

## MAXXI 2026: THE PROGRAMME

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*Rome, 22 January 2026.* MAXXI's 2026 opens under the banner of contemporary Italian creativity, before expanding its focus to embrace global perspectives and change. National Museum of 21st Century Arts is preparing for a dynamic year filled with exhibitions and surprises, promising both challenges and transformation. A diverse and multifaceted programme begins at the end of January with two special projects, gathers pace in the spring, and continues through to early 2027.

In the year marking the 80th anniversary of the Italian Constitution, two major group exhibitions will take center stage: one tracing the evolution of Italian art from the post-war era to the present day and the other exploring the current landscape and future of Italian architecture. The Museum entrance will once again be transformed with visionary furnishings, while the concrete expanse of the Piazza will make way to lush greenery. After its successful debut at MAXXI L'Aquila, the second chapter of the monographic exhibition dedicated to Andrea Pazienza will arrive in Rome. Meanwhile, Palazzo Ardinghelli, home to MAXXI L'Aquila, will launch its 2026 season with Ai Weiwei, followed by Marinella Senatore and a major exhibition on Fabio Mauri curated by Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini.

The year will also feature the return of William Kentridge to MAXXI; a new edition of the MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE; an ambitious research project on the relationship between architecture and geopolitics; a strong emphasis on performance; a tribute to Franco Battiato five years after his passing, and much more.

**Maria Emanuela Bruni**, President of Fondazione MAXXI, states:

“In 2026, MAXXI will continue to innovate becoming ever more open, accessible and receptive, offering high-quality cultural projects underpinned by continuous research. It will be a year of new developments, works and building sites that will transform the Museum's Piazza into a greener and more welcoming space; a special year for MAXXI L'Aquila, one of the key protagonists of L'Aquila Italian Capital of Culture, as we continue to design, rethinking some programmes and launching new ones. MAXXI aims to be a place of critical reflection and much more than a traditional exhibition venue, fully embracing Zaha Hadid's vision of the Museum as a modern Roman forum. Within our programme, art, architecture, design, photography and performance engage in a harmonious dialogue thanks to the expert work of Artistic Director Francesco Stocchi, of Lorenza Baroncelli, Director of the Department of Architecture and Contemporary Design, and of all the Museum's professionals.”

### THE PROGRAMME

The first of the special projects marks the return of **William Kentridge** to MAXXI, one of the most influential artists of our time. Titled **BREATHE DISSOLVE RETURN**, it is a total experience of images, sounds and original music by **Philip Miller**.

The project is curated by Oscar Pizzo and Franco Laera and co-produced by MAXXI and Change Performing Arts in collaboration with William Kentridge Studio. It opens **on 30 January** in Gallery 5 at MAXXI which, following the recent experience with *Mother* by Bob Wilson, once again returns to its original vocation as a space for encounter and cross-fertilisation between visual and performing arts.

The second project is an exhibition-event celebrating the human and musical genius of Franco Battiato five years after his death. **Franco Battiato. Un'altra vita**, curated by Giorgio Calcara with Grazia Cristina Battiato, offers a unique journey into the multifaceted talent of a man who was not only a musician and songwriter, but also a poet, philosopher and intellectual.

Opening on **31 January** in Spazio Extra MAXXI, the exhibition is co-produced by the Italian Ministry of Culture and MAXXI, and organised by C.O.R. Creare Organizzare Realizzare by Alessandro Nicosia in collaboration with Fondazione Franco Battiato ETS.

**From 20 March**, the MAXXI lobby will once again undergo a striking transformation with the second edition of **ENTRATE**, the multi-year design programme curated by Martina Muzi that places the Museum entrance into the spotlight. This time, the Spanish studio TAKK takes the lead revolutionising the ground floor and turning it into a space to be explored and experienced through six interactive, mobile “follies”.

Spring marks the core of the programme, beginning on **2 April** with the major exhibition **Tragicomica. L'arte italiana dal secondo Novecento a oggi**, curated by Andrea Bellini and Francesco Stocchi. This wide-ranging, multidisciplinary project offers a fresh reading of Italian cultural production from the post-war period to the present. Through works by over 140 artists and an extensive public programme, the project investigates irony, comedy and self-irony as defining traits of the Italian tradition, extending the discussion from visual art to cinema, theatre, literature and philosophy. Artists on display include **Elena Bellantoni, Mirella Bentivoglio, Alighiero Boetti, Maurizio Cattelan, Gino De Dominicis, Lucio Fontana, Chiara Fumai, Silvia Giambrone, Valerio Nicolai and Paola Pivi**.

Coinciding with this opening is the focus exhibition **L'archivio della rivista segno. Attualità internazionali d'arte contemporanea, 1976–2026**, curated by Paolo Balmas.

After its acclaimed debut at MAXXI L'Aquila, the second chapter of the major project dedicated to the legendary “Paz” arrives in Rome **on 23 April**. **Andrea Pazienza. Non sempre si muore**, curated by Giulia Ferracci and Oscar Glioti, delves into the relationship between word and image in the work of one of the most radical and visionary authors of the late 20th century. At its core are hundreds of drawings featuring the faces of his most iconic characters, including Zanardi, Pentothal, Pertini, Pompeo and many others.

In May, Spazio Extra MAXXI will host an exhibition paying homage to Saint Francis of Assisi, as part of the Celebrations of the Eighth Centenary of his death, curated by Beatrice Buscaroli. The exhibition is promoted and produced by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture and by MAXXI.

Opening on **29 May** to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Italian Republic, **Architetture dall'Italia**, curated by Pippo Ciorra and Elena Tinacci, explores the key themes of Italian architecture during the Republican era. Beginning with the voices of the great masters of national architecture around the turn of the millennium, the exhibition presents exemplary projects realised in recent years by Italian architects both at home and abroad.

The Archives Centre will also host the exhibition of finalist projects of **NXT**, MAXXI's programme devoted to new generations who represent the future of architecture. As in previous editions, the winning project will become the temporary summer installation in MAXXI's Piazza, a space for play and social interaction.

At the same time, **MILAN UNIT** will open: an archive-work that brings together, in a single large installation, the entire photographic and documentary production created by **Ramak Fazel** between 1994 and 2009, the years in which he immersed himself in the Italian design and architecture scene.

The survey of national creativity continues on **18 September** with the exhibition of finalists of the **MAXXI BVLGARI PRIZE**, the project supporting and promoting young artists that unites MAXXI and Fondazione Bvlgari and has launched numerous Italian talents onto the international scene. For the first time, this year's shortlist—comprising artists born in the 1980s and 1990s—is entirely female: **Chiara Bersani, Adji Dieye and Margherita Moscardini**. Their site-specific works, created especially for the Prize, will be presented in an exhibition curated by Giulia Ferracci. At the end of the project, the winner will be announced, and her work will become part of the Museum's Collection.

In **autumn** 2026, the programme extends its gaze beyond national borders.

October opens with a major exhibition dedicated to **Gordon Matta-Clark**, a multifaceted, playful and anarchic artist who revolutionised the concept of architectural space through radical interventions. This interdisciplinary exhibition promoting collective and participatory art, it highlights Matta-Clark's commitment to transforming the urban environment into an aesthetic and social experience.

This is followed by the ninth edition of **NATURE**, the programme of site-specific installations in the Gian Ferrari Hall curated by internationally renowned architects. This year it features **Tatiana Bilbao**, the leading figure of a generation of Mexican architectural talents now recognised worldwide.

In November, the focus exhibition **Ordinare il mondo. L'Archivio di Nanda Lanfranco**, curated by Lara Conte, opens, retracing the photographer's artistic career through prints, documents and previously unseen materials.

Also in **November**, Spazio Extra MAXXI hosts **Sensing the Future**, curated by Gabriele Simongini, an exhibition that aims to bring "the Futurists into their future"—that is, into our present—as theorists and forecasters of today's world. Futurist masterpieces will be placed alongside new works by contemporary artists invited to imagine tomorrow by adopting and reinventing some of the movement's revolutionary principles.

With **11 plus Rooms**, curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Klaus Biesenbach and Francesco Stocchi, MAXXI presents an exhibition of living sculptures created by eleven internationally acclaimed artists. The Italian chapter of this iconic, evolving series transforms the audience into spectators, voyeurs and participants, highlighting the relationship between human beings and objects and challenging visitors through the body's physical presence (**November**).

**La geopolitica dell'architettura. Gli avamposti del progetto**, curated by Pippo Ciorra and Dario Fabbri, explores the relationship between global geopolitical instability and architectural design through maps, installations and 1:1 scale interventions, illustrating how architects respond to new scenarios of crisis and transformation and how the current historical moment will influence the architecture of the future (**December**).

Running concurrently is the focus exhibition **Il Villaggio Olimpico di Roma. Il mondo in 30.000 mq**, curated by Micaela Antonucci and Carla Zhara Buda, which, through archival materials, presents Rome's Olympic Village as a temporary experiment in "geopolitical cohabiting" among athletes from all over the world.

In 2026, **Grande MAXXI**, the major urban regeneration project directed by Margherita Guccione that will transform the Flaminio district, begins to take shape with the launch of several construction sites and the first tangible results accessible to the public and citizens. From spring onwards, Piazza Alighiero Boetti will be greener, with trees, plants and flowers replacing concrete thanks to a project by Bas Smets, one of the world's leading landscape architects. Part of the new urban park facing Via Masaccio will also be accessible, while construction will begin on MAXXI Hub, the new multifunctional and sustainable building designed by an international team led by LAN.

MAXXI L'Aquila opens the 2026 exhibition season by hosting one of the world's greatest artists. From 28 April, Palazzo Ardinghelli presents **Ai Weiwei's Aftershock**, curated by Tim Marlow: an exploration of the ongoing impact of natural disasters and man-made conflicts, corruption and tragedy across five decades of the Chinese artist's career, presented through films, videos, photographs, sculptures and installations.

2026 will be a year of extraordinary activity for MAXXI L'Aquila, one of the leading protagonists of the programme for L'Aquila Italian Capital of Culture 2026. Numerous projects are realised with the support of the Municipality of L'Aquila, beginning with **SOND – The School of Narrative Dance** by **Marinella Senatore**: a research project rooted in the local area during the first months of the year, culminating in a major performance between late May and early June that will transform the city into an open-air stage.

Still within the framework of the collaboration for L'Aquila 2026, MAXXI will also step outside its Palazzo Ardinghelli headquarters with the exhibition **Convergenze e continuità. Architetture e paesaggi urbani in Abruzzo 1930–1960** opening in June. Curated by Mario Centofanti, Raffaele Giannantonio and Andrea Mantovano, the exhibition will be hosted in the newly restored spaces of Palazzo Ex Omni.

Finally, in **September**, also supported by the Municipality of L'Aquila as part of the programme for L'Aquila Italian Capital of Culture 2026, MAXXI L'Aquila will present an exhibition curated by **Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini** paying tribute to **Fabio Mauri**, a central figure in Italian art and thought of the 20th century, on the centenary of his birth. The project focuses on the works Mauri conceived and staged during the twenty years (1979–1999) in which he taught Aesthetics of Experimentation at the Academy of Fine Arts in L'Aquila, highlighting the connection between his work, the city and its inhabitants.

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