

PRESS RELEASE

THE FARNESE BRIDGE UNVEILED TO THE PUBLIC: THE TEMPORARY INSTALLATION BY FRENCH ARTIST OLIVIER GROSSETÊTE THAT CELEBRATES THE UNREALIZED FEAT OF MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI

Rome, July 13, 2021 - The Farnese Bridge has become a reality: The unfinished dream that Michelangelo Buonarroti had imagined in the 16th century, commissioned at the time by Pope Paul III Farnese, to connect Farnese Palace to the gardens of the current Farnesina Villa, on the other bank of the Tiber, in the stretch near Ponte Sisto, in Rome. The work was never completed by Buonarroti and relives today under the guise of a temporary installation, created in a totally eco-sustainable key by the French artist, Olivier Grossetête, and unveiled today to the public, thanks to an initiative promoted by the French Embassy, with the Institut Français Italia, and with the support of the Webuild Group, and in collaboration with Villa Farnesina-Accademia dei Lincei.

As part of the many cultural projects to be developed in relation to the restoration work on the side facades and roof of the Farnese Palace (2021-2025), the Embassy called Olivier Grossetête, who imagined this homage to Michelangelo. The artist described the Farnese Bridge project as follows: *"Ephemeral by nature, like us, these monumental participatory cardboard constructions are destined to disappear. Their stake is, therefore, as much in the actual process, in the journey and in the collective experience they propose, as in their final forms. This "suspended" bridge, inaccessible in essence, ultimately connects us to ourselves: It is an image of our relationship with the unspeakable"*.

After days of work for the citizens enrolled in the workshops, which took place in the auditorium of the Farnesina Villa, the much-awaited installation is finally ready: shaped like a "flying bridge", made totally of cardboard, and 18 metres in length, it will be suspended in the air, at the same height, with three large balloons. It will remain visible to the public until July 18, to then be completely disassembled, subsequently recycling all the cardboard used to build the installation. The project, artistically named "A Bridge between the Ages", represents a combination of art and human ingenuity, through a collective participation that lasted four days, expertly led by the technical team of artist Grossetête, with the involvement of hundreds of volunteers of all ages, including children.

The event was attended by the French Ambassador to Italy Christian Masset and Webuild CEO Pietro Salini, who welcomed on Ponte Sisto, also with the President of the Accademia dei Lincei, Prof. Parisi, the Mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, and the Vice-President of the Lazio Region, Daniele Leodori.

The French Ambassador to Italy Christian Masset declared: *"The Embassy, after a long period in which participating in events was precluded, has promoted Olivier Grossetête's project with a strong team spirit, also in the area of the restoration works of Farnese Palace, which will last until 2025. It is a great opportunity that offers citizens the possibility of participating directly in a cultural project that is also a tribute to their city and their history. The Farnese Palace is, in itself, a "bridge" between France and Italy. It is the home of the Romans, and the spectacle that will rise this evening, stands as a symbol of a shared rebirth. It is also a symbol that our*

cultures are intrinsically linked. And that our friendship is not only strong, but indestructible. This great moment of shared joy will be followed by many other common cultural events".

"We are proud to have made a dream come true", said Webuild CEO Pietro Salini, who then also added that: "This installation, also a symbol of sustainability, represents the synthesis of a collective participation which, under the skillful and imaginative guide of the artist, was able to put together all the actors and elements needed to complete this artistic work, in record time. It is the confirmation that collaboration and participation make it possible to overcome the obstacles that each complex project entails, also allowing implementation times to be consistent with the objectives that the work itself proposes. A model that we applied in Genoa, when we built the San Giorgio Bridge, and which we hope will act as a lever for the rapid execution of the many works that Italy needs now".

The installation's construction, made even more suggestive by the Roman scenery, among the ancient bridges of the Tiber; it was accompanied by the intense notes of artist Paolo Fresu, who declared *"For the bridge's raising, I imagined a delicate and concomitantly poignant music, capable of enhancing the moment's intensity and intimate colours."* *"Si dolce è il tormento"* is a sort of timeless melody, without a specific geography, written by Monteverdi in 1624, related in a way to Michelangelo and to his imaginative project".

The French Embassy has always promoted cultural events, which occur in the course of the relations between France and Italy: the headquarters of Farnese Palace is an excellent representation of this, where various worlds meet. France and Italy are much more than just two neighbouring countries: their histories, their cultures, their peoples are, in fact, intimately linked: A special relationship nurtured by the past, but that fully looks towards the future. To face the world's complexity, France and Italy, two countries that have a lot in common, need to increasingly enrich their relationship, working together for a better mutual understanding of their two societies, of their artistic creation, and of their ways of thinking.

This is the mission of the Institut français Italia: to strengthen these ties, creating the conditions for an open dialogue between our two countries. The Institut français Italia, which is present throughout Italy, through its centres (the Institut français of Florence, the first in the world, was established in 1907) and the numerous Italian and French partners, with whom it collaborates.

The Institut français Italia works in a great variety of sectors such as artistic cooperation, of course (music, dance, theatre and the visual arts); the audiovisual area, intellectual debate, and for promoting French publishing in Italy; for disseminating the French language, and in educational cooperation; and for developing university cooperation too. Many initiatives, but a single ambition: to allow the Italian public to discover the very best of France.

Webuild, for many years, has been creating cultural projects of international significance, in the various territories where it works. Its commitment to developing the territories translates not only into building large infrastructure, but also into promoting art and culture in places of aggregation, witnessing values at the very core of the Group's identity. Grossetête's installation enriches Webuild's already wide cultural agenda, which includes, among other things, the partnership for the "Raffaello Sanzio" exhibition, the richest exhibition ever dedicated to one of the greatest artists of the Italian Renaissance, held in Rome at the Scuderie del Quirinale;

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"Beyond - Delivering the Future for the Past 110 Years", organized at Milan's Triennale, where infrastructure works were described as works of art for the first time; "Cyclopica", the multimedia exhibition held also at Milan's Triennale, which narrated the magnitude of the great infrastructural works through the heroic feats of the people who built them; the celebrations for the rescue of the Egyptian temples of Abu Simbel; the concert directed by Maestro Antonio Pappano, and organized with the 'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia', to celebrate Genoa's "San Giorgio" Bridge, an infrastructure that stands as a symbol for Italy.

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