

Bar Far is an installation and a working bar by Clementine Keith-Roach and Christopher Page and presented in Villa Lontana's new space in Trastevere. Renovated in collaboration with Studio Strato, this new location extends Villa Lontana's ongoing commitment to exploring the intersections between ancient and contemporary practices. *Bar Far* echoes the name of Villa Lontana—'Faraway Villa'—whose headquarters are located in the north of Rome and historically outside the city walls. With the opening of this site, situated deeper within the city, the former physical distance is transformed into a metaphysical one: the manifold illusions that comprise *Bar Far* conjure an ambiguous beyond.

Keith-Roach, a sculptor, and Page, a painter, have animated the architecture of this newly renovated interior, creating a hallucinatory *gesamtkunstwerk* in the vein of ancient and baroque Rome. *Bar Far* is both an artwork and a bar that draws inspiration from the art-bars of the past: Cabaret Voltaire, the Colony Room and Giorgio de Chirico's favourite, Caffè Greco in Rome. Places like these often emerged during times of political upheaval and provided refuge for experiment and conversation.

Like our dreams, *Bar Far* is a condensation of paradoxical layers. Echoes of ancient Roman and baroque lavishness mingle with contemporary architectural austerity, and flashes of colour that seem to come from the future. The effect is an environment that is at once church and tomb, prophecy and ruin, heaven and hell. Keith-Roach's plaster cast reliefs dramatise the building itself: body-parts emerge from walls and combine with construction materials—brick, pipe, timber—appearing not only to adorn but also to build *Bar Far*, like infrastructural Caryatids. Page's wall painting turns the final room into an illusory colonnade or cloister—though one that surveys not a heavenly landscape but an ominous infinity that draws us in with an ambiguous, otherworldly glow.

With *Bar Far*, the lines between the arts blur—sculpture blends with architecture while painting makes it disappear—and *trompe l'oeil* trickery confuses our sense of what is made of what. Keith-Roach and Page have distinct practices as well as an ongoing collaboration, and their meeting point is illusion. Both utilise *trompe l'oeil* painting because they see in it subversive and perversely enlightening qualities: with painted effects we are not only deceived but are invited to look closer and witness the failure of the illusion. Keith-Roach's reliefs appear to be stoney extensions of the building, but upon closer inspection reveal themselves to be painted plaster, while Page's perspectival wall-painting is believably deep from some angles, but warps and distorts as we move around the room.

Bar Far is the latest manifestation of Keith-Roach and Page's ongoing collaboration, a series of artworks and installations that manifest questions about the destruction of old worlds and the possibility of new ones emerging from the ruins. As world-orders that once held fast fall apart in front of our eyes, *Bar Far* offers a playful space to contemplate such questions, a space to talk and drink amidst paradoxes and contradictions, a metaphysical space in which, who knows, we might find answers at the bottom of a glass.

This dreamlike space will be activated by a programme of live performances starting on 4 December and continuing throughout the duration of the exhibition, beginning with contributions by poet Florence Uniacke, artist and soprano Nyla van Ingen, and musician Lukas De Clerck. Further details and updates on the programme can be found on Villa Lontana's website.

Curated by Vittoria Bonifati.

4 December 2025 – 14 March 2026
Wednesday–Saturday, 3pm–9pm or by appointment

Clementine Keith-Roach (b. 1984, London) is a sculptor of new ruins. Drawing on historical typologies of sculpture, human gesture, and material cultures around birth and death, her work explores the tension between the archaeological and the contemporary. Her practice is centered around plaster casting. Body casts are merged with antique vessels and occasionally sculpted into architectural space, Keith-Roach then trompe l'oeil paints these new assemblages creating continuous surfaces that blur the boundaries between body and object, skin and matter. Keith-Roach's work has been exhibited internationally. Her work was recently included in 'Holes' at Clifford gallery Colgate University, Hamilton NY (2025); 'Wonder and Wakefulness: The Nature of Pliny the Elder,' Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (2023); 'Milk,' Wellcome Collection, London, UK (2023) and 'Slip Tease', Kasmin, New York (2023). She has previously exhibited at Centre Regional D'art Contemporain (CRAC), Sète, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Storefront, Los Angeles. Keith-Roach is represented by Ben Hunter, London and PPOW, New York. She is an editor of Effects journal.

Christopher Page (b. 1984, London) is a painter of light, shadow and reflection. He makes trompe l'oeil paintings that confuse the boundaries between real and virtual space. Paintings of framed paintings with shadows cast across their surfaces call into question where the work begins and ends; mirrors that don't reflect us back confront us with our own absence; glowing skies distort architectural space. Page's work has been exhibited internationally. His work was recently included in 'Wonder and Wakefulness: The Nature of Pliny the Elder,' Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (2023), 'Present Tense,' Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, UK (2024) and 'The Desk', Blue Projects, London (2025). He has previously exhibited at Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), Rio de Janeiro, and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) Storefront, Los Angeles. Page is represented by Ben Hunter, London. He is a founding editor of Effects journal.

Both Clementine Keith-Roach and Christopher Page have exhibited at Villa Lontana in 2018 and 2021.

Villa Lontana is a non-profit project space dedicated to exploring the intersections of ancient and contemporary practices in visual arts and sound. Initiated from the archaeological collection of the Santarelli Foundation, the project develops a layered archaeology encompassing exhibitions, publications, screenings, artist editions, and sound projects through its own label Villa Lontana Records, run in collaboration with Michele Ferrari. The project is run by Vittoria Bonifati and was founded in 2018 in collaboration with Jo Melvin.