

**Vincent Grange** (\*1997, born in Geneva, lives and works in Geneva) explores and challenges the conventions of heteronormative society through the creation of alternative realities. His work, which includes unique architectures, artifacts, and machines, invites viewers to engage with and interpret each design choice, unraveling the often absurd narratives he weaves. After gaining his Master’s in Space and Communication at HEAD – Genève, Grange co-founded Collectif Kimera, which oversees Espace Dukat, a contemporary art space in Geneva. Additionally, he co-founded Souplex Atelier with his colleague and friend Tanguy Troubat, where he serves as a scenographer and art director. In 2023, he received the Déliée grant 2023 du Fonds Cantonal d’Art Contemporain. In 2024 he was one of the recipients of the Kiefer Hablitzel Göhner Prize at the Swiss Art Awards.

Istituto Svizzero acts as a transdisciplinary platform bringing together artistic and scientific research. From Rome, Milan or Palermo, it facilitates connections between Switzerland and Italy, as well as internationally. Istituto Svizzero offers residencies to emerging artists and researchers who wish to contribute to the future of art, science and innovation. Each year, the Institute presents a public programme aimed at promoting forward-thinking events and projects, experimental practices and excellence in research. Istituto Svizzero seeks to actively participate in the global discourse on arts and society, envisioning new paths and looking beyond the boundaries of disciplines.

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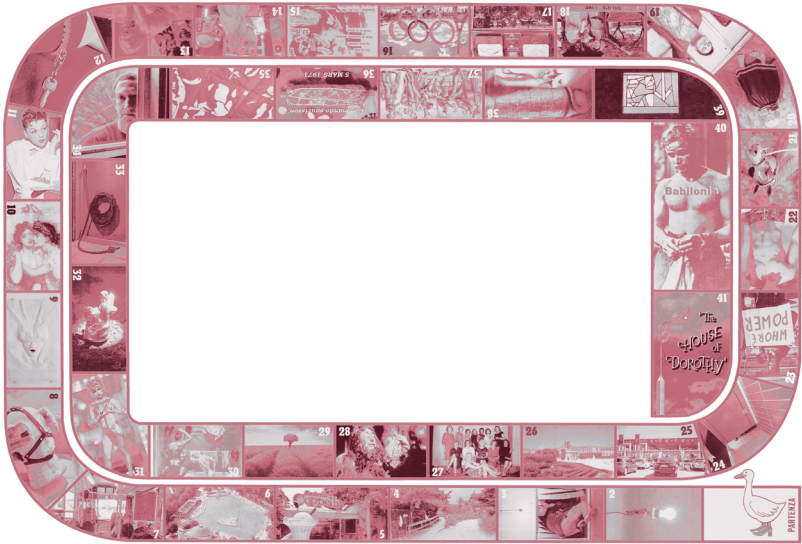
Opening hours  
Monday / Friday: 11:00–17:00  
Thursday: 11:00–20:00  
Saturday: 14:00–18:00

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**Dorothy’s Goose Game**  
The first version of the Milanese Goose Game was created in the summer of 1982 as an insert in issue zero of *Babilonia*, a historic magazine of the LGBT community at the time. The game unfolded through key locations of the gay subculture, serving as a counter-mapping of the city and documenting experiences that would otherwise have been forgotten. Dorothy’s Goose Game traces the genealogy of the house, decoding its symbols and stories. Among its squares, the Coppelia ice cream parlour in Cuba, where ordering strawberry ice cream was a secret declaration of homosexuality; Sappho and Erinna depicted by Simeon Solomon in 1864; and the trans sisters at the forefront of the 1969 Stonewall Riots.

Copies of ‘Dorothy’s Goose Game’  
are available to the public at the entrance.



The realisation of this exhibition was made possible thanks to the many people who contributed to building the physical and ideal foundations of the *House of Dorothy*. Among others, we deeply thank: Michele Bertolino, Dafne Boggeri (Tomboys don’t cry), Sandra Cane, Histoire sans chutes, Maude Renevier, Tanguy Troubat, Francesco Ventrella.

Above: Vincent Grange, Tanguy Troubat from Souplex Atelier, *Il gioco dell’oca di Dorothy*, 2025. Courtesy the artists.

Cover: Vincent Grange, *The House of Dorothy*, 2024. Ph. Irina Popa. Courtesy the artist.

# Vincent Grange

## The House of Dorothy

02.04.2025  
03.07.2025



## Milano

## Istituto Svizzero

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*The House of Dorothy* is the first solo exhibition in Italy by artist Vincent Grange.

The title of the project draws inspiration from the expression “friends of Dorothy,” a code used by the gay—and later the LGBTQIA+—community in the United States starting in the 1950s to identify one another and evade persecution for homosexuality. The term was so widespread that in the 1980s the Naval Investigative Service launched a lengthy but ultimately futile investigation to locate Dorothy, believing her to be a real person.

At the intersection of spatial design and queer history, *The House of Dorothy* reconstructs the home of this imagined figure, whose name was likely a tribute to the character played by Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). The various rooms narrate Dorothy’s life while simultaneously paying homage to a series of spaces historically significant to the LGBTQIA+ community. From legendary clubs to urban cruising spots, from historically significant homes to cinematic references, Dorothy’s house spans eras and geographies, gathering symbolic and real locations that have served as safe spaces for the queer community.

In the house, the memory of stories of oppression alternates and overlaps with the joyful experience of shared struggle. The project takes on a practice rooted in the history of LGBTQIA+ movements: reclaiming, with an emancipatory perspective, terms and narratives initiated from discrimination. The architecture, objects, and presences in the house interrogate both contemporary and past mythologies, bringing suppressed stories to the surface and strongly reaffirming the importance of not forgetting them, by reinhabiting them together.

The title references the concept of “house” in ballroom culture, where chosen families, led by a “mother” or “father,” offer a sense of belonging and support to their “children,” who are often estranged from their biological families. *The House of Dorothy* thus becomes a space for the community, honoring queer genealogies past and present, and offering them shelter.

Curated by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti  
Head Curator Istituto Svizzero

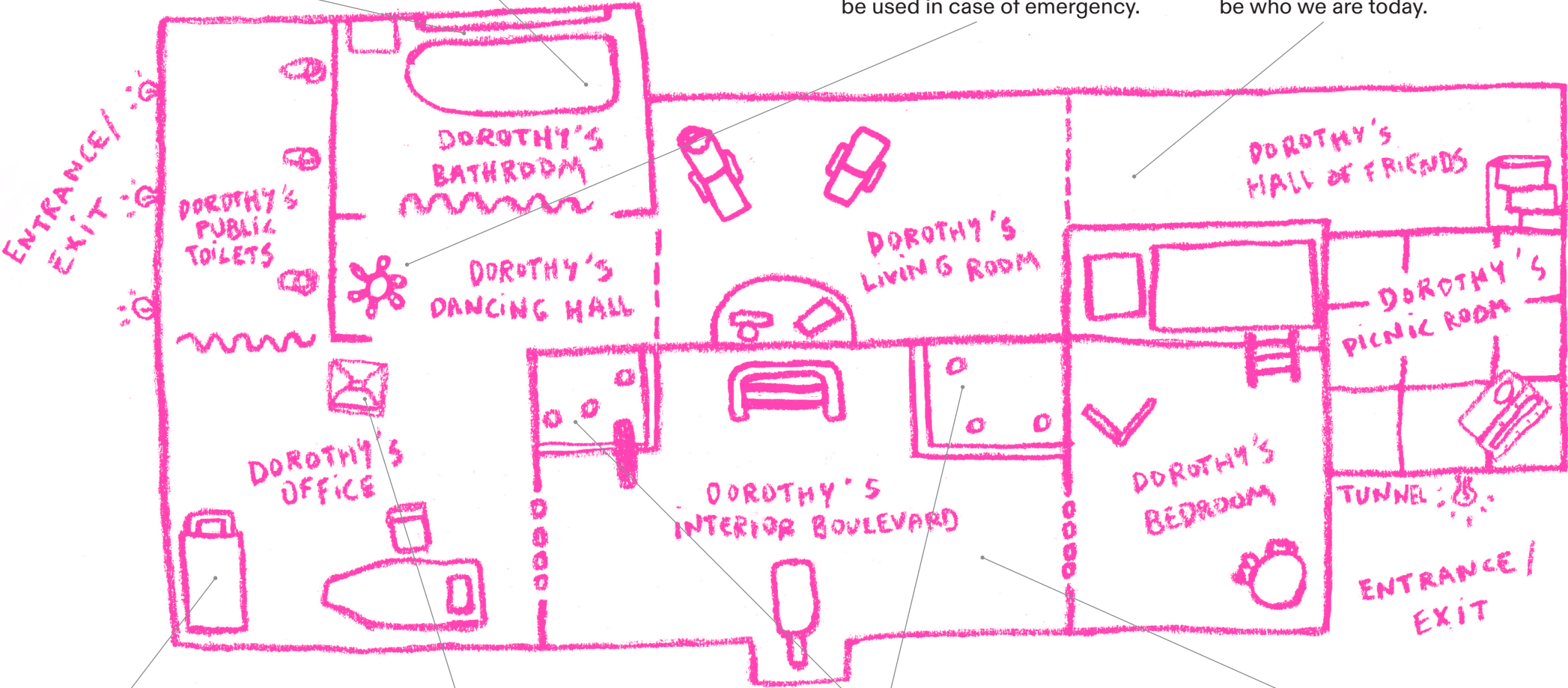


**The protest at the Lido di Milano**  
On 4 July 1980, around fifteen trans women entered the public swimming pool at the Lido in Milan. After gathering in protest, they all removed the tops of their swimsuits at the same time. Going topless was prohibited by the pool's regulations but, since the state did not recognise them as women, they asserted their right to wear only swimming briefs, just like men. The action aimed to expose the hypocrisy and contradictions of the law that sought to govern their bodies. The police eventually intervened, bringing the demonstration to an end: the protesters were taken to the police station and charged with public indecency. The day marked the first public protest in Italy led by trans people. The tops of the 15 trans women's swimsuits are hanging in the House of Dorothy's bathroom.

**Bathroom**  
Public toilets serve as a liminal space, a membrane between the public and private spheres that has long been transformed into a key point of encounter for the LGBTQIA+ community. In Dorothy's bathroom, the urban landscape and the intimacy of the home collide: the clothes-drying racks turn into the poles of Geneva's public transport system. The abbreviation of the transport agency TPG (Transports Publiques Genevois) coincides with the terms Trans Pédés Gouines, proudly re-appropriated by the French speaking queer community.

**Commando Saucisson**  
In 1971, in Paris, a group of lesbians armed with sausages attacked Professor Jérôme Lejeune during an anti-abortion lecture. The event marked the birth of the "Commando Saucisson" (Sausage Commando), around which the Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire later gravitated. The idea had come from Françoise d'Eaubonne: sticks or iron bars would have gotten them arrested, but a dry sausage, if handled well, could produce a similar effect with fewer risks. During the protest, sausages became a parody of the traditional instruments of politics at the time: truncheons on one side and phalluses on the other. A sausage is kept in the house, ready to be used in case of emergency.

**Dorothy's Hall of Friends**  
On the walls of the house, small marks hint at the extent of its community. Just like families who record the height of their youngest members on the wall, immortalising their growth centimetre by centimetre, so too does the house remember its friends. Marsha P. Johnson, Mario Mieli, Monique Wittig, Susan Sontag, Sylvia Rivera, Harvey Milk, Susanna Valenti, Paul B. Preciado, Grisélidis Réal are among those honoured in the House of Dorothy, whose very foundations are shaped by the people who inhabit it. Both children and parents of this great domestic monument, the names on the wall are little love letters to those who, through who they were, have made it possible for us to be who we are today.



**All my military gays**  
A hanging file cabinet bound by a black corset references the investigation carried out by the Naval Investigative Service in the 1980s to track down Dorothy, under the belief that she was a real person around whom the navy's gay community revolved. The cabinet is imagined to contain, meticulously filed in alphabetical order, the names of all the soldiers Dorothy had supposedly led astray—a godmother of perdition at work within the military. The presence of the file cabinet becomes an undeniable proof of Dorothy's existence. The object materialises—and seeks to exorcise—the spectre of identification and categorisation based on sexual preference, keeping those inside safely hidden thanks to the corset that seals the cabinet shut.

**Vacuum cleaning**  
A vacuum cleaner with a bag full of glitter appears to have just collected the remnants of a party that took place last night at Dorothy's house. This eccentric sculpture evokes the vacuum cleaner used by Freddie Mercury in drag in the Queen's "I Want to Break Free" video, which became an icon of subverting expectations around gender identity. A playful monument to challenging gender stereotypes and rebelling against domestic labour, the vacuum cleaner, upon closer inspection, also suggests a darker reference. The colours of the glitter match the trans flag, and the cleaning it has undergone might allude to an attempt to erase the rights of the community. Glitter, a material often considered frivolous and linked to celebration and fun, transforms into a symbol of resistance and a reminder to stick together in the face of threats of our time.

**Bushes**  
Shiny, precious objects spin on themselves in the soil of the boulevard's flower beds. Like small, melancholic jewels, they resemble the stumps left behind after the great cutting of the Jardin des Tuileries' bushes in Paris. A historic cruising spot for the city's gay community, the park was erased in 2024 as part of urban renewal ahead of the Olympic Games. Transformed into small kinetic sculptures, the stumps remain as witnesses, a memory of the uprooting of both nature and the marginalised communities that inhabit it, in the face of large-scale urban gentrification. A garden hose, dressed for a funeral, mourns their loss.

**Dorothy's Interior Boulevard**  
The walls of Theatron Club in Mexico City are sculpted and decorated to evoke the exterior walls of a city. The club's enclosed space is transformed into a square, where one can assert their sexuality within an imagined public space, when the official public sphere does not allow it. Similarly, at the heart of Dorothy's house lies the reproduction of an external space: a boulevard. Positioned between the rooms of the house, the "interior boulevard" enables one to traverse the space of the street, reclaiming the experience of public space in a controlled environment, not with an escapist outlook, but as a form of training, for when the outside world becomes less hostile. At the same time, it celebrates the value of liminal spaces in cities, which have always been key places for the LGBTQIA+ community.