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radis

is delighted to present

Abetare (a day at the school), 2025

Doodles and Drawings from Schools in Dogliani and the Balkans

a work created by Petrit Halilaj for the second edition of *Radis*, the art for public spaces project conceived and supported by the Fondazione Arte CRT in collaboration with the Fondazione CRC.

**Opening event: Sunday, 5 October 2025, 11:30 am,
Borgata Valdibà - Dogliani (CN)**

The complete press kit is available at [this link](#).

Turin, 1 October 2025 The second edition of ***Radis***, the art for public spaces project conceived and supported by the **Fondazione Arte CRT**, the 'art oriented' arm of the **Fondazione CRT**, is concluding with the inauguration of the site-specific work ***Abetare (a day at the school), 2025. Doodles and Drawings from Schools in Dogliani and the Balkans*** by Kosovan artist **Petrit Halilaj**.

The public opening will be on **Sunday, 5 October at 11:30 am**. The artist **Petrit Halilaj** and the curator **Marta Papini** will be present along with representatives from the institutions and local authorities. The project will be introduced by **Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo** (president of the Fondazione Arte CRT), **Mauro Gola** (president of the Fondazione CRC) and **Claudio Raviola** (mayor of Dogliani). After a welcome coffee at the adjacent farm of Marco Zabaldano, the day will continue with the opening of the exhibition ***All that you touch, You Change. All that you Change, Changes you*** in the former chapel of the Ritiro della Sacra Famiglia, Belvedere di Dogliani. Refreshments will be provided in the Sala Polifunzionale of Dogliani.

'Through Radis, we are bringing art outside museum walls and into people's lives, in dialogue with the local area and community. We believe that when culture is accessible and shared, it is a root that can generate social cohesion, beauty and future development' explains **Anna Maria Poggi**, president of the Fondazione CRT. *'And this is the deeper meaning of the project,*

which not only enriches the artistic heritage of Piedmont, it also strengthens ties between people and places.'

Entrusted, like the first edition of **Radis**, to curator **Marta Papini** and in collaboration with the **Fondazione CRC**, the work for this second edition of **Radis**, under the patronage of the **Region of Piedmont**, was created in **Borgata Valdibà**, in a panoramic spot in the heart of the Langhe, on a road that leads from **Dogliani** to Monforte d'Alba and where there was once a village school in a two-floor building in disuse since the 1970s. The artist's work occupies the space of the old school and at the same time reveals the surrounding landscape, which was previously hidden by the building.

The installation, which will remain the property of the **Fondazione Arte CRT** and be given on loan to the **Municipality of Dogliani**.

*'We are delighted to inaugurate the work for the second edition of **Radis**, a project to which Fondazione Arte CRT devotes particular attention, and which aims to leave a significant, enduring mark on Dogliani and our region', states **Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo**, president of Fondazione Arte CRT, 'Petrit Halilaj's work interprets this commitment, connecting seemingly distant places and communities – the Langhe and the Balkans – and bringing them close through the shared language of the imagination and children's fantasy. The artist has translated drawings made by boys and girls on school desks into a permanent sculpture that enriches the landscape and enters into dialogue with the history of the place. I am convinced that this installation will unite memory and perspective, offering the community a new space of reflection and exchange.'*

Abetare (a day at the school), 2025. Doodles and Drawings from Schools in Dogliani and the Balkans is the first permanent work of the project *Abetare*, from which it draws its title, a series of works that Halilaj has been developing since 2015. *Abetare (a day at the school), 2025* gives three-dimensional shape to a stylised house that was carved on a desk by a child in a school in Dogliani. The artist assembled steel tubes that had been bent and twisted to faithfully represent the drawing, turning a fleeting doodle into a permanent sculpture. As indicated by the title, Halilaj breathed life into a new imaginary school filled with creatures, messages and symbols from school desks in the Langhe and the Balkans. The work is a crossroads of symbols and figures from different geographic areas, joyfully celebrating the imagination, freedom and children's play in every place and time.

Begun in 2015, *Abetare* started with the archiving of drawings found on desks in the former school in Runik (Kosovo), the village where Halilaj grew up. The artist built an archive of drawings that he draws from to create monumental sculptures in steel or bronze, inspired by the image worlds of children from different times and places, which overlap in the works in a unified language. The series *Abetare* has been on view at several important institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in 2024, as that year's Roof Garden Commission.

*'Children's drawings are a door to freedom', states artist **Petrit Halilaj**, 'When I first began expressing my thoughts and wishes, I always felt more comfortable drawing than talking. Drawing was like breathing, or even flying. The process of collecting material for the works in*

the Abetare series involves looking at a vast quantity of drawings, specifically ones made by children on school desks in Kosovo, the Balkans more generally and now also Dogliani. They contain truths that adults are often unable to express. They are raw, tender and courageous – sparks of inventiveness and freedom. They remind me that art can be a form of survival, but also of play.'

Children from every part of the world doodle on school desks. From the moment they can hold a pencil, the world is their drawing paper: doors, tables, floors, drawers. Everyone can remember, thinking back, drawing on their school desk: a stylised house, their own initials, a smiling sun or a simple HELLO. Not as an act of vandalism or transgression, but out of the need to appropriate an object that is central to everyday life and yet anonymous, leaving a sign that we were there and transforming the school desk into an attestation of our presence in the school.

*'Petrit Halilaj's **Abetare (a day at the school)** is the second work of the public art programme **Radis**', explains the curator, **Marta Papini**, 'The first – **Giulia Cenci's le masche** – paid homage to the stratified history in the Chiot Rosa clearing: stories of resistance, fear, joy, stories of love and hate, stories of plants and animals. Petrit Halilaj's work reveals another world of stories, that of childhood. **Abetare (a day at the school)** is a hymn to freedom and the imagination, in the form of a house filled with creatures that were drawn on school desks in the Langhe and the Balkans. It is a meeting of cultures that becomes a joyful celebration of children's imagination and play, from every place and time.'*

Also on **Sunday, 5 October**, along with the work by Petrit Halilaj, the exhibition **All that you touch, You Change. All that you Change, Changes you** will open at the Chiesetta del Ritiro della Sacra Famiglia, Dogliani. Curated by Marta Papini, the exhibition will feature works from the collections of the **Fondazione Arte CRT** and the **Fondazione CRC** that would otherwise be unavailable to the public, so that they can be enjoyed by a broader audience. The reference to the dystopian novel by Octavia E. Butler *The Parable of the Sower*, the opening poem of which gave the exhibition its title, was inspired by Nolan Oswald Dennis's *Notes for recovery (hold)*, one of the works on view. The exhibition reflects on art as a tool for hope and openness to the future through a selection of works by **Marina Abramović, Sol Calero, Chiara Camoni, Bracha L. Ettinger, Dorothy Iannone** and **Nolan Oswald Dennis** that touch on these themes, expressing them from different perspectives.

*'For the second consecutive year, thanks to our renewed partnership with Fondazione Arte CRT, the project **Radis** is bringing the province of Cuneo an important new work of public art by an internationally recognised artist that actively involves local communities' states **Mauro Gola**, president of Fondazione CRC, 'Confirming the strategic role that beauty can play today, as a generative force that can support the development and growth of our communities.'*

Radis, from the Piedmontese term for 'root', was created to bring contemporary art to a broad public and engage with unconventional contexts. **Radis** is divided into four parts: the commission of permanent public artworks, an education programme for schools, curated by Feliz in collaboration with the association La Scatola Gialla, which will continue after the work is installed, the exhibition and a **public programme** aimed to engage the public in the lead up to the opening of **Petrit Halilaj's** installation and promote public art in the province of Cuneo,

with a special focus on the Fondazione CRC project *A Cielo Aperto*. Conceived by **Barbara De Micheli**, a project manager and producer with extensive experience managing artistic and cultural projects, these itineraries for discovering the artworks scattered across the Cuneo area offer the public an opportunity to explore artistic heritage that merges with the landscape and local communities. The initiative will conclude on **Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October**: in **Dogliani**, the focus will be the installation by **Petrit Halilaj**, with cultural mediation activities, workshops and snack for children in English and Italian; in **Alba**, discovery of the works **Alba** by **Valerio Berruti** and **Porta di Luce** by **Samuel Di Blasi**; in **Guarene**, a walk and discussion of the work **I Dormienti** by **Hilario Isola**, for the anniversary of the **23 days of the city of Alba**; finally, in **Castagnito**, discovery of the work **Paesaggio in 565 giorni e 33 scalini** by **Victoria Stoian**.

'It is with immense pride that the city of Dogliani is hosting the second edition of Radis, a project that joins together and creates dialogue between the energy of contemporary art and the identity of the region and the local community' states Claudio Raviola, mayor of Dogliani, 'Petrit Halilaj's installation brings new visibility and tourist appeal to Borgata Valdibà, a meaningful place in our local area, on the road between Dogliani and Monforte. The installation offers yet another reason to travel this route, adding it to the already numerous options for sustainable tourism, which favours the slow pace of walking and cycling. A pace that allows us to properly observe and experience the landscape, in total contact with nature.'

Across the four-year period 2024–2027, **Radis** will produce works of art in public spaces in active collaboration with local residents, organisations and associations. The new works, in conversation with local histories and the landscape, will help create a new shared imaginary and stimulate tourism that is attentive to the environment and sustainability.

*Practical information: for the inauguration on **Sunday, October 5**, a free shuttle service will be available, while seats last. From Turin to Dogliani, the shuttle will depart from Porta Susa (Corso Bolzano 44, at bus stops 11 and 13) at 9:00 a.m. and return at 5:30 p.m. From Milan to Dogliani, the shuttle will depart from Piazzale Lodi at 8:30 a.m. and return at 6:30 p.m. Reservations can be made at info@fondazioneartecrt.it. From 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., shuttles will be available between Dogliani (P.zza Luigi Einaudi) and Borgata Valdibà. As the road to Borgata Valdibà will be closed to cars, we kindly ask visitors to park in Dogliani and make use of the shuttle service provided.*

For information: www.radis-crt.it

The **Fondazione Arte CRT**, the art-oriented arm of the **Fondazione CRT** and mainly active locally and regionally, is celebrating **twenty-five years of support for contemporary art this year**. Since its founding in 2000, the Fondazione has advanced concrete projects that valorise talent and enrich cultural heritage and has cultivated a large collection of contemporary art that has become one of the most prestigious in Italy and internationally. More than **950 works** by about **330 artists**, with an overall investment of more than **42 million euros**.

Fondazione CRT, founded in 1991, ranks third among Italian banking foundations in terms of wealth. Since its founding, it has disbursed more than 2 billion euros for more than 43,000 projects devoted to art, research, education, welfare, the environment and innovation in

Northwest Italy. The Fondazione is also involved in impact investing, one of the most important examples at the European level being the project for the urban renewal of OGR Torino, the former major repairs shop for the Italian railways, which was redeveloped and converted into an innovative international centre for art and culture and scientific, technological and industrial research.

Fondazione CRC, one of Italy's leading banking foundations, works mainly in the province of Cuneo, through the allocation of grants to public institutions and private non-profits as well as through its own projects, developed in partnership with organisations active in a wide range of fields. Art and culture have always been strategic priorities for the foundation. The public art initiatives it has supported include the project *Cielo Aperto*, in celebration of its 30th anniversary in 2022, and *Bando Distruzione*. The foundation also began expanding its own art collection in 2017 through the project *Coltivarte*, the focus of which is to acquire contemporary art and organise art-related events for the public.

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Petrit Halilaj

Abetare (a day at the school), 2025

Doodles and Drawings from Schools in Dogliani and the Balkans

Stainless steel, patina

Permanent Installation

Commissioned and produced for the project *Radis*, curated by Marta Papini

Collection of the Fondazione Arte CRT on permanent loan to the town of Dogliani

Abetare (a day at the school) is the first permanent work in *Abetare*, a series begun by Petrit Halilaj in 2015.

Abetare takes its name from the title of the primer children use to learn Albanian and is a vast archive of drawings and carvings that the artist found on school desks. The idea first came to him in 2010, when he returned to Runik, the village in Kosovo where he grew up and went to elementary school and which was almost completely destroyed by the war. The school was one of the few buildings still standing, and while Halilaj was filming he noticed that they were about to demolish it to make way for a new school. The old desks were stacked outside, ready to be thrown away, and so the artist started taking pictures of them, documenting the graffiti and drawings that had accumulated over the years, from the Yugoslav era to the postwar period. Halilaj then expanded his search to other parts of the Balkans, reflecting on what children from different generations and places shared in common and how they differed. Today, the *Abetare* archive contains the historical memory of numerous periods and places, linking the passage of time with the crossing of geographic borders. For each work in the series, the artist selects different elements from this encyclopaedia of doodles and transforms the two-dimensional sketches into monumental metal sculptures that reproduce the original drawing on a large scale and in three-dimensional space.

Children from every corner of the world doodle on school desks. From the moment they can hold a pencil, the world is their drawing paper: doors, tables, floors, drawers. Everyone can remember, thinking back, drawing on their school desk: a stylised house, their own initials, a smiling sun or a simple HELLO. Not as an act of vandalism or transgression, but out of the need to appropriate an object that is central to everyday life and yet anonymous, leaving a sign that we were there and transforming the school desk into an attestation of our presence in the school.

For the second edition of *Radis*, Petrit Halilaj was invited to develop a piece specifically for this site, a two-floor building that has been abandoned since the 1970s but was once a small neighbourhood school. The artist created a work that fills the space of the old school and at the same time reveals the surrounding landscape, which was previously hidden by the building. The work represents a stylised house that Halilaj found carved by a child at a school in Dogliani. He assembled steel tubes that had been bent and twisted to faithfully represent the drawing, turning a fleeting doodle into a permanent sculpture. As indicated by the title, Halilaj breathed life into a new school filled with creatures, messages and symbols from school desks in the Langhe and the Balkans. The work is a crossroads of symbols and figures from different geographic areas, joyfully celebrating the imagination, freedom and children's play across space and time.

Petrit Halilaj was born in 1986 in Kostërre, Kosovo, and has shown his work in numerous international solo and group exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale in 2017. Through his work, he tries to alter the course of personal and collective histories, creating complex worlds that claim space for freedom, desire, intimacy and identity. His work is deeply tied to the recent history of his native Kosovo and the consequences of cultural and political tension in the region, which he often uses as a starting point for developing a countercurrent poetics for the future. Rooted in his biography, his projects span a variety of media, including sculpture, drawing, text and performance. The artist often incorporates materials from Kosovo in ambitious installations, translating personal relationships, people and places into sculptural form. Halilaj's works can be seen as a playful and, at times, irreverent attempt to resist oppressive policies and social norms, in pursuit of the wild celebration of all forms of connection and freedom.

'The old schoolhouse in Borgata Valdibà is reborn as a house of imagination, alive with the characters, doodles and daydreams of schoolkids in Dogliani and children from across the Balkans: a towering reverie that floats across geographical borders and political boundaries.' Petrit Halilaj

