



George Rouy, *Meditations II*, 2026 (detail)
Chrome, acrylic and graphite on canvas
270×30×4.5 cm

© George Rouy / Courtesy the artist and Hannah
Barry Gallery, London, UK
Photography © Damian Griffiths

Press images
<https://tinyurl.com/george-rouy-conciliazione-5>

The Holy See's Dicastery for Culture and education announces
a one-Year Contemporary Art Programme curated by Donatien Grau.

First exhibition
Presence in Form by George Rouy

Opens
20 March 2026

Curated by internationally acclaimed art historian and philologist,
Donatien Grau, the series *Leggere, di nuovo* (*Read, Again*), will be a year-
long reflection on the act of reading by leading contemporary artists.

British artist George Rouy will present the first exhibition, *Presence
in Form*, which will open at the Holy See's Conciliazione 5, Rome on
20 March 2026.

For Conciliazione 5, George Rouy has created a new site-specific
painting and accompanying soundwork. Known for his dynamic, layered
paintings, for this new work Rouy invites the viewer to engage with the
act of reading a painting as if it were a text, embracing the palimpsestic
nature of his work. Concurrent with his painting practice, Rouy has been
working with sound and creating music, collaborating with musicians
and performers. Confronting this practice for the first time, to accompany
his painting for Conciliazione 5, Rouy has created a sound work made
from audiobooks he listened to while making the painting. The sound
piece will be released once a day on the street and will be available via
a QRCode.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a special digital project on
the artist's and Conciliazione 5's Instagram platform, there by opening
up a different situation for the experience of art and reading alike.

George Rouy
Presence in Form

Leggere, di nuovo, 1

Opening
20 March 2026

Opening event
Friday 20 March, 6 pm

Conciliazione 5,
Via della Conciliazione,
Rome, Italy

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George Rouy (b. 1994, Sittingbourne, Kent, UK).
Lives and works in Faversham, UK). Recent exhibi-
tions and projects have included Shadowing at Château
de Boisgeloup, Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-
Picasso, the former sculpture studio of Picasso in
Gisors (2025), BODYSUIT, a 45-minute live perfor-
mance created with leading choreographer Sharon
Eyal, shown in London and Los Angeles (2023-2025)
and The Witness (2025), made in response to The
Massacre at Chios by Eugene Delacroix, an invitation
from the Musée du Louvre and Centre Pompidou-
Metz. His is held in museum collections including
Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris, FR, The
ALBERTINA Museum, Vienna, AT, Fondation Cartier
pour l'art contemporain, Paris, FR, Stahl Collection,
Norrköping, SE, SFMoMA, San Francisco, US,
LACMA, Los Angeles, US, Phoenix Art Museum,
Phoenix, US, Berkeley Museum of Art, Berkeley,
US, M Woods, Beijing, CN, Sifang Art Museum,
Nanjing, CN.

First opened in February 2025 and named after its
address in Rome, Conciliazione 5 is the first space
dedicated to contemporary art of the Holy See's
Dicastery for Culture and Education. The space is
open 24 hours a day on Via della Conciliazione allow-
ing all visitors to view the works on display.

Donatien Grau is a philologist. A scholar of the Ancient
Roman Empire, he is the author of *Néron en Occident*
(Gallimard, 2015); *La Mémoire numismatique de
l'Empire romain* (Les Belles Lettres, 2022) and *De
Civitate Angelorum* (Yvon Lambert, 2023). In his work
as a literary thinker, he has authored studies such
as *Tout contre Sainte-Beuve* (Grasset, 2013); *Dans la
bibliothèque de la vie* (Grasset, 2019) and *Un Autopor-
trait* (LeSeuil, 2024). As a conversation-partner to
artists, he has curated dozens of exhibitions, written
and edited essays and publications. A leading museum
scholar, he is notably the author of *Living Museums*
(Hatje Cantz, 2020) and *Under Discussion. The Ency-
clopedia Museum* (Getty, 2021). He handled the
transformation of Azzedine Alaïa's exhibition space
into an institution prior to the passing of the couturier,
his close friend, and has served as head of contem-
porary programmes at the Musée d'Orsay and then
at the Louvre. He is the co-founder, editor-in-chief
and artistic director of the magazine *Alphabet*.

The Dicastery for Culture and Education is the depart-
ment of the Roman Curia entrusted with relations with
the contemporary art world, listening to its protago-
nists, and engaging in collaborative dialogue on the
major questions of the present. Among its various ini-
tiatives, the DCE organizes the Holy See's participation
in the Venice Biennale and manages the Conciliazione 5
space, a platform open to contemporary art.