

FONDAZIONE MEMMO

EXHIBITION

Make Haste Slowly

Conversation Piece Part XI

Alicja Kwade, Paul Maheke, Enrique Ramírez, Prem Sahib, Henry Taylor

curated by Marcello Smarrelli

Press preview: Wednesday, 14 January 2026 | 12:00 pm

Opening: Wednesday, 14 January 2026 | 6:00–8:00 pm

Open to the public: 15 January–12 April 2026

Fondazione Memmo

Rome, via Fontanella Borghese 56b

PRESS RELEASE

From 15 January to 12 April 2026, Fondazione Memmo in Rome presents ***Make Haste Slowly***, the eleventh edition of *Conversation Piece*, an annual exhibition cycle curated by **Marcello Smarrelli**, created with the aim of providing an overview of **Italian and international artists who choose Rome** as a place of residence and research.

A highly successful curatorial project, it has already involved over sixty of the most interesting artists on the contemporary scene.

The title of the exhibition, ***Make Haste Slowly***, is inspired by the famous Latin phrase *festina lente*, attributed by the Roman historian Suetonius to Emperor Augustus. The phrase combines in an oxymoron two antithetical concepts—speed and slowness—to indicate an action that is timely and decisive yet simultaneously cautious and thoughtful.

Erasmus of Rotterdam, in the *Adagia* of 1508, recounts that Aldus Manutius showed him a denarius of Titus with the image of the emperor and the symbol of an anchor intertwined with a dolphin: an allegory of the motto *festina lente*, uniting rapidity and slowness. Taken up by **Italo Calvino** in the *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, this principle expresses the time of creativity: an immediacy that arises from long sedimentation, a lightning intuition made possible by patient adjustments.

The tension between urgency and reflection also recalls the Aristotelian distinction between *praxis* and *théôria*, aptly describing the dual rhythms of the artistic act, which may emerge suddenly or mature slowly, but always through a profound process of organizing knowledge. **In the age of fast communication, this dialectic between speed and depth becomes crucial, and images once again assume a central and almost sacred role.**

As usual, the artists of this eleventh edition were also asked to engage with a theme of universal resonance: the perception of time, intimately connected to the history of art, to the city of Rome and its millennial past.

Is there an internal time within works of art? How is it perceived, how is it measured, and what real and symbolic value does it assume in the creative process?

These are some of the reflections proposed to the invited artists: **Alicja Kwade** (1979, Katowice, Poland), winner of the 2025–26 Rome Prize at the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo; **Paul Maheke** (1985, Brive-la-Gaillarde, France) and **Enrique Ramírez** (1979, Santiago de Chile, Chile), both *pensionnaires* 2025–26 at the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici; **Prem Sahib** (1982, London), BSR – British School at Rome Abbey Fellow 2025–26; **Henry Taylor** (1958, Ventura, California).

The exhibited works, created specifically for the spaces of Fondazione Memmo or presented for the first time in Rome, reflect on the time of art, recounting it through different modes and languages. The work of art thus becomes a peculiar timekeeper, whose functioning must be deciphered each time.

Through her installations, **Alicja Kwade** invites us to rethink perception and cognition in everyday life. Her language is based on the deconstruction and decontextualization of common objects to generate unexpected and unprecedented points of view on socially shared beliefs. With her creations—often conceived in dialogue with architecture and natural phenomena—Kwade explores concepts such as time and space, with the aim of introducing a sense of derealization of reality.

Paul Maheke's research is rooted in decolonial and emancipatory thought, in exploration of the shifting notions of identity and memory through the lens of history. Playing with layers of transparency and opacity - both literally and metaphorically - the artist approaches the elements that shape collective imaginaries. Through installation, text, and drawing, Maheke invites us to consider the body as an archive constantly being reimagined and rewritten- a territory with its own cartography, where personal and collective histories intersect and transform.

In his practice, **Enrique Ramírez** combines video, photography, sound and installation to explore narrative forms in which dream and reality blur, transcending borders and historical periods. Maintaining a delicate balance between the poetic and the political, Ramírez builds layered narratives whose central element is obsessive and recursive: the sea. A space of memory in perpetual motion, the sea becomes a place of narrative projection in which the fate of Chile, his country of origin, intertwines with broader stories of journeys, conquests and migrations. His fluid images evoke a history that repeats itself continuously, never in the same way.

In **Prem Sahib**'s practice, time manifests as an emotional and spatial dimension rather than a chronological one: a stratified time in which past and present coexist in the traces of bodies left in the spaces that hosted them. His work explores sexuality, intimacy, desire within queer communities. The minimalism of Sahib's works makes visible a non-synchronous temporality made of memories, desires and absences, becoming a way to question the emotional duration of experiences and their persistence in space.

With his painting, **Henry Taylor** captures fragments of time. The subjects of his paintings emerge from research that draws on personal and collective memory, intertwining biography, culture and history. In his studio coexist newspaper clippings, historical photographs of the civil rights movement, snapshots of known or unknown people.

Taylor paints with rapid gestures and touches of saturated colour alternating with densely detailed areas, grasping an emotion before it fades. His works, populated by figures from the Black community and symbols of historic struggles, traverse the full spectrum of the human condition and become visual biographies, permanent testimonies of the history of individuals and communities.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication, to be released in spring 2026.

Thanks to the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo, the French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici, and the BSR – British School at Rome for their collaboration.

Conversation Piece – the project

Conversation Piece was born from Fondazione Memmo's desire to constantly monitor the contemporary artistic scene of the city and, in particular, the activities of the foreign academies and cultural institutes, where new generations of artists from all over the world traditionally complete their education. Through these exhibitions and other initiatives, Fondazione Memmo aims to act as an amplifier of the work of these institutions. The title of the cycle is inspired by one of Luchino Visconti's most famous films, *Conversation Piece (Gruppo di Famiglia in un interno, 1974)*, a clear metaphor for the confrontation between generations and the love-hate relationships between ancient and modern; but *Conversation Piece* was also a pictorial genre widespread between the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by groups of people in conversation with each other or depicted in scenes of family life. The exhibition, in addition to representing an opportunity for dialogue with Rome, offers itself as a moment of discussion among artistic personalities different from one another, with the aim of bringing together diverse energies, knowledge and methods in a single exhibition event. Over the years more than fifty international artists have participated, including Yto Barrada, Eric Baudelaire, Rossella Biscotti, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, Piero Golia, Francesca Grilli, Invernomuto, Jonathan Monk, Philippe Rahm, Julian Rosefeldt, Marinella Senatore, Victor Man, Miltos Manetas, Yael Bartana, Claire Fontaine, Kapwani Kiwanga, Bruna Esposito, Bianca Bondi, Enzo Cucchi, Sidival Fila, Richard Mosse.

The curator

Marcello Smarrelli is Artistic Director of Pesaro Musei, the Pastificio Cerere Foundation in Rome, the Ermanno Casoli Foundation in Fabriano, curator-at-large at Fondazione Memmo in Rome, and a member of the Regional Cultural Observatory of the Marche Region. After graduating in Art History at La Sapienza University of Rome and specializing in Contemporary Art History at the University of Siena, he dedicated himself to studying the relationship between aesthetics and pedagogy, focusing his curatorial practice on issues related to relational aesthetics, art in public space, and its educational and formative function. He has curated numerous exhibitions in public and private institutions, public art projects, training workshops with artists for multinational companies; the E-STRAORDINARIO project, created for the Ermanno Casoli Foundation and based on cooperation between artists and business for corporate training, won first prize at the Cultura+Impresa Award 2014. His critical essays are published in catalogues and specialized journals with which he collaborates regularly. He has served on important juries for awarding contemporary art prizes in Italy and abroad (Curator of the Ariane de Rothschild Prize, critic selector of the Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco Prize, Premio Furla, Talent Prize, Prize for Young Italian Art, creator and curator of

6artista for Civita, Allianz and Fondazione Pastificio Cerere, Ermanno Casoli Prize, Surprise for the Academy of Fine Arts of Urbino).

Fondazione Memmo

Fondazione Memmo was established in 1990 from Roberto Memmo's desire to create cultural activities aimed at bringing the world of art closer to a broad public through the direct experience of masterpieces from all eras and the most diverse civilizations. Since 2012, thanks to the initiative of Fabiana Marengi Vaselli Bond and Anna d'Amelio Carbone, a new exhibition program entirely dedicated to the contemporary art scene has been active. Contributing to the development of the cultural fabric of the territory, connecting with international realities, opening a dialogue with other institutions and promoting interaction between artists and the city of Rome are among the goals of Fondazione Memmo. Performances, residencies, talks, educational workshops and publications thus become opportunities to promote the present, like an observatory dedicated to contemporaneity, contributing to the development of our future. In 2018, Fondazione Memmo won the prestigious Montblanc de la Culture Arts Patronage Award, thanks to which, in January 2020, it launched a residency program in London, in collaboration with Gasworks, dedicated to Italian artists—continuing its work of exchange, dialogue and connection among artists and institutions from different contexts. The artists involved so far are Diego Marcon (2020), Adelaide Cioni (2022), Francis Offman (2023), Alice Visentin (2024), Raffaella Naldi Rossano (2025).

Rome, November 2025

Press materials and photos at the link:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/6a1u9v13ke3wl3s0wcurn/AOFOCVI1exWPPmrHDC5ckOA?rlkey=k_s5awbofgw03lbo0d1c77bgkh&dl=0

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INFORMATION

Exhibition: *Make Haste Slowly. Conversation Piece / Part XI*

Curator: Marcello Smarrelli

Assistant curator: Angelica Gatto

Venue: Fondazione Memmo, via Fontanella Borghese 56/b, Rome

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Hours: everyday 11:00 am–6:00 pm (closed on Tuesdays)

Free admission

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