Venice, Island of San Giorgio Maggiore

12 December 2024

***Fondazione Giorgio Cini’s 2025 programme of activities approved***

***More than ninety events and two main thematic focus points around which all the Foundation’s Institutes and Research Centres will work in synergy: an international and interdisciplinary symposium on ‘Democracy and Pandemics’ and a programme of events on Giacomo Casanova marking the 300th anniversary of his birth.***

The General Council of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini has approved the programme of activities for 2025, which embraces and reflects the spirit of institutional renewal expressed by President Gianfelice Rocca, while implementing the multi-year interdisciplinary working guidelines laid out by Scientific Director Daniele Franco.

The programme features **over ninety events** that will showcase the seven Institutes and three Research Centres operating within the Foundation. Thirty-two seminars and conferences, twenty-seven educational events and workshops, eight exhibitions, six hosted events, thirty-two concerts as well as a number of publications will fill the Foundation’s annual event calendar.

**The programming includes two themes that will foresee the participation of all the Institutes**, withthe aim of integrating methods, research, materials and a diverse range of imaginaries. The first thematic focus is **‘Democracy and Pandemics’***,* which will be the topic of an international symposium from 13 to 16 November, with the presence of experts and scholars from all around the world. The second focus explores Giacomo Casanova and eighteenth-century Venice, a themewith which the Foundation will participate in the celebrations for the 300th anniversary of the birth of this iconic and restless figure of the Serenissima. The journey will culminate in an exhibition project that will be open to the public from October 2025 to February 2026.

**Gianfelice Rocca**, president of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, explains the vision that accompanies the activity programme as follows: “We are living through a **historical moment of profound change,** characterised by heightened geopolitical and social fragmentation, with new protagonists and communities bearing divergent values and often polarised worldviews. At the same time, **scientific and technological knowledge** is advancing rapidly, profoundly affecting all of humanity.”

“We must refer to these **challenges** when interpreting the future role of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini,” the President added, “while maintaining the strong appeal to **humanistic thought** on which our civilisation is founded and which the Foundation is committed to preserving, fostering an open and constructive cultural dialogue that facilitates international relations. Of vital importance is **the Foundation’s link with Venice,** with its millennial history, as a constitutive element of our mission.”

The Scientific Director **Daniele Franco** underlines: “Over the past seventy years, the Foundation has organised countless events and meetings of a cultural nature, so as to bring scientific and humanistic fields into dialogue on an international level. Next year, with renewed commitment, it will set about addressing the issue of pandemic management in democracies with the participation of experts from all around the world. **The Foundation must remain a place of dialogue,** hosting figures from different backgrounds as well as research from different geopolitical systems.”

Focus on ‘Democracy and Pandemics’

**The ‘Democracy and Pandemics’** **theme** will be explored through a wide-ranging programme of events organised in concert by all the Institutes: from music composed during the Covid period to the impact of the Spanish flu on the artistic world; from studies on plague in the Serenissima to the social and anthropological ramifications of folk and vernacular medicine, to an exhibition on *Venezia e le epidemie* (Venice and Epidemics) in the Longhena Library, complete with a rich array of documents, maps and artifacts.

The key event along this journey on Democracy and Pandemicswill be **an international symposium on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore from 13 to 16 November 2025.**

The Institute for the History of the Venetian State and Society will deal with the historical and local aspect of the symposium, with a documentary exhibition to be set up in the Longhena Library. The year 2025, moreover, marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the Institute, which is internationally recognised as a research hub concerning the history of the lagoon city.

The symposium titled ***Democracy and Pandemics*** follows on from *Global Health in the Age of AI*, held last November, which was attended by forty of the world’s top experts on the impact of artificial intelligence on global health, coordinated by Prof. Luciano Floridi together with his team from Yale University. Publication of the results in international scientific journals is foreseen for next year.

**Symposia on these pressing contemporary issues take up the mantle of the Foundation’s history as a place of vitality of contemporary cultures across disciplines, a laboratory of excellence and cultural diplomacy.**

Focus on Giacomo Casanova

Throughout the year, **a series of events organised by the Institutes** will accompany the investigation of Giacomo Casanova, including concerts and performances, study and music seminars, as well as **an international conference** (4–7 June).

The goal will be a re-reading of the figure of Casanova in the socio-historical context of his life, so as to reflect on the **similarities that our time may share with the crisis and fall of the Serenissima**, and with the gaze of a literary traveller who described panoramas and fragments of a Europe *ante litteram* and Venice as a cultural capital and a crucible of theatre, music and the arts.

**From October 2025 to February 2026, an exhibition will be held** (at the Palazzo Cini Gallery in San Vio and in the Carnelutti and Piccolo Teatro rooms on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore) which will take shape thanks to the scientific oversight of the Institute of Art History and which will feature works and materials from the Foundation’s collections, as well as loans from Venetian, Italian and foreign museums and collections. The exhibition will thus pay homage to a key witness of the era and at the same time, a great intellectual, memoirist and scholar.

The major exhibitions

In 2025, the Foundation renews the **cultural and international partnerships** with which it shares plans to host major exhibition events on the Island of San Giorgio.

**On 10 April, the Stanze della Fotografia (Photography Rooms) will open the exhibition *Robert Mapplethorpe.*** ***Le forme del classico* (The Forms of the Classic)**, the first stage of a trilogy that will continue into 2026 in Milan, at the Royal Palace, with *Le forme del desiderio* (The Forms of Desire) and then in Rome at the Ara Pacis Museum with *Le forme della bellezza* (The Forms of Beauty).

The Venetian chapter, with works accompanied by texts, documents and films, sketches what might be defined as **the very notion of beauty and** **form**, a theme dear to this artist, who comes across as a master of elegance. Curated by Denis Curti, it is an event organised and promoted by Marsilio Arte and the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in collaboration with the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation in New York. It will be on view until 23 November 2025.

Also from 10 April, the Stanze della Fotografia will host ***Maurizio Galimberti tra Polaroid/Ready Made e le lezioni americane di Italo Calvino* (**Maurizio Galimberti from Polaroids / Readymades to Italo Calvino’s *Memos for the Next Millennium*). Some of the portrait artist’s most iconic polaroid mosaics will be on display, including ones of Johnny Depp, Barbara Bouchet, Angelica Huston and Taylor Swift. It will remain open until 3 August 2025.

On **13** **April** (until 23 November 2025), it will instead be the turn of **Le Stanze del Vetro** (the Glass Rooms), with the second instalment of ***Il Vetro di Murano e la Biennale di Venezia*** (Murano Glass and the Venice Biennale), this year dedicated to the decade **1932–1942**. As usual, the exhibition will be accompanied by a conference to be held in October by the Foundation’s Glass Study Centre.

In 2025, the Architecture Biennale will take centre stage in Venice. For the occasion, **in partnership with the Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, a major Jean Nouvel** **exhibition** will be held on San Giorgio **from 10 May to 15 September**.

The exhibition is inspired by Nouvel’s critical text, written in 1980, *The Future of Architecture Is No Longer Architectural.* The exhibition revisits this statement and repurposes the architect’s contextual approach to creating spaces that are not simply buildings but cultural and intellectual environments – an architecture that transcends boundaries.

In his design for the new Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain space, architecture becomes a platform for the broader spectrum of human intelligence, including the visual arts, philosophy and technology, resonating with the central theme of the Venice Architecture Biennale 2025: *Intelligens.* *Natural.* *Artificial.* *Collective.*

The events and scholarships confirmed

In the Foundation’s calendar of activities, already confirmed are the consolidated partnerships with institutions and organisations that have chosen the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore for a host of events, awards and cultural activities.

The year will open with the traditional **Umberto and Elisabetta Mauri School for Booksellers** (28–31 January 2025), now in its forty-second edition, bringing together operators, experts and scholars from the sector in a three-day event packed with appointments.

Also confirmed is the **Soft Power Conference**, dedicated to cultural diplomacy, here at its sixth edition, bringing together the leading researchers and policymakers around themes of urgent international reflection.

The concert activity at the Auditorium ‘Lo Squero’ continues with a rich calendar of performances, with new performers and consolidated figures, renewing the partnership with **Asolo Musica – Associazione Amici della Musica and Veneto Jazz** for 2025.

Among the awards for study and research, the **Benno Geiger Prize for poetic translation** returns in the autumn, named in memory of the Austrian intellectual whose literary fond is kept on the Island of San Giorgio Maggiore.

Of particular importance for the involvement of new generations of scholars are the **scholarships**, which allow graduates, doctoral and post-doctoral students to reside at the **Vittore Branca Centre** to further their studies.

Ten scholarships will be awarded over the course of 2025, along with another two scholarships for the Digital Centre’s **Digital** **Artist in Residence** – ARCHiVe, the Foundation’s innovative residency programme for creatives and experts in new technologies, now in its second year. The scholarships will be allocated to the research of those selected by the call, who will have the chance to explore the Foundation’s online archives and databases so as to elaborate and propose works of art for the fruition and narration of their digital heritage.

The **Digital Centre – ARCHiVe** will be engaged in supporting the Institutes’ activities and projects around the two key themes, with specific digitisation and digital production works, deploying its knowhow in the fields of technology, knowledge and artificial intelligence.

Lastly, throughout the year, a rich programme of initiatives will support the **Cini Ambassador** programme, offering preview access to exhibitions and events, exclusive discovery of the Foundation’s archives and secret niches, discounted access to the museums of the Dorsoduro Museum Mile as well as free admission to one of the concerts in the ‘Lo Squero’ Auditorium.

**The entire programme will be available throughout the year in detail on the Foundation’s website**, along with the monthly newsletter detailing all the appointments.

**Info**

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