Pescara. She is among the artists of the Quadriennale d'Arte 2020, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome. Among the venues of her most recent group shows: Mudam Luxembourg, Fotografiska Museum, Berlin; Teatrino di Palazzo Grassi, Venice; Neuer Kunstverein, Vienna; GAMEC, Bergamo; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; Emanuela Campoli Gallery, Paris; (FKA) Witte de With, Rotterdam; Istituto Svizzero, Milan-Venice; Fondazione ICA, Milan; MAXXI, Rome; CAC, Vilnius; Kunstraum, London; MACRO, Rome; Matadero, Madrid; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Les Abbatoirs, Toulouse; and Villa Medici, Rome. In 2017 her project CARTABURRO was the winner of the Italian Council, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture. In 2019 she made the short film BUSTROFEDICO, a special project of the Italian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Art Biennale. For 2022 she is one of the winners of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. Her work is part of numerous public and private collections, including Centre Pompidou in Paris, Les Abbatoirs in Toulouse, Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, MACRO in Rome, GAMEC in Bergamo, Fondazione Fiera Milano, MACTE in Termoli, Nicoletta Fiorucci Collection and Silvia Fiorucci Collection. She holds a PhD in Visual and Media Studies and teaches at Iulm University in Milan.

**Voluspa Jarpa** (Chile, 1971) Since 1994, Voluspa Jarpa has sustained an extensive artistic production, participating in group and solo exhibitions both in Chile and abroad. Her work has explored extensive research and artworks that inquire into the nature of the archive, memory and the cultural and symbolic notion of social trauma. This research has focused on the Cold War in the Latin American region through the commissioning and review of the process of declassification of intelligence files that the US has carried out on the countries of the region in recent decades. The implication of secrecy as a modus operandi of politics, its effects on the psyche, as well as the exploration of ways to emancipate ourselves from these structures, are the main concerns of her recent works and research.

She has had important solo exhibitions, including *En nuestra pequeña región de por acá* at MALBA, Buenos Aires (2016); or *L'effet Charcot* at La Maison de l'Amérique Latine in Paris (2010). She has participated in many international exhibitions, including *Altered Views*, in the Chilean Pavilion at the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial, Italy (2019); *Progress*, 12<sup>th</sup> Shanghai Biennial, China (2018); *Parapolitics: Cultural Freedom and the Cold War* at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017-2018); and the 31<sup>st</sup> Sao Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2014), among others. In 2012 she received the Illy Award at ARCOMadrid for the work *Minimal Secret*; in 2021 received the Julius Baer Award to Latin American Female Artists for the work *Sindemia* and in 2023 was awarded with the Acquisition Prize of the XVI Biennial of Cuenca for the work *Cartografías de la Sindemia*.

**Agnes Questionmark** (Rome, Italy, 1995) is an artist working across performance, sculpture, video and installation. Questionmark's practice examines the self's boundaries through genetic experiments, surgical operations and artificial reproductive processes whereby identity becomes unsettled. By forcing her body and her audiences into spaces where humanity fails to assert its normative demands, Questionmark disrupts the biopolitical implications of transgender and transpecies bodies in a human-dominated world. Recent long-duration performances include CHM13hTERT (2023),

presented in a public train station at SpazioSERRA, Milan and TRANSGENESIS (2021), presented by The Orange Garden and Harlesden High Street in London. Her work has been shown at Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva; MAXXI Museum, Rome; Malta Biennale, Valletta; Konig Galerie, Berlin; and the 14th Gwangju Biennale. Her writing has been published DRY, Speciwoman and NERO Magazine. Questionmark has just launched her first artist book with NERO Editions, and exhibited a piece for the 60th Venice Biennale.

### **SHORTLISTED MUSICIANS**

**Arturo Corrales** is a composer, conductor, guitarist, professor and architect. Born in El Salvador and studied in San Salvador, Geneva, Lugano and Paris.

Co-founder of the Vortex Ensemble, for the creation of new music; he has participated in many international art festivals as a composer, teacher or conductor.

In spite of the experimental character of his music, his work is influenced by folkloric and popular sources and shows a constant concern for form and time-space perception, in a kind of « human scale music ». Actually, he is the professor of composition and analysis in CPMDT (Geneva) and works on a doctoral thesis about «Musical Figures».

Currently, he is the professor of composition and analysis at CPMDT, artistic and musical director of the Orchestre des Trois-Chêne, Ensemble Vortex and Electric Primitivo. He obtained a PHD in musicology from the University of Geneva, with honorable mention and congratulations from the jury unanimously; as well as the Barbour 2019 Award for excellence in aesthetic criticism.

**Natalia Domínguez Rangel** is a Colombian/Dutch artist and music composer currently living and working in Vienna and Amsterdam. She holds a Master in Music Composition, Conservatorium van Amsterdam.

Her compositions are played at Radialsystem, Berlin (DE); Muziekgebouw aan't IJ, Amsterdam (NL); Vienna Biennale (AT), Theaterhaus – Südseite P1, Stuttgart (DE); Kiasma, Helsinki (FI); Festival Archipel, Geneva (CH); Het Orgelpark, Amsterdam (NL); International Film Festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam (NL); International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (DE); EYE Film Museum, Amsterdam (NL); STUK, Leuven (BE); Dampfzentrale, Bern (CH); Impulz Tanz, Vienna (AT); November Music, Den Bosch (NL); Société de Musique Contemporaine, Lausanne (CH) De Apple Arts Center, Amsterdam (NL); Les Urbaines, Lausanne (CH); Gaudeamus Muziek Week, Amsterdam (NL); Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (UK); Museum Arnhem (NL), CODA Museum, Apeldoorn (NL) between others. She is a docent at Design Art Technology department of ArteZ, Arnhem, NL and teaches Sound in Sculpture at Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst (mdw) in Vienna.

**Luigi Morleo** is an Italian percussionist and composer of contemporary music. He uses varied musical and artistic styles like minimalism, rock-cross-over, folk-Pop, jazz, electronica and DJ.

Many of his works have been played by the Maracaibo Symphony Orchestra-Venezuela, Rome and the Lazio Orchestra-ITALY, Clermont-Ferrand Conservatoire Orchestre-France, Denver Young Artists Orchestra-USA, Orchestra Sinfonica Metropolitana di Bari-ITALY, Orchestra del Conservatorio di Monopoli-ITALY, Orchestra Sinfonica di Lecce e del Salento-ITALY, Halleiner KammerOrchester-Austria, Orchestra Filarmonica della Calabria-ITALY, at PASIC (Percussive Arts Society) in Nashville-USA, Federation Bells of Melbourne-Australia, and at the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival-USA and Festival MUSLABfrom Mexico, Festival Futura Electronic – France, Jasmin Vardimon Company from Ashford-UK, Percussion Ensemble from Academy of Music STANISLAW MONIUSZKO in Gdansk-Poland, Percussion Ensemble from University of Miskolc-Hungary, Japanese Arts Network, Festival Atemporanea in Argentina.

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