

In-ruins

Contemporary Art
and Archaeology



In-ruins
Residency 2026

Open Call
VII
edition

Museums and
Archaeological Parks of
Melfi and Venosa (PZ)

in collaboration with
Fondazione Elpis

in partnership with
Città di Venosa

under the patronage of
Città di Melfi

Imagine crossing a volcanic landscape dotted with chestnut and oak trees, olive groves and vineyards, while simultaneously hearing the trumpeting of prehistoric elephants, the movements of Italic and Roman peoples, the clashing of arms in medieval castles, the notes of sixteenth-century madrigals, post-unification gunfire and the relentless activity of a large automobile factory. This is the cosmos of the Vulture-Melfese, a millennial crossroads structured around the river axis of the Ofanto-Sele - connector between the Adriatic and the Apennine worlds. Since antiquity, internal routes have linked this area with the territories of the coastal Daunia to the east, the Ionian coast to the south through the Bradano valley, and the Tyrrhenian shore to the west. After Sibari, Metaponto and Canosa di Puglia, In-ruins returns to Basilicata for its seventh edition, this time in the province of Potenza, retracing this ancient triangulation.

Venosa was founded as a Latin colony in 291 BC, in a territory whose human presence stretches back to the Palaeolithic. Developed along the route of the Via Appia, it was the birthplace of Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 BC) - poet of *carpe diem*, *aurea mediocritas* and *labor limae*. Centuries later, within its castle, Prince Carlo Gesualdo (1566-1613) - murderer and musician - founded the *Accademia dei Piacevoli e dei Rinascenti*, transforming the residence into a radical sonic laboratory. The urban fabric still follows the ancient Roman layout, and the Norman *Incompiuta of the SS. Trinità* marks its edge: a medieval church never completed. The opposite of a ruin. Interrupted before it truly existed, yet tangible up until our days.



Melfi is the first Norman capital in Southern Italy. The castle dominates the valley on a lava platform made of the same stone with which it was built between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Here, in 1231, Frederick II of Swabia promulgated the *Constitutiones Melphitanae* - a legislative monument of the European Middle Ages and, for some historians, the founding act of the modern administrative state. The Museo Archeologico Nazionale “Massimo Pallottino”, housed within the castle, preserves the *Sarcophagus of Rapolla* (2nd century AD), of Microasiatic production and testimony to the deep ties of this area with the Mediterranean.

Stepping back - before the Romans - the Vulture-Melfese becomes a frontier zone between distinct yet contiguous worlds: Daunians, Lucanians, Oenotrians. Cultures in continuous contamination, as the collections of the territory's museums attest. Among these populations were also the Oscan peoples of the Bantian area, today Banzi. In the 1st century BC, in the context of the Social Wars (91-87 BC), these communities undertook paths of progressive and voluntary adoption of Roman ritual and institutional practices. A testimony to this is the *Askos Catarinella* (3rd century BC): a polychrome funerary vessel from the *Necropolis of Lavello* depicting an indigenous rite celebrated in Roman forms - contamination already absorbed into the gesture of mourning, as everyday practice rather than subjugation.

Leaping forward some two thousand years, the same landscape becomes the stage for an altogether different relationship with power. This is the time of post-unification brigandage. With the fall of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the unification of the peninsula under the Savoy monarchy, part of the rural population organised itself into armed resistance: the repression was so violent that some historians have described it *as the first Italian civil war* - a contested definition, yet indicative of the scale of the conflict. In this context emerges the figure of Carmine Crocco (1830-1905), who established himself as the foremost leader of Lucanian brigandage: on 10 April 1861 he occupied Venosa, and a few days later Melfi, bringing the peasant war into the heart of the very territory we are traversing.



This oscillation between integration and resistance takes a different form in the twentieth century, with industrialisation and the deepening of the Southern Question. The ANIC-ENI petrochemical plant in Pisticci, launched in 1965 in the Val Basento, inaugurates a season of large productive infrastructures imposed upon a landscape that preceded and will outlast them. The same logic returns, at a different scale, with the FIAT plant in San Nicola di Melfi, inaugurated in 1993 (today Stellantis): a facility born of development matured elsewhere, still suspended between future promises and short-time working schemes.

Beneath all these layers, time plunges into presents difficult to imagine. The site of Notarchirico, nine kilometres from Venosa, yields human and animal traces dated to over 600,000 years ago: lithic tools, faunal remains and a femoral fragment attributed to the *Homo heidelbergensis* - the oldest known fossil evidence of human presence in Italy. The Vulture was then in full volcanic activity, the territory crossed by lakes and marshes, an ecosystem inhabited by species long vanished from this landscape - which we will find ourselves inhabiting.



1. Integration and Resistance

The *Askos Catarinella* depicts an indigenous rite already celebrated in Roman forms. The Bantian peoples voluntarily adopted Rome's institutional system before belonging to it. Two thousand years later, Crocco's brigands travel those same roads in the opposite direction. This axis explores the thresholds between assimilation and resistance, the hybrid forms that emerge in moments of contact between asymmetric cultures, and what is gained and lost in these clashes and encounters.

2. Incompleteness and possibility

The *Incompiuta of the SS. Trinità* is not a ruin: it is a project crystallised at the moment of its abandonment. The walls rise three or four metres. Then stop. This condition is reflected in the contemporary landscape surrounding it, echoing in the reinforced concrete skeletons that dot the South, and in the Stellantis plant in Melfi - a monument to an industrial future equally unfinished. This axis explores the incomplete not as fossil but as productive condition - what inhabits, and what may yet inhabit, its landscape.

3. Deep time and belonging

The *site of Notarchirico* and the *Sarcophagus of Rapolla* mark the two extremes of a question this territory poses with force: what does it mean to recognise as one's own a landscape that precedes us by hundreds of thousands of years, or that bears the marks of worlds impossibly remote? This axis explores the relationship between belonging and estrangement, between the depth of geological time and the endangered mobility of Mediterranean people.



4. Macrocosms and microcosms

The *Brocchetta di Ripacandida* (5th century BC) and the *Auguraculum Bantino* (1st century BC) are operative devices: from the territory they reach toward the sky, to interrogate it and receive from it an answer on earth. Not representations, but systems of translation between what looms above and what inhabits a place. Carlo Gesualdo performs the opposite movement: locked in the castle of Venosa following the murder of his wife and her lover, he plunges inward, working at the limits of the utterable - unresolved dissonances, unstable modulations, radical chromaticism that Stravinsky reworked in the *Monumentum pro Gesualdo* (1960) and Werner Herzog portrayed in *Death for Five Voices* (1995). Between macrocosms and microcosms, we propose to explore these two postures as complementary practices - interrogating the cosmos, inhabiting dissonance - and the forms they may take in the present.

Deadline
Thursday, July 2nd
midnight CET

In-ruins 2026 will take place between Venosa and Melfi, in synergy with the Museums and Archaeological Park of Melfi and Venosa, in partnership with the Municipality of Venosa, under the patronage of the Municipality of Melfi and of Fondazione Italia Patria della Bellezza. The residency is developed in collaboration with Fondazione Elpis, which co-funds the project since 2023. The residents will be hosted in the *Convent of Madonna delle Grazie*, Venosa.



– **Archaeological Park of Venosa:** At the heart of the territory's historical stratification, the park preserves traces of the Roman city of Venusia, founded in 291 BC as a Latin colony along the route of the Via Appia, and hosts one of the most enigmatic architectural complexes in Southern Italy: the church of the Santissima Trinità and the Incompiuta, a vast structure never completed that eludes both the category of the finished monument and that of the traditional ruin. The area yields traces of a city that for centuries represented a hub between different cultures, trade networks and powers - and the suspended condition of the Incompiuta makes it one of the central references of this edition's curatorial reflection.

– **Museo Archeologico Nazionale "Mario Torelli" di Venosa:** Housed in the underground galleries of the Castello di Pirro del Balzo, the museum preserves finds that speak to the multiple cultural stratifications of the territory, from the pre-Roman age to Romanisation, offering a fundamental context for understanding the processes of contact, assimilation and transformation that traverse the Vulture-Melfese.

– **Museo Archeologico Nazionale "Massimo Pallottino", Melfi:** Housed within the Castle of Melfi, the museum gathers archaeological evidence from the Vulture-Melfese area and surrounding territories, restoring the complexity of the cultures that inhabited this region. Among the key finds are objects attesting to the symbolic and material richness of the pre-Roman civilisations of Southern Italy.

– **Castle of Melfi:** Among the principal monumental complexes of the medieval Mezzogiorno, the castle introduces a different temporal and political scale into the residency, bound to the relationships between power, territorial control and the historical construction of Southern Italian identity. Its presence connects archaeology, architecture and political memory into a single interpretive device.

– **Paleolithic Park of Notarchirico:** A few kilometres from Venosa, the site of Notarchirico radically extends the temporal depth of the residency. With evidence of human presence dating back over 600,000 years, it represents one of the most significant Palaeolithic sites in Europe and opens a reflection on deep time, human presence, and the relationship between landscape, transformation and permanence.



How to Apply \

Applications must be submitted through the form available at **this link**.

After completing the required information, please upload a single PDF file (maximum 10 MB) containing:

– CV (max 3 pages)

– **PORTFOLIO**

max 15 pages, with images and artworks description (for artists)

with previous curatorial or research projects' outlines (for curators and researchers)

– **RESIDENCY PROJECT ***

500 words max + non mandatory accompanying images

* **The project is not considered final and may evolve over the course of the residency.**

If possible, please indicate in the PDF any materials required for your practice.

The pdf must be titled:

SURNAME_NAME_INRUINS2026

If you experience any difficulties with the application process, do not hesitate to contact us at: **info@inruins.org**



Timeline \

Open call: **2 june - 2 july (midnight CET)**

Results: **by 15 july**

Date residenza: **7 september - 11 october**

(Participants must be present for at least 4 out of the 5 weeks)

Jury \

The decisions of the jury and the In-ruins team are final. Individual feedback from the team will be available upon request after the residency concludes. Jury members:

Gianpaolo Cacciottolo (PhD, Curator and Director of Civico Museo Archivio di Etno Antropologia e Arte Contemporanea, Campagna), **Sara Fumagalli** (Curator, GAMEC - Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bergamo), **Stefano Mudu** (Post-doc in Art History e Visual Studies, University of Bergamo), **Sofia Schubert** (Curator, Responsible for Exhibitions and Residencies, Fondazione Elpis, Milan), **Maria Paola Zedda** (Curator and researcher, Artistic director “Le Alleanze dei Corpi”).

Conditions \

FREE AND PRIVILEGED ACCESS

to the archaeological heritage sites and museum collections involved in the project. Free participation in visits, group excursions and access to places, archives and research contexts relevant to the development of the projects.

ACCOMMODATION

for 35 days in Venosa, in private rooms with shared bathrooms, at the Convento della Madonna delle Grazie. Wi-fi included.

STUDIO SPACES

on site

MEALS

Breakfast + dinners included.

It is important to consider that the facilities and customs of the local context may not always guarantee immediate alternatives for every dietary requirement. We will do our best to find suitable solutions for all participants, but re-



sidents are asked to approach the local cuisine and customs with understanding and flexibility. Allergies and other medical conditions must be promptly communicated upon selection.

PRODUCTION BUDGET

up to **€1,000 gross** per artist.

N.B. The budget is not a fee and will not be disbursed in advance. It constitutes the maximum expenditure limit allocated to documented production or research needs of each participant.

N.B. Durable goods that are not artworks but production tools (e.g. cameras, hardware, working equipment) may be acquired through the production budget for the exclusive use of the participant during the residency, with an obligation of care, but remain the property of the residency.

N.B. The production budget is also available to curators and researchers, subject to the rule on durable goods, which also applies to books and periodicals (purchasable up to a maximum of 25% of the budget). It may be used to support experiments and research processes activated during the residency.

PARTICIPATION FEE

€500 as reimbursement for travel and any shipping costs for the work produced to the studio. In exchange for the participation fee, **the artist resident to donate to Archeofuturo APS an artist's proof, draft or small-format work produced during the residency.** These donations will enter the In-ruins collection, as part of a process of valorisation of the programme's activities and participants. The fee will be paid on site (50% at the beginning of the residency / 50% at the end, subject to the conditions of the programme) in ways to be agreed on a case-by-case basis according to the fiscal situation and provenance of the participant.

DEDICATED CAR

for excursions, visits and research and production needs. The car is intended for collective needs and programme-related activities, not for personal or discretionary use. Participants holding a valid driving licence and willing to drive are invited to indicate this in their application.

ONGOING CURATORIAL SUPPORT

throughout the residency.

MEETINGS AND COLLABORATIONS

with archaeologists, scholars and local experts according to research and production needs.

OUTCOMES

The results of the residency will be subject of a public presentation dedicated to sharing the process with the inhabitants of Venosa and Melfi, and of a subsequent presentation of the project in Milan,



Archaeological references
\ Photographic appendix









V E N O S A .

LIBRO SESTO. 190

A page of a musical score for a vocal piece titled "VENOSA". The page is numbered "190" and is part of "LIBRO SESTO". The score consists of two columns of music. The left column has five staves of vocal lines with lyrics in Italian. The right column has five staves of vocal lines with lyrics in Italian. The lyrics are: "Eltà poi che t'affenti Come se porti il cor", "Eltà poi che t'affenti Come ne porti il cor", "Eltà poi che t'affenti Come ne porti il cor", "Eltà poi che t'affenti Come ne porti il cor", "Eltà poi che t'affenti Come ne porti il cor". The right column lyrics include: "portai tormenti por tai tormenti Che", "portai tormen ti portai tor menti Ci-c", "porta i tormenti portai tormenti portai tormenti", "menti portai tor menti portai tormenti Che tormen", "tai tormenti portai tor menti", "del morire La doglia del morire E vn'alma fenza co", "glia La do glia del morire E vn'alma fenza co", "del mori re del morire del mori re E vn'alma fenza co", "glia La doglia del mori re del morire del morire E vn'alma fenza co", "La do glia del mori re E vn'alma fenza co".



Project by /

CONCEPT AND PRODUCTION

ARCHEOFUTURO
APS

Design: Donato Loforese

Partners /

IN COLLABORATION WITH

fondazione elpis

HOSTED BY


MUSEI E PARCHI ARCHEOLOGICI
MELFI E VENOSA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Comune di Venosa

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF



Comune di Melfi



IN THE ACADEMIC SYNERGY WITH



Policy of participation and respect \

In case of selection, you will take part in an immersive experience in the Vulture-Melfese area, between Venosa and Melfi, in the province of Potenza. A territory marked by deep stratifications - from the Palaeolithic site of Notarchirico to Frederick II's Constitutiones Melphitanae, from Gesualdo's murder to Crocco's brigand resistance, through to the Stellantis plant and the ANIC-ENI refinery - far from both the postcard imagery of Southern Italy and the simplifications of the Southern Question. A landscape in which geological time and the contemporary overlap without resolution, and where beauty coexists with suspended infrastructures and stretched-out rhythms.

Residents are expected to bring an open, curious and respectful spirit, with awareness of the historical, cultural and community context of Basilicata. This is not a museum site, but a living territory, crossed by real tensions between ancient and contemporary, integration and resistance, incompleteness and possibility. In previous editions, personal initiative and active listening to local communities have generated fertile relationships and unexpected possibilities.

In-ruins is a collective and temporary experiment, grounded in mutual trust, respect and responsibility. Residents are expected to contribute to a safe and welcoming environment, free from any form of discrimination, violence or toxic behaviour. Expressions of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism or any other attitude that undermines individual dignity will not be tolerated. Any violation of this policy will be addressed seriously, up to and including exclusion from the programme.

Thank you for reading this policy and for your commitment to sharing its values.

