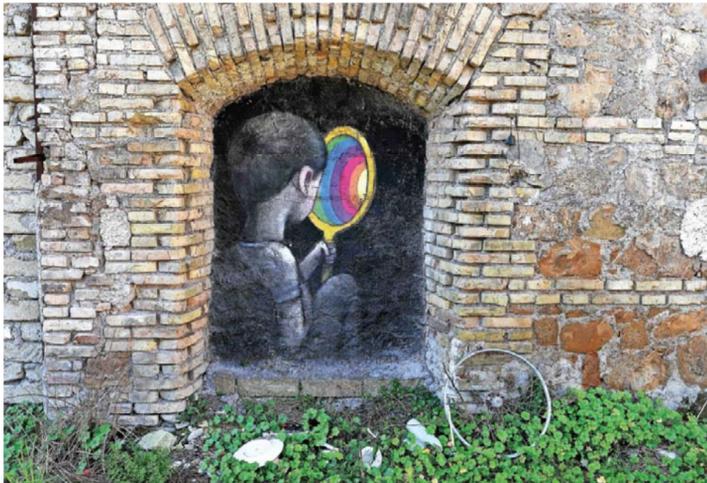


ART SPRINGS

FROM RUINS OF ROME'S INDUSTRIAL PAST



A picture shows a painting named in Latin "Vultus Est Index Animi" at the ex Mira Lanza factory hosting installations and paintings by French artist Julien Malland a.k.a Seth as part of the exhibition "Range ta chambre" which means "clean up your room" in Rome. —AFP photos



Roma people Tito (right) and Lena, pose at the ex Mira Lanza factory hosting installations and paintings by French artist Julien Malland a.k.a Seth as part of the exhibition "Range ta chambre".

The ruins of a landmark industrial building in Rome have become home to a thought-provoking art project that casts an unflattering light on the capital's patchy record on urban regeneration. Sections of the abandoned shell of the Mira Lanza, once a factory where soap was first produced in Italy, are now home to a collection of works created by Seth, a French street artist who camped, illegally, on the rubbish-strewn site for two months last year.

Now looked after by a group of ethnic Roma migrants, who have set up camp inside the ruins, the paintings and installations created from the on-site debris are already starting to decay. And that is exactly the point, according to Stefano Antonelli, a director of 999Contemporary, the not-for-profit organization behind the initiative. Piled-up books, which initially appeared to provide a seat for a boy painted onto the brick walls of the listed 19th-Century building, have fallen over and now lie encrusted in mud on the soggy floor. The paintwork on what was the re-creation of an empty swimming pool has been mostly washed away by the rain. So why not touch up the paint, put the books back in place?

Unthinkable elsewhere

"This is the destiny of these works," says Antonelli. "This place has been abandoned since the factory closed in 1957. Since I was a little boy there have been plans to turn it into a museum, student accommodation, something. "But nothing has ever come of it. So now, we are asking the question: what is the destiny of the Mira Lanza going to be?" That such a prime site, located a short walk from the trendy downtown neighborhood of Testaccio and only a few kilometers (miles) from the ancient heart of



A picture shows a painting named in Latin "Felix Qui Potuit Rerum Cognoscere Causas" at the ex Mira Lanza factory.

Rome, should have been left undeveloped for 60 years would be unthinkable in most comparable cities.

That it has been appears to be down to a combination of Rome's chronically weak urban planning—seen most notably in its underdeveloped transport network—and some unfortunate twists of fate. The books were brought to the site when plans to develop it as an offshoot of a prestigious drama college were at an advanced stage.

But those plans and most of the books went up in smoke when the building was ravaged by a fire that broke out after hundreds of squatters were forcibly evicted from the site in 2014.

In an area the squatters used as a latrine, the artist has painted a crouching boy with his head emerging into the light, a work entitled Lux in Tenebris (Light in Darkness) in homage to how it came to be. "To clear the space we literally had to shovel out

piles of shit—it is not what you usually associate with curating a contemporary art exhibition," said Antonelli.

Brickseat or Brexit

Another wall sports paintings of migrants crammed onto boats bound for Italy's southern shores. The colorful images create a similar impression to a run of stained glass windows in a church. In the adjacent, roofless hall, the surviving, often lopsided, pillars have been painted in the colors of the rainbow to create an installation inspired by the destruction of treasured Roman monuments in Palmyra, Syria, by the Islamic State group.

Since the roof's collapse, the colorful pillars have themselves become damaged history. A pile of painted bricks provides the support for another painted little boy: "Brickseat" it's called, in a nod to the Brexit vote that had just taken place when Seth was creating the collection. The Paris-born artist, whose real name is Julien Malland, has created large-scale murals and colorful street art all over the world. In the aftermath of the 2014 fire, Antonelli's organization put together a proposal to clean up the site, make it safe and put on a pilot exhibition to demonstrate its potential.

With a budget of 50,000 euros (\$54,000), plus the cost of employing an architect for 50 days, that vision won the backing of former mayor Ignazio Marino. But he was forced to resign on the very day the accord was due to be signed and it was back to square one. Fifteen months later, the collective is hoping to persuade his replacement Virginia Raggi to sign up. But with her administration beset by more pressing issues, a resolution of the fate of the Mira Lanza does not look imminent. — AFP



Muezira poses at the entrance of her makeshift house near a painting called "Oculus Habit Et Non Videbunt".



A picture shows a painting called "Lampedusa".



A picture shows an installation and painting called "Brickseat".



Home Centre's latest catalogue features 850 new style inspirations

Home Centre, the region's leading home retailer, has released its latest 140-page catalogue that showcases an extensive collection of furniture and home accessories, both classic and contemporary. With over 850 new inspiring styles, this catalogue promises to let customers rediscover the joy of shopping for their homes.



Like every year, this edition too will reflect the year's global trends in home furnishing, customized and presented beautifully for regional shoppers.

In addition to the print version, the latest catalogue is also available online and features interactive elements and new-age technological components such as a mobile responsive design and informative embedded videos.

The catalogue offers customers a preview of Home Centre's latest range of interior products categorized as Living, Dining, Sleeping and Playing solutions. A new addition this year are the modular and mix-and-match solutions like the Blend table, Signature sofa, Stellar bed and Infinity wardrobe, which enable customers to select components that perfectly suit their space and personalities.

This year, Home Centre has introduced three breath-taking collections - Arabesque, Marrakesh and Majestic - each of them inspired by distinctive styles and curated to create beautiful homes. The new catalogue also features 'Great Deals', offering customers a selection of best priced products. Adding to this year's exciting offerings, Home Centre has introduced warranties for up to two years on furniture and up to a year on household items.

Designed to meet the customers' evolving style and design requirements, the catalogue offers home design tips, style advice and practical suggestions for the discerning homemaker. The print catalogue will be available at all Home Centre stores located at Al-Rai, Shuwaikh, The Avenues, Kuwait City, Fahaheel and Sama Mall, while the interactive catalogue can be viewed online at homecentre.com.

