ROME, A WORLD CITY

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Stalker hypothesizes that Rome may express an interpretative paradigm of the world, a cosmology alternative to the dominant one. A cosmology founded on three elements that have mythically and historically allowed Rome to regenerate itself throughout the historical epochs. The hypothesis is that Rome is a complex life form, a sympoietic eco-myth-system, with its own emergent organization capable of spontaneously evolving and self-regenerating over time, where humans have a role but not full control. A living reality, both mythological and ecological, characterized by the ability to include every otherness that might otherwise lead to its demise. Thus Rome has always confronted and included: wild nature, its alter ego Latium, as well as foreigners, cyclically summoned to regenerate the city on the hill of the Asylum. The city is conceived as a shared space since its very foundation through an act of communion between diverse people, around the Mundus, a trench into which each future roman insert a bit of the earth of the birth place to create a new shared ground, not found on roots or blood, but on a common future perspective. These three elements, Latium, Asylum and Mundus, which we call mythological algorithms, operates according to a different conception of time, a time that is not linear but circular, so as to make the origin and end points in contact as a potentially infinite temporal continuum.

This hypothesis is contradicted by the ideology of human domination over the environment, typical of modernity, which has dominated urban development for the last 150 years in an attempt to realize a thesis, that of Rome as Modern Capital, whose fulfillment risks definitively erasing the hypothesis of Rome as World City. The conflict between the Rome-World-City hypothesis and the Rome-Capital thesis is not yet widely perceived, but its battlegrounds are precisely the meaning and role that wild nature, strangers, and time (the ruins) play in the transformation of the city.

Over 30 years, Stalker has carried out a continuous effort aimed at exploring/narrating/imagining the reality of Rome. The relationship between Stalker and the Rome hypothesis is a mutual construction, born from the exploration, narration, care, and celebration of the most marginal, understated, and oppressed aspects of contemporary history and the city's most creative social and environmental realities.

STALKER is a collective founded in Rome in 1995 that conducts research and actions within the landscape, focusing on marginal areas and forgotten urban spaces, defined as "Actual Territories." Stalker promotes practices of exploration, listening, and relation, fostering creative interactions with environments, its inhabitants and their "archives of memories". These processes generate self-organized social and environmental relations, produce accessible mappings, and encourage knowledge sharing, collaborative projects, and raise the awareness of communities towards their territory and their cultural environment.

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The focus of the investigation is on those margins of the city, irreducible to clear boundaries, territories of confrontation with otherness, unplanned and unregulated spaces in which the ruins of the past and the life forms that here find refuge in the struggle for life generates emerging ecosystems, highly bio- and socio-diverse, “possible adjacents” in which a new principle of reality can regenerate within the folds of a reality now in decline. The Rome hypothesis is therefore a work in progress in the exploration of emerging biosocial processes, through wich comprehend and share the complex natural and urban history of Rome, where experiment urban practices and theories along with it. This to understand whether and how the Rome-City-World hypothesis can provide an urban model for escaping the polycrisis we are experiencing and which threatens to wipe us out.



Rome. Living the the Ruins of the Present, exhibition’s view, Macro Museum, Rome, 2026