

Display and Capitalism

June 10-11, 2025

Free University of Bozen-Bolzano,
Faculty of Design and Arts
Piazza Università, 1 – Bolzano



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Introduction

Display and Capitalism, organized as part of the PNRR P+ARTS (Partnership for Artistic Research in Technology and Sustainability) project, aims at exploring the relationships between capitalism, technology and visual arts through the lens of display.

In an era where the attention economy governs the flow of images and meanings, display is not merely a technical device but an epistemic and economic structure that organizes perception, shapes value and disciplines the visible. Contemporary capitalism increasingly relies on processes of visualization: from digital interfaces to the art market, from social media platforms to augmented reality, display is the medium through which commodities, bodies and ideas are made visible and consumable. The spectacularization of art, its reduction to scrollable content in algorithmic feeds and its exhibition in increasingly hybrid, both physical and virtual, spaces raise urgent philosophical questions about the very nature of representation.

The conference seeks to address these themes through a dialogue between philosophers, artists, media theorists and social scientists, focusing on:

- **The aesthetics and politics of display:** how capitalist logics shape the ways art and aesthetic experiences are exhibited, distributed, and received.
- **Technologies of visibility:** from museum vitrines to digital screens, an analysis of the technical infrastructures that govern what is shown and what remains hidden.
- **Art between exposure and concealment:** how artistic practices can resist the logic of forced transparency and the hyper-visibility imposed by contemporary capitalism.
- **Display and architecture:** how capitalist aesthetics influence exhibition spaces, urban environments, and digital architectures, shaping exhibition spaces, corporate environments, and digital architectures, structuring visibility, control, and value production.

Through these perspectives, *Display and Capitalism* invites a critical reflection on the role of visibility in today's economy and the possibilities for an aesthetics that challenges the capitalist logic of display.

Program

Tuesday, June 10

AFTERNOON SESSION

2.30pm – 3.00pm

Welcome and Introduction

Elisa Poli (NABA)

Marcello Barison (UNIBZ)

3.00pm – 3.30pm | First Talk

“24th International Exhibition: INEQUALITIES”

Nina Bassoli (La Triennale di Milano)

3.30pm – 4.00pm | Second Talk

“Distribution is Political. Infrastructures of Visibility and Circulation”

Andrea Catherine Steves (NABA)

Vincenzo Estremo (NABA)

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Q&A and coffee break

5.00pm – 5.30pm | Second Talk

“The presence of absence. The (im)possibility of escaping the art marketing system”

Gerhard Glüher (UNIBZ)

5.30pm – 6pm | Fourth talk

“Aesthetics of self-display and self-destruction”

Vittorio Parisi (EDHEA/HES-SO)

6.00pm – 7.00pm

Q&A and closing remarks

Live remote following
(Team connection):

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MDE0YmFhODItMD-g4Yy00OWQ2LTlZjYtYTJiZGIzMTI5NzNk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Ti-d%22%3a%2292513267-03e3-401a-80d4-c58ed6674e3b%22%2c%22Oi-d%22%3a%22858d59e2-697c-46bc-80d7-a15d34aeb5f%22%7d

Wednesday, June 11

MORNING SESSION

9.15am – 9.30am

Introduction to the Morning Session

9.30am – 10.00am | First Talk

“Display Against the Extractive Narratives of Capitalism”
Emanuele Guidi (UZH)

10.00pm – 10.30pm | Second Talk

“Apparel / Apparition: Fashioning the Sporting Body between
Capital, Embodiment and Myth”
Alessandro Manzi (NABA)
Lodovico Pignatti Morano (Q36.5)
Elisa Poli (NABA)

10.30am – 11.00am

Q&A and coffee break

11.30am – 12.00am | Third Talk

“Visibility Fatigue”
Irene Fenara

12.00pm – 12.30pm | Fourth talk

“Strategies of Display. Emilio Vavarella in Conversation
with Gianluca Riccio”
Emilio Vavarella (SC)
Gianluca Riccio (ABANA)

12.30pm – 1.00pm

Q&A and break

Live remote following
(Team connection):

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MDE0YmFhODItMD-g4Yy00OWQ2LTlZjYtYTJiZGIzMTI5NzNk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Ti-d%22%3a%2292513267-03e3-401a-80d4-c58ed6674e3b%22%2c%22Oi-d%22%3a%22858d59e2-697c-46bc-80d7-a15d34aeb5f%22%7d

Wednesday, June 11

AFTERNOON SESSION

2.45pm – 3.00pm

Introduction to the Afternoon Session

2.30pm – 3.00pm | Fifth Talk

“The Capitalist Eye”

Sophie Cras (Panthéon-Sorbonne)

3.30pm – 4.00pm | Sixth Talk

“The Politics of the Vitrine. Displaying Capitalism from Glass To Screen”

Elisabetta Modena (IULM)

4.00pm – 5.00pm

Q&A and coffee break

5.00pm – 5.30pm | Seventh Talk

“Let it express itself. Some Considerations on Techno- Capitalism and Screens moving from Don DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis*”

Francesco Cattaneo (UNIBO)

5.30pm – 6pm | Eighth talk

“The 2008 Financial Crisis as a Historical Threshold: Tracing Shifts in Architectural Values Through Biennials”

Claudia Mainardi (UNIBZ)

6.00pm – 7.00pm

Q&A and closing Remarks

Live remote following
(Team connection):

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_MDE0YmFhODItMD-g4Yy00OWQ2LTlZjYtYTJiZGIzMTI5NzNk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Ti-d%22%3a%2292513267-03e3-401a-80d4-c58ed6674e3b%22%2c%22Oi-d%22%3a%22858d59e2-697c-46bc-80d7-a15d34aeb5f%22%7d

Speakers June 10

Nina Bassoli (La Triennale)

Vincenzo Estremo (NABA)

Andrea Catherine Steves (NABA)

Gerhard Glüher (UNIBZ)

Vittorio Parisi (EDHEA/HES-SO)

SPEAKER

Nina Bassoli

Tuesday, June 10

3.00pm – 3.30pm | First Talk

"24th International Exhibition: INEQUALITIES"



Nina Bassoli (born 1983) is an architect, researcher, and curator. She holds a PhD from IUAV University of Venice and graduated in Architecture from the Politecnico di Milano, where she currently teaches Architectural Design. She has given lectures, talks, and workshops at various international universities, including UTPL in Loja, Ecuador, where she was a Visiting Professor, and the Faculty of Design and Art at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, where she worked as a research fellow on the project *Architecture in the Age of Display*, an investigation into architecture exhibitions of the past twenty years.

Author of numerous essays, catalogues, and books, she has been a member of the editorial board of *Lotus international* since 2008. From 2016 to 2020, she served on the Board of Directors of the Pirelli HangarBicocca Foundation and, since 2016, she has been a member of the Scientific Committee for Cultural Activities of the Milan Order of Architects.

→ **"24th International Exhibition: INEQUALITIES"****Abstract:**

Since 1923, Triennale Milano organized the International Exhibitions every three years, inviting designers, architects, artists, and collectives from around the world to focus on a particular theme.

After tackling the themes of sustainability with Broken Nature (2019) and the mysteries of the universe with Unknown Unknowns (2022), the 24th International Exposition closes this trilogy by focusing reflection on the human dimension and addressing an urgent and political issue such as the growing inequalities that characterize cities and the contemporary world. Inequalities is a collective project that, through exhibitions, installations, special projects and events, questions the global challenges related to the differences present in various spheres of existence: from economic to ethnic, from geographic origin to gender.

The 24th International Exhibition also includes a section devoted to international participations, solicited under the auspices of the BIE - Bureau International des Expositions.

SPEAKERS

Andrea Catherine Steves Vincenzo Estremo

Tuesday, June 10

3.30pm – 4.00pm | Second Talk

**"Distribution is Political.
Infrastructures of Visibility
and Circulation"**



Andrea Catherine Steves (b. 1983, Michigan, USA) is an artist, curator, researcher, and organizer currently based between New York and Vienna. Her collaborative practice includes ongoing projects with Bernhard Garnicnig and Lukas Heisteringer (Artist Project Group), Enar de Dios Rodriguez (Essential Services), and Timothy Furstnau (FICTILIS, Museum of Capitalism). She is a PhD candidate in Artistic Practice at NABA (Milan) and HDK-Va-land, University of Gothenburg, with completion expected in 2028.



Vincenzo Estremo (b. 1980, Caserta, Italy) is PhD Course leader at NABA, curator, independent researcher and writer. Vincenzo Estremo holds a PhD in Media, Film, and Communication Studies from the University of Udine and the Kunstuniversität Linz. Estremo regularly writes for Flash Art and Il Foglio. His publications include among others: *Extended Temporalities* (2016); *Teoria del lavoro reputazionale* (2020) *Indistinzione* (2023), *Cronofagia e Media* (2024).

→ **“Distribution is Political.
Infrastructures of Visibility
and Circulation”**

Abstract:

This paper examines the political stakes of distribution as a central — rather than auxiliary — dimension of cultural production. Moving beyond content-focused critiques, we argue that distribution infrastructures themselves shape the conditions under which cultural goods circulate, and thus determine access, visibility, and value. Far from being neutral, these infrastructures embed social relations and power dynamics that influence who speaks, who listens, and under what terms.

Drawing on case studies across diverse media and geographies — including Naples’ Mixed by Erry, the Allied Media Conference in Detroit, independent publishing networks like SPD and Publication Studio, postwar Italy’s PCI-affiliated cultural circuits, and cooperative and experimental cinema practices in the US, UK, and Italy — we explore how alternative distribution networks emerge from specific material conditions and social movements. These networks often repurpose or reroute existing infrastructures to create autonomous channels for cultural exchange, resisting capitalist and state logics.

Departing from Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of the “field of cultural production,” we reframe distribution as a contested site where cultural producers negotiate legitimacy, autonomy, and circulation. In this light, we propose that the current crisis in cultural production is not merely one of content, but one of infrastructure — and that reclaiming distribution is central to reimagining cultural futures.

Bourdieu P. (1984). *The Market of Symbolic Goods in The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, Columbia University Press

Bonini, T. Treré, E. (2024). *Algorithms of Resistance. The Everyday Fight against Platform Power*, 2024 MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts and London.

Plantin, J.-C., & Punathambekar, A. (2018). “Digital media infrastructures: pipes, platforms, and politics.” *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(2), 163–174.

SPEAKER

Gerhard Glüher

Tuesday, June 10

5.00pm – 5.30pm | Third Talk

“The presence of absence.

**The (im)possibility of escaping the art
marketing system”**



Gerhard Glüher is a Full Professor at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, where he teaches, among other subjects, Theory and Languages of Visual Communication, Artistic Research, and History of Contemporary Art. He holds a doctorate in Art History from Philipps University Marburg and received his habilitation in Art Theory from the Bauhaus University Weimar with a study on visual languages and forms of expression in new media and contemporary art. His interdisciplinary work concerns Philosophy, Media theory and Aesthetics, with a particular focus on the image in modern and postmodern contexts. Glüher has held teaching and research positions at several institutions, including Humboldt University in Berlin, the University of Innsbruck, and the Bauhaus University Weimar. He also serves as an expert evaluator for major cultural and academic foundations such as the DAAD and the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

→ **“The presence of absence.
The (im)possibility of escaping the art
marketing system”**

Abstract:

We start from the premise that the driving force behind capitalism is the profit-maximising exchange of goods and services. This could be stopped if works of art were altered in such a way that they were no longer goods or services, but something else entirely. In this paper, we examine four selected artistic concepts, works and exhibitions to see what strategies have been used to conceive the work – or its absence – in such a way that it cannot be appropriated by the market system of capitalism.

We examine the following positions: the most consistent stance would be the non-existence of the work, as taken by Laurence Weiner with his ‘Untitled Statement’, followed by the inaccessibility of the work, as practised by Richard Long with ‘March 19-22 1969’. The third strategy is to make time itself available, with John Cage’s work ‘Organ 2 As Slow As Possible’ serving as an example, and fourthly, Jean-François Lyotard’s exhibition entitled ‘Les Immatériaux,’ which prioritised the experience of the visitors’ presence over the absence of things.

The strategies mentioned above have lost their radical nature due to the paradigm shift brought about by digital technology, as the capitalist parameters of ‘value’ and ‘ownership’ (with all their power-political consequences) have been transformed into immaterial entities such as cryptic numbers, codes and information. In the second part of this article, we therefore consider NFTs (non-fungible tokens) as works of art. As the most immaterial and non-sensory forms an artwork can take, they should actually be outside the realm of economic interest, but the opposite is true: they are purely speculative trading options and voluntarily submit to capitalist systems. Does this mean that the possibility of practising rebellious art has been taken away, or did its predecessors never stand a chance because every form of art can be capitalised?

SPEAKER

Vittorio Parisi

Tuesday, June 10

5.30pm – 6.00pm | Fourth Talk

**"Aesthetics of self-display and self-destruction.
Graffiti and street art between repression,
cultural appropriation, and self-iconoclasm:
the case of Blu."**



Vittorio Parisi holds a PhD in Aesthetics from Panthéon-Sorbonne University, and he is currently Head of Visual Arts and Full Professor at the Valais School of Art / University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Western Switzerland. Between 2019 and 2025, he has been working as Head of Studies and Research at the Villa Arson Nice. His work focuses mainly on unsanctioned art practices such as graffiti and street art, their origins in urban interstices, and their ambiguous relationship within the cultural industry and the institutional art world. Between 2015 and 2023, he was a Lecturer at the École des Arts de la Sorbonne, the University of Rennes 2, and the Université Côte d'Azur. He has also conducted several research and teaching stays in the United States (Columbia University, Smith College) and China (Fudan University, Tongji University). An art critic and curator, Vittorio Parisi is a member of the French section of the AICA – Association internationale des critiques d'art.

→ **"Aesthetics of self-display and self-destruction.
Graffiti and street art between repression,
cultural appropriation, and self-iconoclasm:
the case of Blu."**

Abstract:

Graffiti and street art were born as unsanctioned, *self-displaying* practices, i.e. practices that escape the ordinary and administered organization of visibility, by imposing their own display strategies in the urban environment, defying common rules of property and propriety, and thus provoking censoring and repressive responses from the established order. Nonetheless, through their progressive commodification and institutionalization, the self-displaying status of graffiti and street art has been easily overturned and subjected to forms of appropriation by that very established order. This paper focuses on the work and practice of Italian muralist Blu, whose approach consists mainly in the creation of unsanctioned murals on a monumental scale, marked by a strong militancy and a humanist, ecological, and no-global approach. Because of the public, highly polemical and satirical nature of his creations, Blu's practice has already known several episodes of censorship, in which institutions acted against representations that they deemed either morally inappropriate or outrageous towards public decorum and the reputation of law enforcement. On two occasions, Blu himself decided to "censor" his own creations by covering them in black or grey paint: in Berlin in 2014, to prevent two of his murals from contributing to the ongoing gentrification in the Kreuzberg district; in Bologna in 2016, to protest against the museum exhibition *Street Art, Banksy & Co.*, in which some of Blu's unsanctioned wall paintings dating from 2006 were detached and exhibited as canvases. Confronted with street art's quick institutionalization and its consequent "de-aestheticization" – meaning by that, as Theodor Adorno put it through the concept of *Entkunstung*, the loss of art's original critical force – Blu decided to take over the means of censorship traditionally used by institutions to protect his own murals through an unprecedented form of self-iconoclasm. Existing between the craving for exposure and the necessity of concealment, between an aesthetic of self-display and one of self-destruction, graffiti and street art represent a peculiar and ambiguous case of display within the frame of late-stage capitalism.

Speakers June 11

Emanuele Guidi (UZH)
Alessandro Manzi (NABA)
Lodivico Pignatti Morano (Q36.5)
Elisa Poli (NABA)
Irene Fenara
Emilio Vavarella (SC)
Gianluca Riccio (ABANA)
Sophie Cras (Panthéon-Sorbonne)
Elisabetta Modena (IULM)
Francesco Cattaneo (UNIBO)
Claudia Mainardi (UNIBZ)

SPEAKER

Emanuele Guidi

Wednesday, June 11

9.30pm – 10.00pm | First Talk

**“Display Against the Extractive
Narratives of Capitalism”**



Emanuele Guidi is a writer, curator and researcher based in Berlin. He is PhD candidate in Practice in Curating at the University of Reading & Zurich University of the Arts and teaches Curatorial Studies at NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti) in Milan. In 2024 he was research fellow at Archiv der Avantgarden (ADA) – Egidio Marzona and with the support of the Italian Council Grant, he edited the book *Henry Martin – An Active Ear*, with the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (SKD) and the Archiv der Avantgarden (ADA), jointly published by Spector Books. He is initiator and co-artistic director of *Post-Colonia: Festival of Architectures and Imaginaries in Transition*, Marina di Massa, Tuscany in April 2025. From 2013 and 2022 Guidi was artistic director at ar/ge kunst, Kunstverein of Bolzano/Bozen, where he curated solo shows by, a.o. Otobong Nkanga, Jumana Manna, Slavs and Tatars, Adjai Dieye, Mohamed Bourouissa, Ho Tzu Nyen, Alessandra Ferrini, Elena Mazzi and Lorenzo Pezzani.

→ **“Display Against the Extractive
Narratives of Capitalism”**

Abstract:

Moving from my own curatorial practice in support of artists, the paper delves into the project Silver Rights (2020–2022), initiated by Italian artist Elena Mazzi in dialogue with Mapuche spiritual leader and silversmith Mauro Millán and Argentinian artist Eduardo Molinari – a project in which I was directly involved as curator and artistic director of ar/ge kunst – Kunstverein of Bozen/Bolzano, and that was presented in ar/ge kunst, Italy, Södertälje Konsthall, Sweden, Bienalsur, Argentina in 2021.

The presentation discusses how Silver Rights confronts the extractive practices of some foreign multinational companies in Patagonia, the original land of the Mapuche people, among them the Italian company Benetton. More specifically I will focus on the role of the complex installation display, designed by Studio Gisto, as response to the narrative proposed by the Leleque Museum, an anthropological museum opened in 2000 in the very lands owned by Benetton: an ambiguous operation, which I claim in continuity with Benetton’s notorious communication campaigns, that dismisses the Mapuche people as an extinct culture rather than one that is alive and active in the disputed territory, ‘musealising’ their memory and material culture.

Drawing on the work of Azoulay (2019) and Acosta (2013), this paper will address how contemporary cultural institutions risks of preserving separative and neo-extractivist practices; eventually to propose how exhibition-making and politics of display can activate forms of mediation, recomposition and healing against the perpetuation of colonial narratives.

SPEAKERS

**Alessandro Manzi
Lodovico Pignatti Morano
Elisa Poli**

Wednesday, June 11

10.00am – 10.30am | Second Talk

**“Apparel / Apparition: Fashioning the Sporting Body
between Capital, Embodiment and Myth”**

Alessandro Manzi is Chief Creative Director and Partner of the K-448 and Accident agencies. Alumnus of Politecnico di Milano, in his experience he has developed creative strategies and products for international companies i.e. Marella, Kiton, Aspesi, Prada, Gucci, Msgm, Duvetica, Poltrona Frau, Spotti, Le Sirenuse, Mantero, and Silversea. He is Senior Lecturer and Subject Leader at NABA, Nuova Accademia Belle Arti and he teaches at a number of Italian and international schools such as Politecnico di Milano, Poli.Design Master, MFI, DOMUS Academy, IED and many others. As a researcher, he is part of the “FIP-Fashion in process” collective of Politecnico di Milano. He is also author of articles and Ted Talks about Theories on Sustainability in the Fashion System and on copying in the fashion industry.



Lodovico Pignatti Morano has been working as a creative consultant and brand strategist in the sports and fashion industries for more than 15 years. With an artistic education (BA Fine Hons in Contemporary Art Practice from Goldsmiths College, University of London) and author of 5 books ranging from fashion history to literary novel to poetry, his approach is driven by an ambitious use of narrative combined with conceptual brand strategies. His clients have included C.P. Company, Cinelli, Massimo Osti Studio, Nike and Slam Jam. He is currently the creative director and brand strategist of the Bolzano-based high performance cycling clothing brand Q36.5.



Professor Elisa Poli is the NABA Research Program Leader and, since 2024, the Scientific Coordinator of the PNRR P+ARTS project. From 2014 to 2021, she was Head of the Master in Urban Vision & Architectural Design at Domus Academy. She earned her Ph.D. in Architectural History from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the Faculty of Architecture in Florence. She has written for Domus, Icon Design, Abitare, and Arch'it, and is co-author of several publications. Since 2010, she has delivered lectures and talks in Italy and abroad, including at the Venice Biennale, Triennale di Milano, Middle East Technical University in Ankara, State Stroganov Academy of Design and Applied Arts in Moscow, NewSchool of Architecture & Design in San Diego, Western Caspian University in Baku, and Hochschule Mainz – University of Applied Sciences. In 2020, she took part in the Buenos Aires Design Week, and in 2023 in the Bangkok Design Week.

→ **“Apparel / Apparition: Fashioning the Sporting Body
between Capital, Embodiment and Myth”**

Abstract:

Within the economy of images that governs contemporary capitalism, *apparel* is not merely clothing — it operates as a dispositive of appearance. In professional sport, and especially in mass events such as the *Giro d'Italia*, the athlete's body becomes a dynamic surface where capital, narrative, and desire converge. This session — structured as a double interview conducted by Elisa Poli (NABA, P+ARTS) with fashion designers and creative directors Alessandro Manzi and Lodovico Pignatti Morano — interrogates the role of apparel in shaping the visibility, value, and mythology of the sporting body.

The conversation unfolds from a shared provocation: What happens when *display* becomes the terrain where marketing, fashion design, athletic performance, and community intersect? Drawing on Barthes' *Mythologies*, the dialogue reframes cycling apparel not as a seamless extension of streetwear culture, but as a site of tension. Can technical garments do more than signal? Can they narrate, embody, or even provoke sentiment?

While professional riders often appear saturated with branded signals — walking billboards regulated by complex economies of exposure — does this visibility translate into cultural meaning? Or does it obscure the expressive potential of clothing altogether? What distinguishes apparel that merely displays from fashion that interprets and elaborates?

Examples such as Giulio Ciccone's choreographed gesture of throwing branded sunglasses at the *Tour of the Alps 2025*, or the fetishisation of the *Pirelli cap* worn by Lidl-Trek, invite reflection. Do such moments activate a mythology of performance, or do they flatten it into spectacle? As Pignatti Morano, who has designed across technical apparel, fashion and sportswear, suggests: might it be precisely the lack of emotional responsiveness — the absence of a capacity to process cultural temperature — that delineates the boundary between apparel and fashion?

Apparel, once strictly technical infrastructure, now speaks a complex language. Terms rooted in military and automotive industries — *cutting plan*, *pattern*,

aerodynamics — are woven into design narratives that blur the line between utility and visibility. But is appearance now a form of labor, projection, or even constraint? Should brands like Q36.5 navigate this ambiguity? How to balance global innovation with local craftsmanship, or what Pignatti Morano calls “an economy of belief,” in which authenticity becomes a form of currency. How, then, do we define authenticity in a system increasingly governed by standardised aesthetics and algorithmic reach?

Meanwhile, Alessandro Manzi reflects on the tension between celebrity and community the role of education. In an era of contract-bound morality clauses and tightly managed media personas, can the athlete still operate as a mythological figure — or has visibility become entirely instrumentalised by the logic of display capitalism? What kind of resistance, if any, is still possible?

Throughout the dialogue, examples drawn from design pedagogy and material culture — from Sardinian folk costume traditions to the modular intelligence of *Enzo Mari* — complicate the image of the streamlined brand. These practices reveal the silent labor of embodiment: gestures, materials, and processes that resist abstraction. If screens and podiums flatten difference, then perhaps the critical task is to reinsert texture — to give form again to complexity.

Rather than offering closure, the session invites a final provocation: If apparel has become the architecture of visibility, how might we design a language — visual, material, conceptual — that resists being entirely consumed by the logics of display?

SPEAKER

Irene Fenara

Wednesday, June 11

11.30am – 12.00am | Third Talk

“Visibility Fatigue”

Irene Fenara (1990) is an artist who lives and works in Milan. Her work investigates the gesture behind every photographic operation: watching. She hacks into the supposedly objective eye of the machine to find a mistake and render its gaze again subjective and poetic with works that speak of the fragility of the surveillance technologies. In 2017 she received her master's degree in Visual Arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, after obtaining a bachelor's degree in Sculpture at the same Academy. Her work has been exhibited in public and private institutions, such as MACTE (Termoli 2024), MADRE (Naples 2024), Museion (Bolzano 2023), Palazzo Bentivoglio (Bologna 2023), MAXXI (Rome 2022), ICA (Milan 2022), MACRO (Rome 2021), Basel Social Club (Basel 2022), Triennale (Milan 2021), Kunst Merano Arte (Merano 2019), MAMbo (Bologna 2018), Palazzo delle Esposizioni (Rome 2018), Fondazione Fotografia (Modena 2017) and Fondazione Prada Osservatorio (Milan 2016).

→ “Visibility Fatigue”

Abstract:

This talk explores the use of surveillance imagery within artistic practice as a way to interrogate the power dynamics of visibility in contemporary capitalism. Through works based on security camera footage, Irene Fenara questions the asymmetry between observer and observed, the legal and social implications of being watched, and the aesthetics of machine-generated images. In a world dominated by the Internet of Things and algorithmic vision, her practice proposes strategies of resistance through error, opacity, and reversal of the gaze..

SPEAKERS

Emilio Vavarella Gianluca Riccio

Wednesday, June 11

12.00pm – 12.30pm | Fourth Talk

"Strategies of Display.

**Emilio Vavarella in Conversation
with Gianluca Riccio"**



Emilio Vavarella (Monfalcone, 1989) is an artist and researcher working at the intersection of interdisciplinary art, media experimentation, and critical theory. He is Assistant Professor of Media and Film Studies at Skidmore College and currently Artist in Residence at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. His work has been exhibited internationally at venues such as the 18th Venice Biennale (Italian Pavilion), MAXXI (Rome), Museo Reina Sofia (Madrid), Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), The Photographers' Gallery (London), and Eyebeam (New York). His films have been shown at major festivals including the Toronto Images Festival, Torino Film Festival, and Japan Media Arts Festival. Vavarella has received several awards and grants, including the Italian Council award (2019), and his work is frequently discussed in both academic and art publications. He holds a Ph.D. in Film and Visual Studies and Critical Media Practice from Harvard University.



Gianluca Riccio is an art historian and contemporary art curator. He has taught at several Italian universities, including La Sapienza, L'Orientale, and Federico II. He is Professor of Contemporary Art History and History of Photography at the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples, and lecturer at Luiss Business School in Rome, where he also serves as a researcher at the Ethos Observatory. He has curated exhibitions and special projects with artists such as Depero, Chia, Nannucci, Mahama, Vavarella, and Ghirri, in institutions across Italy and abroad (MADRE, MACRO, MACTE, MANN, Fondazione Banco di Napoli, Pompeii Archaeological Park). Since 2016, he has been co-artistic director of the Festival del Paesaggio in Capri. He has held roles at the Banco di Napoli Foundation, Flash Art, the Carditello Foundation, and the Art-Ethics project (Luiss/MADRE). He curates the Renovatio Mundi platform and, since 2022, is co-director of the Artinmove Observatory at the Academy of Naples.

→ **"Strategies of Display.
Emilio Vavarella in Conversation
with Gianluca Riccio"**

Abstract:

Through the presentation of a selection of works and artistic projects created by Emilio Vavarella in the last ten years (2014 - 2025), the conversation between the Italian artist and Gianluca Riccio will be articulated following some of the recurring threads and themes in Vavarella's artistic production and theoretical reflection. These include the investigation of the increasingly undefined boundaries between humans and machines in turbo-capitalist societies (*Captcha Project*, 2014), the limits of artistic authorship in a world saturated by non-human autonomous agents and the role of technological and cultural devices in immaterial material consumption (*Amazon's Cabinet of Curiosities*, 2019-ongoing), up to the reconfiguration of the relationship between labor and artistic value, between productivity and data economy within a broader biopolitical horizon (*DREAMSCAPES Analytica®*, 2017).

SPEAKER

Sophie Cras

Wednesday, June 11

3.00pm – 3.30pm | Fifth Talk
“The Capitalist Eye”

Sophie Cras is Assistant Professor in Art History at Université Panthéon-Sorbonne. Her research explores the intersections between visual art and economics in the contemporary period. She is interested in the economics of art and its market, with an emphasis on the economic knowledge and practices of artists themselves. She also studies the way economists mobilize images, as well as the creative and critical view that artists provide of the economy of their time. Her first book, *The Artist as Economist* (Yale University Press, 2019) considers how money, finance, and economics in general became a focus for artistic experimentation in the 1960s. In 2022, she published an anthology of artists' writing about the economy since the 19th century (B42). Her most recent book, co-authored with Charlotte Guichard, is a historical essay looking into artist's relationship with the market since the Renaissance (*Le Seuil*, 2025). She is currently completing a new manuscript about the history of “economic museums” since the mid-19th century.

→ **“The Capitalist Eye”****Abstract:**

In 2021, the fully restored Bourse de Commerce (Commodity Exchange) re-opened in Paris as a museum housing the private collection of entrepreneur François Pinault. What has been virtually forgotten is that, when it first opened in 1889 for the Paris World’s Fair, the Bourse de Commerce was already a place devoted not only to trade but also to the display of commodities and the exercise of the gaze. The building, with its eye-shaped dome, housed what was then called a “commercial museum.” My presentation looks back at what commercial museums were in their day, to uncover a lost history of capitalism on display.

SPEAKER

Elisabetta Modena

Wednesday, June 11

3.30pm – 4.00pm | Sixth Talk

“The Politics of the Vitrine.

Displaying Capitalism from Glass to Screen”



Elisabetta Modena is a tenure-track researcher in contemporary art history at IULM University in Milan (Italy). Her research interests lie at the intersection of visual arts history, media history and theory, exhibition display history and theory, as well as digital and video game culture. In recent years, she has explored the relationship between art and virtual reality, the cultural applications of this immersive technology, and the concept of “immersive-ness” as a defining motif of contemporary experience, which finds expression in exhibitions and installations, museums and virtual environments, as well as in storytelling and narrative practices. Together with Marco Scotti, she co-founded MoRE. Museum of Refused and Unrealised Art Projects (www.moremuseum.org), a digital museum and archive dedicated to unrealized contemporary art projects from the 20th and 21st centuries. Modena has held research positions at the University of Pavia (2023–24) and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Philosophy “Piero Martinetti” of the University of Milan (2020–23). She has also been a research fellow at the CSAC. Centro studi e archivio della comunicazione at the University of Parma (2017–18) and an adjunct lecturer at the University of Bologna. She is the author of the monographs: *La Triennale in mostra. Allestire ed esporre tra studio e spettacolo (1947–1954)* (Scripta Edizioni, Verona 2015), *Nelle storie. Arte, cinema e media immersivi* (Carocci, Rome 2022), *Immersioni. La realtà virtuale nelle mani degli artisti* (Johan & Levi, Milan 2023), *Display. Luoghi Dispositivi Gestì* (Einaudi, Turin 2024).

→ **“The Politics of the Vitrine.
Displaying Capitalism from Glass to Screen”**

Abstract:

This lecture examines the vitrine as a hybrid apparatus of display, positioned at the crossroads of aesthetic experience, commodity culture, and institutional power. From the 19th-century Parisian passages – where the shop window staged the encounter between desire and merchandise – to the modern museum vitrine that frames and freezes objects into value, the logic of display has mirrored and shaped the logics of capitalism. In contemporary e-commerce platforms like Amazon, the vitrine is reconfigured once again: it dematerializes, migrates to the screen, and is governed by algorithmic suggestions, user ratings, and infinite scroll. Whether framing a cultural artifact or staging a purchasable good, the vitrine operates as an economic and epistemic surface, organizing visibility, regulating desire, and producing value. While promising transparency, the vitrine enacts a powerful ideological function: it selects, aestheticizes, and naturalizes capitalist structures under the guise of openness. Throughout the lecture, selected artworks and artistic practices that engage critically with display mechanisms will be used to expose the tensions, limits, and contradictions embedded in the vitrine as both a material and symbolic structure. From glass to pixel, from preservation to persuasion, the vitrine persists as a central structure in the visual economies of late capitalism.

SPEAKER

Francesco Cattaneo

Wednesday, June 11

5.00pm – 5.30pm | Seventh Talk

"Let it express itself.

**Some Considerations on Techno-Capitalism and
Screens moving from Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*"**



Francesco Cattaneo is Associate Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Bologna. Among his most recent works: *La presenza degli dèi. Filosofia e mito in Friedrich Nietzsche e Walter F. Otto tra verità e bellezza* (2019); he has edited the following special issues of journals: *Nietzsche's Aesthetics: The Human Between Health and Illness* (2024), "So viel Misstrauen, so viel Philosophie". *Nietzsche lettore di filosofia* (2023), *Heidegger e i poeti* (2022), *La verità che avviene. Sulla compagnia tra arte e filosofia* (2022), *Estetica e traduzione* (2022), *Sogni febbrili: Werner Herzog e la filosofia* (2020), *Nietzsche nella letteratura del primo Novecento. Percorsi interpretativi* (2019). He has translated and edited *Werner Herzog, Guida per i perplessi. Nuovi incontri alla fine del mondo* (Minimum Fax, Roma 2024); *Richard Capobianco, La Via dell'Essere di Heidegger*, Orthotes, Napoli-Salerno 2023. He is member of the steering committee of *Estetica. Studi e ricerche* and of the scientific committee of *Paradosso*. He has co-founded the book series "Rendere visibile" (Orthotes) and "Filosofia del cinema" (Mimesis).

→ **"Let it express itself.
Some Considerations on Techno-Capitalism and
Screens moving from Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*"**

Abstract:

My talk will take into consideration some aspects of Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* – and of David Cronenberg's film based on the book – to highlight, through the work of authors such as Jacques Ellul and Guy Debord, some topics related to techno-capitalism, such as creative destruction, the relationship with the future, the obsolescence of the present, the flux of information, virtualization and de-materialization. All this will be discussed in connection with the notion of spectacle and the ambiguous character of displays and screens.

SPEAKER

Claudia Mainardi

Wednesday, June 11

5.30pm – 6.00pm | Eighth Talk

**“The 2008 Financial Crisis as a Historical Threshold:
Tracing Shifts in Architectural Values
Through Biennials”**



Claudia Mainardi is co-founder of the architectural practice Fosbury Architecture with whom she curated the Italian Pavilion at the 18. Venice Architecture Biennale in 2023. CM holds a PhD from the Politecnico di Milano in the framework of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie project *TACK/Communities of Tacit Knowledge: Architecture and its Ways of Knowing* coordinate by the ETH/Zurich. CM precedently collaborated with diverse architectural practices including OMA/AMO, MVRDV, MultiplicityLab and Studio Folder with whom she won the special mention at the 14. Venice Architecture Biennale. In 2019 CM was head curator of the exhibition and graphic design of UABB Shenzhen Biennale and in 2017 she was assistant curator of BIO 25, the 25th Biennial of Design in Ljubljana. CM has been researcher at The Why Factory – the think-tank led by Winy Maas within TUDelft – and collaborator at the Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam.

→ **“The 2008 Financial Crisis as a Historical Threshold:
Tracing Shifts in Architectural Values
Through Biennials”**

Abstract:

This contribution focuses on investigating the impact of the 2008 economic crisis on architecture as a profession, production and concerns. Specifically, it aims to highlight how this crisis — though it merely exposed ongoing underlying trends — marked an end to the era of so-called *irrational exuberance* that defined the early 21st century. This shift challenged the prevailing image of the “architect as hero” and coincided with the rise of a new architectural approach rooted in values distinct from those of the neoliberal paradigm that had dominated the early 2000s.

Given the recency of these developments and the limited academic literature addressing them, the study approaches this transformation through the lens of architectural exhibitions — namely, a selection of international biennials and triennials. These events, due to the immediacy and responsiveness of their content, serve as effective indicators of evolving disciplinary priorities, urgencies, intentions, and value systems.

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