

“ The Pavilion is a very diverse endeavour, and Europe indeed is no longer the 19th century, rather boring, white male Europe: it’s a really exciting, vibrant, and diverse continent. The European Pavilion is also unfinished: it is not an exhibition or a gallery space but a work in progress, and so is Europe. Lastly, the European Pavilion is trans-local, and transnational, connecting very diverse organisations across the continent, and Europe in theory is the prime example of trying to bring together diversity and national oppositions for a common aspiration and a common future.”

– **Lorenzo Marsili, Artistic Director, Fondazione Studio Rizoma**

“The image of the pavilion takes us to a close space. And I think that one of the most important things that we are trying to do with the European Pavilion is to open spaces, connecting communities not only transnationally but also across regions. The spaces that we open should take care of the differences, and also allow us to confront, to discuss, to explore ways of doing things.”

– **Mabel Tapia, Deputy Artistic Director, Museo Reina Sofia**

The European Pavilion in Rome was a three-day artistic program organized from 17 to 19 November 2022 in the capital of Italy. Over three days, artists, thinkers, and researchers from all over the continent came together in a program that offered panel discussions, talks, workshops, music performances, a virtual reality environment, as well as sculptural, and multimedia installations. Almost twenty different events took place in the European Pavilion in Rome, bringing together different audiences, and groups.

The European Pavilion in Rome was co-curated by Lore Gablier (Programme Manager of the European Cultural Foundation), and the Ukrainian curator Lesia Kulchynska, in close collaboration with: Ambasada Kultury (Berlin-Vilnius), ARNA (Sweden), Brunnenpassage (Vienna), EUPavilion (Rome-Zürich), Fondazione Studio Rizoma (Palermo-Rome), Iniva (London), L’Internationale (Madrid, Warsaw, Barcelona, Ljubljana, Eindhoven), OGR (Turin), State of Concept (Athens), and Studio Wild (Amsterdam). These organizations and partners have been working on The European Pavilion since 2021, and in Rome they presented, as the end of a cycle, their projects.



fig 2: Map of the seven venues where the European Pavilion in Rome took place



Fig 3: Académie de France à Rome Villa Médicis

The European Pavilion

The city of Rome hosted this 2022 the first European Pavilion of many to come. As a matter of fact, the European Pavilion is intended to perdure. In Rome, the European Cultural Foundation tested the earliest prototype of what could become a new type of biennial art program focusing on Europe. As Dietachmair and Gablier (2022) point out there are nomadic arts biennales such as Manifesta or European Capitals of Culture, that come forward as local hosts or are selected for the title. However no European cultural program deals explicitly with the “most burning issues for our continent from an artistic point of view, in a decentral, locally contextualized, yet interconnected way” (Dietachmair, Gablier, 2022, p. 9).

As Dietachmair and Gablier (2022) recall this is also the perspective from which the European Pavilion was first conceived: “as an innovative cultural model that makes it possible to imagine, and propagate a new type of non-linear, and decentralized pavilion” (p. 9). In this imaginary pavilion, the goal is not to try to find consensus between all its voices, but much more the contrary. Consensus is “always specific and partially exclusionary, hegemonic” (Sassatelli, 2022, p.13). As put by Sassatelli “the role of critical art remains to show alternatives, open up, pluralize, create space for the agonistic struggle” (p. 13). The idea that there should be a consensus runs against the idea of diversity. But here is where the potential of The European Pavilion lies. It could be a space not of consensus, but of pluralistic dissent, or agonism. The basis for solidarity.



Fig 1: The Great Exhibition of 1851, at the Crystal Palace of London, UK

As Sassatelli (2022) indicates national pavilions were born after all as the quintessential expression of national representation within the imperialist, colonialist project of world exhibitions (fig. 1). They represented a certain idea of progress, of standardization of the national identity, based on common culture, and consensus. They work as a sort of measure through which nations can compete with each other. But could there be other types of pavilions? Pavilions that do not seek consensus, unity, or competition, but rather dissensus, plurality, and solidarity? Can there be a European Pavilion to shelter, and protect, the unheard and excluded?

With these questions in mind, and with a decentralized perspective, the European Pavilion in Rome happened simultaneously in seven different venues (fig. 2). Once again, rethinking, and questioning the nation-state, most of the chosen venues were national academies. Created for artists to experience the classical past, and which accompanied the construction of nations in Europe, these institutions offer a particularly relevant context for discussing, and imagining transnational forms of collective belonging. The European Pavilion in Rome was therefore organized in partnership with Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Goethe-Institut, German Academy Rome Villa Massimo, Académie de France à Rome Villa Médicis (fig. 3), Istituto Svizzero, Museo della Civiltà, and NERO Editions.

The people

Who created and formed the European Pavilion in Rome?

EP Studios



fig 4: Ylva Gislén, and Johan Widén (artists from ARNA) in the hamlet Hammarlunda, in Sweden

It could be said that the main characters were the "European Pavilion Studios". These studios had been collaborating with the European Pavilion since the summer of 2021 when the program was launched. As a result, seven organizations were selected, and awarded a grant. These would work by bringing together diverse practices, communities, and local or regional realities, forming a diverse constellation. The topics and questions they chose to address throughout 2021-2022 were multiple and complex, and reflect many of the challenges facing Europe. They ranged from the issue of waste in contemporary societies, or the future of food, as the project of ARNA (fig. 4), to the state of democracy, or the urgency of listening to the unheard, and marginalized. Without the European Pavilion Studios of ARNA, Brunnenpassage, L'Internationale, iniva, OGR Torino, State of Concept, and Fondazione Studio Rizoma the program would not have been possible.



fig 5: Video piece by antiwarcoalition.art exhibited at Goethe Institut

But not only, in addition to these seven organizations, the European Cultural Foundation had also given financial support to a variety of initiatives that relate to and enhance the European Pavilion's content. These projects included the creation by eight artists and architects of a series of architectural models for a European Pavilion at the Venice Giardinis (EUPavilion), an installation in the form of a garden of plants classified as invasive by the European Union (Studio Wild), and an online gallery where artists are invited to display multimedia works (fig. 5) that express their opposition to war, and all forms of oppression (antiwarcoalition.art).

Speakers

The program of the European Pavilion in Rome also comprehended numerous talks, and conferences, given by a range of different speakers: lecturers, researchers, musicians, artists, architects, curators, politicians, and activists among others.



fig 6: *Visualising Europe* by Jana Graul, Matthias Weiss and Carlo Ugolotti

On Friday 18, for example, at Bibliotheca Hertziana, three art history researchers reflected on the image of Europe. *Visualising Europe* (fig. 6) was a panel discussion proposed by the current Bibliotheca Hertziana fellows Jana Graul, Matthias Weiss, and Carlo Ugolotti. It explored how Europe has been imagined, and visualized through arts and media throughout history. Looking at images of Europe produced by European artists and filmmakers since the 16th century, we discussed their differences, interdependencies, and permeabilities. These images were as well contrasted with the ones created outside Europe.



fig 7: *Shaitans and Shakhids* by Diana Khalilova

Or the lecture-performance *Shaitans and Shakhids* (fig. 7), by Diana Khalilova, a Ukrainian artist of Dagestan origin. Khalilova reflected on the images and concepts, historical or mythological, related to the endangered culture of Dagestan and the memory of Caucasian resistance, through the subjective lens of her own experience of the ongoing war in Ukraine.



fig 8: *Mother of Pearl* by Liza Dieckwisch, Jungwoon Kim, Ae Ran Kim, and Klara Paterok

Or the presentation by the artists Liza Dieckwisch, Jungwoon Kim, Ae Ran Kim, and Klara Paterok of *Mother of Pearl* (fig. 8), an artistic and social project reflecting on the structure of the pavilion as a space shared and sustained by communities. Built in northern Austria, in St. Florian, *Mother of Pearl* is a contemporary reinterpretation of the Korean pavilion, intended as an open space, a meeting place for afternoon tea or a space for arts and culture, for philosophical and intellectual exchange.

Partners

Without the help of other partners, the European Cultural Foundation would not have been able to build The European Pavilion. This arts initiative was constructed in collaboration with, and with the support of, key partners including the Camargo Foundation, the Kultura Nova Foundation, and Fondazione CRT.

On Friday 18th, a closed partnership meeting with multiple foundations took place to discuss the future of the European Pavilion at the Swiss Institute. As described, The European Pavilion is a multi-annual programme, and it needs partners to join, contribute, and fuel its program. As a matter of fact, now a new call for Pavilions will be launched in the search of new cultural organizations that, through dedicated artistic, and educational programs, would encourage artists and communities “to visualize and imagine Europe, and reflect what it means today, and what is needed to make it better tomorrow” (Dietachmair, Gablier, 2022, p. 7).

The program

Exhibitions



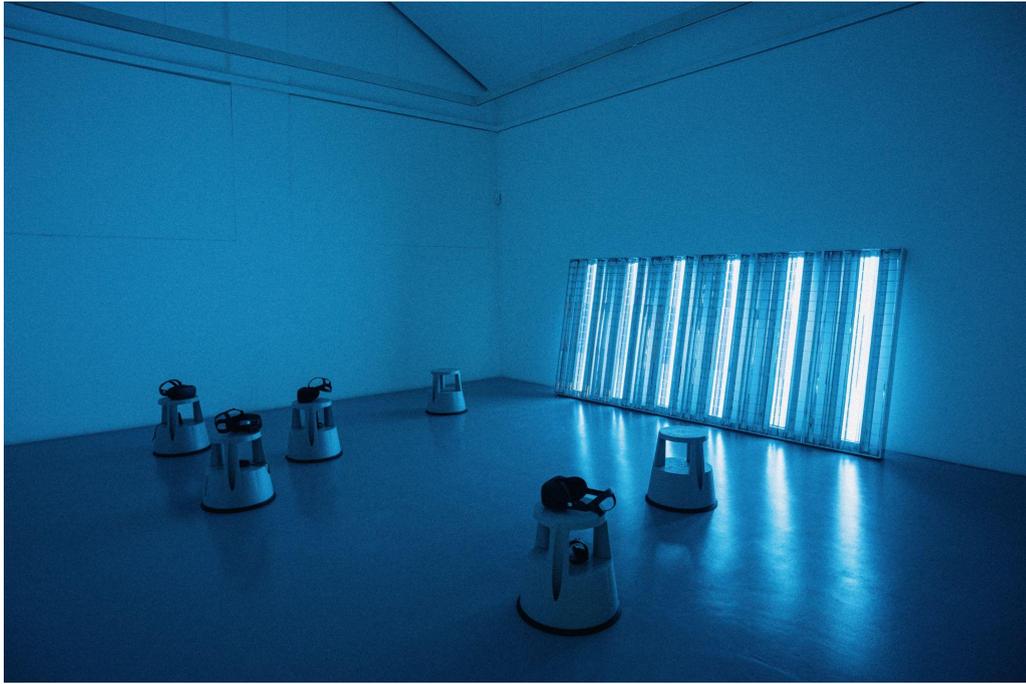


fig 9: *EUPavilion Eight proposals* by EUPavilion collective

The program included not only numerous public events but also a series of exhibitions that documented the work carried out by the European Pavilion Studios, and collaborators. Exhibitions such as those held at Villa Massimo, where in the gallery space, the EUPavilion collective (Anna Livia Friel and Marco Provinciali) presented *EUPavilion Eight proposals* (fig. 9), a new virtual reality installation that is part of a project initiated in 2020, which explores how architecture can contribute to the debate on European integration as a cultural project. The eight models were commissioned by a group of artists and architects (Armature Globale, BB with Tomaso De Luca, Jasmina Cibic, Diogo Passarinho Studio, Plan Comn, Something Fantastic, TEN, and Evita Vasiljeva), who were invited to imagine a European pavilion for the Giardini Della Biennale in Venice last year. The installation, which was created in collaboration with Supervoid, provided the opportunity to explore these models.



fig 10: Fabian Wagner's pavilion and wine tasting by OENOPE

In Studio 1, another architect, Fabian Wagner, presented the pavilion he built in the context of his residency at Villa Massimo in 2022-2023: a flexible structure, designed to adapt to different settings, and to accommodate various proposals. This meeting space hosted a wine tasting (fig. 10) on the opening night of the exhibition, led by Jérôme Felici, one of the co-initiators of the [Borderless European Wine](#) by [OENOPE](#).

Presentations, talks, and debates



fig 11: *I come from outside myself* by Ludovica Carbotta and collective walk to Villa Massimo with Nilas Heinskou, Luke de Noronha, and Monica Sassatelli



fig 12: *I come from outside myself* by Ludovica Carbotta, miniature pavilions

The program also included numerous presentations, talks, and debates, such as the artist presentation and collective walk proposed by Ludovica Carbotta (fig. 11), an Italian artist commissioned by OGR Torino Studio. *I come from outside myself* started from the observation of the mutability of European borders – porous when it comes to the circulation of goods and people within them and, on the other hand, fortified to exclude those who are outside. Ludovica Carbotta then developed a project that takes the form of a series of miniature pavilions (fig. 12): small and fragile objects that can be passed from hand to hand, from country to country. These objects become amulets and vehicles for opening up conversations about borders, rights, and space. The pavilions were passed on to a group of three contributors – Nilas Heinskou, Luke de Noronha, and Monica Sassatelli – who invited the public to an open conversation during a walk from the Goethe-Institut Rom to the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo.



fig 13: *Unexpected landscapes* by Leone Contini, sigua (luffa) and pugua (bottle gourd) plants

Another artist talk was *Unexpected landscapes*, where Leone Contini reflected on Europe and the European landscape. Contini arrived at the talk at Villa Medici laden with the most varied and unusual vegetables (fig. 13). Plants that seemed rather from another planet or from some far-away place, and that I had never seen before. He explained that the astonishment caused by these vegetables did not only generate curiosity but also racism. Asian migrants had brought them with them when they left their lands. Curious neighbours concerned about the invasive plants made the planting a debate of all. Thus, amidst racist comments in the local press, the Italian authorities and the police finally closed down these plantations (fig. 14).



fig 14: *Unexpected landscapes* by Leone Contini, slide of the presentation of the police closing down the plantations

Contini knew these Asian migrants personally. They were his neighbors, and he shared with them the passion for agriculture. He ended up writing his memoirs of these events, and of the racism that this community subsequently suffered during the times of the pandemic. In the talk, he not only presented his short publication (which was conceived as part of State of Concept), but also shared collages, images of lands highly modified by photoshop and reflected on the artificial creation of the idyllic Tuscan landscape. At the end of his presentation, he gave out seeds to the listeners to continue growing these forbidden vegetables.



fig 15: *Decolonizing Russia: forgotten histories and expected futures* by Rafis Kashapov, Rajana Dugar-De Ponte, and Ruslan Gabbasov

One of the most interesting debates, due to how little we know on the topic, was *Decolonising Russia: forgotten histories and expected futures* (fig. 15). The panel discussion aimed to highlight the current decolonial movements of indigenous people of the Russian Federation, and give voice to its leading activists: Rafis Kashapov, founder of the Free Idel-Ural movement and a deputy prime minister of the self-proclaimed Tatar government in exile; Rajana Dugar-De Ponte, one of the leaders of the Buryat national movement and co-founder of “League of Free Nations” movement; and Ruslan Gabbasov, head of the Bashkir National Political Center.

Performances and installations



fig. 16: *Politics of Frequency* by Marcus Schmickler with Ilenia D'Avenia, Denise Bezziccheri, Alessandro Fabiani, Lorenzo Profita

The last event of the opening on Thursday at Villa Massimo was a music performance, *Politics of Frequency* (fig. 16). Composer Marcus Schmickler, and media theorist Julian Rohrhuber, composed it in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis that almost pushed Greece out of the European Union. This music performance deals with the acoustic rendering of numerical concepts, following the hypothesis that music and economics share a fundamental object: the number.

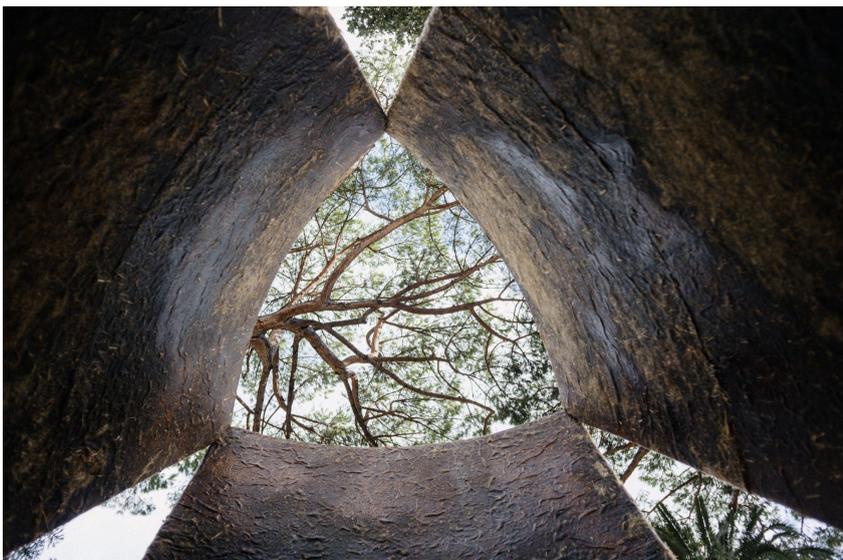


fig. 17: *The forbidden Tempietto* by Studio Wild

At the gardens of the Swiss Institute, the architects of Studio Wild (Tymon Hogenelst and Jesse van der Ploeg) presented *The forbidden Tempietto* (fig. 17). The pavilion proposes a reflection on the European Union’s migration policies. The project, which initially took the form of a garden presented at the 2021 architecture biennial in Venice (*The Forbidden Garden of Europe*, fig. 18), is inspired by a list of plants considered invasive by the European Union, and therefore banned. The architects collected these plants and used them as the material for the production of a series of panels that together construct the space of the pavilion, which is intended to be a chapel or mausoleum in homage to those who cannot find common ground in Europe, even after living there for generations.



fig. 18: *The Forbidden Garden of Europe* by Studio Wild in the Venice Biennale of Architecture

Workshops, readings sessions, and open tables

The “European Pavilion Studios” had not only come with art pieces to exhibit but also projects to share and explore together in a series of workshops. This was the case of iniva and ARNA who proposed reading sessions and open tables (intimate debates).

iniva's DRIFT Pavilion proposed three reading sessions, called *From River to River*, which took place at NERO, an independent publishing house in the south of the city. The three facilitators (Lola Olufemi, Adjoa Armah, and Cairo Clarke) who conducted the sessions are the research associates from iniva's Archipelagos in Reverse research network, who have been involved in their DRIFT pavilion project through their contribution to a special issue of STUART papers. These sessions not only featured collective readings, but also discussions, image/video sharing, and listening to parts of their podcast collectively.

Two open tables were proposed by ARNA (Art & Nature) a non-profit organization in the southern part of Sweden. In Vombsjösjöänkan, a region on its road to becoming a UNESCO biosphere reserve, ARNA explores the cultural aspect of sustainability. By bringing together the experiences of several generations, science, and people's visions for the future, they want to contribute to innovation in sustainable development.



fig. 19: *Dinner for future* by ARNA

On Friday at Villa Medici, artists Ylva Gislén and Johan Widén, with the help of ARNA founder Kerstin Jakobsson, arranged a circle of chairs in the Stanza Azzurra. In the center of a cloth, which seemed like a green velvet curtain, were three mounds of different seeds (fig. 19). A small group came through the large rooms of the Villa. Once everyone was seated, among the echoes of the big room Gislén narrated the Greek myth of the Spring, and how the young maid Persephone was kidnapped and forced to marry the god of the underworld, Hades. With this introductory story, and this genealogy of the myth of the seasons, she gave each of the participants a seed. As she handed them out, she spoke of the seeds in feminine, personifying them. Each seed had her story, as did each of the participants, who also had to introduce themselves. Most of the participants had a direct connection to agriculture. Among them was Slow Food Roma (a large international non-profit association, committed to restoring the right value to food, respecting those who produce it locally), or the artist Leone Contini, who as we have already mentioned also enjoys agriculture, or a Croatian farmer, who lived in Sicily. The conversation became more and more fluid and dynamic, and the initial silences

were left behind when the two artists proposed to us to split bread and wine. Not only did we share food and stories, but we also discussed the future of food and current farming practices in Europe.



fig 20: *Translating Resistance, Smuggling Utopia* Leyla Dakhli, philosopher Esla Dorlin, and choreographer Caroline Meyer-Picard

The number of audience for each activity was different. There were small groups at the reading sessions and open tables, or int the two listening sessions that took place at Bibliotheca Hertziana: *Translating Resistance, Smuggling Utopia*, and *Listening out Loud: StoryTelling: Europe!* The first one, led by historian Leyla Dakhli, philosopher Esla Dorlin, and choreographer Caroline Meyer-Picard, *Translating Resistance, Smuggling Utopia* (fig. 20) was a research project that aimed to retrace trajectories of resistance, and utopian thinking in Southern Europe and the Mediterranean. The collective presented a sound installation, and a live-performance that weaved together multilingual archives and voices of mobilizations and revolts in the Mediterranean area.



fig 21: *Listening out Loud: StoryTelling: Europe!* by Melika Ramić, Fariba Moseh and Natalia Hecht



fig. 22: *StoryTelling: Europe!* by Brunnenpassage

In *Storytelling: Europe in Listening Out Loud!* (fig. 21), we listened to excerpts from a collection of audio recordings created by the artist Melika Rami in collaboration with local kids in Vienna's Brunnenmarkt (fig. 22). These recordings enabled us to join a polyphonic chorus that offered new forms of listening to the daily lives and views of both neighbors and children. They were simultaneously translated into some of the most frequently spoken languages in Rome. The recordings aid in our reflection on important issues of Europe's past, present, and future from a transgenerational perspective anchored in the everyday life of the market. The workshop was part of Brunnenpassage's *StoryTelling: Europe!* initiative.



fig. 23: *Italy and the future of Europe* by Giuseppe Laterza, Lorenzo Marsili and Elly Schlein

On the other hand, other events were so crowded as to exceed the limited seating capacity. For example, the panel discussed *Italy and the future of Europe* (fig. 23). The event took place on Thursday at Villa Massimo, where three speakers, Giuseppe Laterza (publisher), Lorenzo Marsili (philosopher), and Elly Schlein (Italian MP) reflected on the recent Italian elections, as well as on the challenges facing our continent. Almost one hundred participants attended the event.

Walk(s)

From venue to venue, the guests joined to walk together and discover routes from points of the city that, perhaps on other occasions, they would not have transited. These *dérives* added to the lunches, dinners, drinks, European wine, and Italian coffee ended up creating a small community. A network of individuals, all interested in rethinking the future of Europe, culture, and art.



Listening out Loud: StoryTelling: Europe! by Melika Ramić, Fariba Mosleh and Natalia Hecht

CONCLUSIONS

Working with the image of the pavilion is already interesting: a place of encounter or disencounter; from summer stands with food and music, to tents, or constructions like those of the demonstrations during the 2008 crisis, in Athens or Madrid. Temporary, and open, the pavilion can be assembled and disassembled. It is susceptible to change, and growth, and opposes rigid walls. Places of meditation, that can be rethought, can be defined along the way. That come and go. A place of transit, of momentary exchange, which does not represent a hegemonic order, but it is fluid. That is somehow what we experienced in Rome. Already the fact that the event lasted only three days, and that so many different nations met all together, in a place for debate and intellectual exchange, demonstrated this. In seven different decentralized venues, visitors could get to know different proposals. But in any case, as the Korean pavilion welcomes the tired traveler to rest and reflect on his journey, our Pavilion does intend to be a place for reflection and does need more time. Time for enjoyment, time to stop, and contemplate. Conferences on topics unknown to most, such as the assembly between Russian uprising groups, or a conversation with a Ukrainian artist of Dagestan origins took place in Rome. It was an international meeting in diverse languages, with simultaneous translators, and disparate people. Probably we still need to digest it, and it will be necessary for the pavilions to come to give this time for reflection.

In Rome, we saw how different contexts could learn and exchange, and how not seeking an agreement was enriching. Many projects had nothing to do with each other, but that was what made them interesting. Each session initiated a dialogue, a rethinking, and a reimagining of a common future. We listened a lot, maybe even too much, as many speakers attended. But at the same time, intimate spaces were built in such a broad program. Seeds were exchanged, as well as books and publications, or small charms, such as Ludovica Carvotta's pavilions that were passed from hand to hand. We saw the importance of getting to know others, and of being and thinking together.

However, we must also be aware that even if a decentral biennial is appealing, it leaves a trace. How many participants took a plane to Rome? Why was there almost no local Italian audience? These are questions for future pavilions: how can we ensure that our program does not become a trip for a select few? How can we make it known to other audiences apart from the cultural sector? How can we make sure that in a meeting where the theme is migration there are migrants or refugees? How can we reach an audience as heterogeneous as Europe? The next steps will be to look for these people: students of political science or international studies who are interested in current geopolitics, farmers, or local collectives for migrant people.

The future of the Pavilion will be to get its message to more voices, not so that they agree or support the same things, but so that a polyvocal dialogue can begin, in which chaos will perhaps break everything, in which we will not know what answer we are looking for. In Rome, topics as necessary as starting to think about new forms of agriculture or leaving behind notions such as the nation-state were touched upon. Relevant and without a single response, but multiple, and therefore necessary.

Clara Lizasoain

Studied Fine Arts in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and a MA in Contemporary Art History and Visual Culture at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid.

At the European Cultural Foundation, she worked as an intern in the preparation and follow-up of the European Pavilion in Rome. She worked helping with the logistics of the program, translating it, reaching out to interested audiences, disseminating the program, and sending practical information to the participants.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dietachmair, P., & Gablier, L. (2022). The germination of an idea. In L. Gablier & V. Anning (Ed.), *The European Pavilion* (p. 6-11). The Hague: Tim Beijer Producties.

Sassatelli, M. (2022). A Sentimental journey through Europe. In L. Gablier & V. Anning (Ed.), *The European Pavilion* (p. 11-16). The Hague: Tim Beijer Producties.

Gablier, L., & Kulchynska, L. (2022). *The European Pavilion in Rome*. Retrieved 10/12/2022 from https://culturalfoundation.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/PROGRAM_ECF_The-European-Pavilion-WEB_EN.pdf