



Fondazione CARIPLO



Digital Aesthetics



Lake Como School of Advanced Studies 29th May - 1st June 2023

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Lake Como School of Advanced Studies Digital Aesthetics

(28th May- 1st June 2023)

In 1936 the philosopher Walter Benjamin wrote about a great change triggered by the technological reproduction of images. Photography and cinema were transforming not only the forms of art, but also the way humans perceived the world. It was the human way of looking at things that was deeply modified. Through these new technologies, humans were learning to come *closer* to objects and to *play* with their images. "Optics" and "touch" were becoming strictly intertwined. Today, this idea of an essential change in our way of perceiving the world has become true in a way that largely exceeds Benjamin's expectations. Digital technologies have become more than just an instrument. Rather, they have also become an environment in which we move, permeating our experience of the world.



The summer school will be organized by the University of Milan in collaboration with the European Seminar of Aesthetics – an international network of academics and researchers founded in 2014 with the aim of fostering critical debate on key topics in aesthetics (https://sites.unimi.it/eu_aesthetics/about/) – and with the Milano Painting Academy (<https://www.milanopaintingacademy.it/mpa/>). It will address the new challenges faced by aesthetics in the digital era. Aesthetics is a discipline that was born in 1700, in a cultural and historical context far removed from the present. However, from the beginning, aesthetics constituted itself as a philosophical investigation of the "sensible knowledge" (Baumgarten), i.e. of the sensory way in which humans experience the world. For this reason, it is an important duty of aesthetics to understand how this experience changes in the context of the new digital technologies.

In fact, the digital reproduction, creation, transformation and diffusion of images, videos, texts and sounds affects not only the domain of art (with the origin of new forms of art such as digital photography, video art, digital art and, more recently, AI art), but in a broader sense, different aspects of our everyday life, too. In fact, through digital technologies everyday life often acquires a strong aesthetic value (let's think of food photographs, selfies, travel pictures on blogs and social networks...). Moreover, through digital content, we build and convey identities, tastes and desires.

Through an interdisciplinary dialogue among philosophers of aesthetics, philosophers of science, artists, photographers, scholars of visual culture and media studies, the summer school will address four important aspects of digital aesthetics, which will correspond to the **four sections** (one and a half days each) of the program:

- Digital aesthetics and values.** Digital images and texts have become an expression of values, which are shared by an increasingly large number of subjects. The first day of the school will reexamine the connection between aesthetic experience and values. In fact, values don't originate from a propositional process. Rather, they are primarily something which has to be *felt*. Emotions, sensible experience of the world, and values are strictly intertwined. For this reason, it is particularly important to investigate how values can be created, transformed and communicated through digital content. Can digital content convey a *true* or *authentic* experience of values? Can the transformative power of digital technologies help to keep values alive? Or is it bound to bury them under a great quantity of fakes instead? These are some of the questions that will be addressed on the first day.
- Digital photography.** At its origins, photography has often been considered not so much as art, but rather as a *reproduction* of reality. Nevertheless, many photographers have utilized this technology as an extraordinary means to *express* content in an original way. With digital photography, the transformative power of pictures has become even more evident. Digital photographs can be manipulated at every step: colors, lights and even subjects can be changed and adapted to express the author's intentions. Can digital images still be considered as "photographs"? What is their relationship to reality? How can digital photographs tell the truth or (in connection with the first day of the school) convey true values? These are some of the topics that will be discussed.
- Art and artificial intelligence.** A very interesting type of art that emerged recently is certainly the art made through artificial intelligence. Can an artificial intelligence be creative? Who is the author of these works, is it the human artist or the algorithm? And what does this type of art have to say on AI itself, on the new presence that it represents? These are some of the questions that will be addressed during the second and third day of the summer school.
- Colour and drawing in the digital age.** Colour and drawing have often been considered as two opposite poles of the visual artistic process. Drawing has typically represented the ideal aspect of the picture, the project which the artist can realize and control. Colour, on the contrary, was often regarded as the vehicle of emotion and sensible pleasure. For this reason, it was considered sometimes dangerous and difficult to regulate. In the Nineteenth Century, as it is well known, both color and drawing became increasingly independent from the reproduction of reality and acquired an autonomous expressive power. Yet what is happening today, in the context of digital images? How have color and drawing changed, and with it, the relationship between them? These are some of the questions that will be raised during the third and last day of the school, in a dialogue that will involve also the Milano Painting Academy (<https://www.milanopaintingacademy.it/mpa/>).

Estimated Number of Participants: Min. 15-Max. 40 (graduate students, doctoral students and young researchers).

Involved PhD programmes: The following PhD programmes will be actively involved, also through the request of providing ECTS: Dottorato in Scienze del Patrimonio Letterario, Artistico e Ambientale (Università degli Studi di Milano); Florence-Pisa Doctoral School in Philosophy (Università di Pisa, Università di Firenze); Esthétique et philosophie de l'art (Université Sorbonne, Paris); Doctoral School of Communication and Arts (Roskilde University, Denmark).





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Programme

Monday 29th May:
Digital aesthetics and values
08.00-10.00: Arrival and reception
10.00: Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis (Università degli Studi di Milano): Introduction
10.15: Carole Talon-Hugon (Paris, Sorbonne)
11.00: Andrea Mecacci (Università di Firenze)
11.45: Coffee break
12.00: Claudio Rozzoni (Università degli Studi di Milano)
12.45-13.15: Discussion
15.00: Renato Boccali (Università IULM Milano)
15.45: Laura Aimo (Università Cattolica di Milano)
16.30: Andrea Scanziani (Università di Milano)
17.15-17.45: Discussion
17.45-18.30: Aesthetics and values: students' talks and laboratory

Tuesday 30th May:
Digital photography
09.30: Elena Tavani (Università degli Studi di Napoli) (online)
10.15: Linda Bertelli (IMT, Lucca) (online)
11.00: Coffee break
11.15: Sara Romani (Università di Colonia)
12.00-12.30: Discussion
14.30: Anna Maria Monteverdi (Università degli Studi di Milano), Kamilia Kard (artista)
15.15: Lorenzo Manera (Università di Reggio Emilia)
16.00-16.30: Discussion
16.30-18.00: Digital photography: students' talks and laboratory - Coordinator: Saverio Macri

Wednesday 31st May:
Art, photography and artificial intelligence
10.00-10.45: Giovanni Ferrario (Artist; Università Cattolica di Milano) The fracture of a star
10.45-11.15: Discussion
11.15-11.30: Coffee break
11.30-12.15: Drawing and colouring in the digital age: Students' talks and laboratory
14.00-14.45: Ruggero Eugeni (Università Cattolica di Milano)
14.45-15.30: Antonio Somaini (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3) (online)
15.30-16.00: Discussion
16.00-16.45: Arthur I. Miller (University College, London) (online)
16.45-17.30: Alice Barale (Università di Milano)
17.30-18.30: Art, photography and artificial intelligence: discussion with students

Thursday 1st June:
Art, photography and artificial intelligence
10.00: Katherine Thomson-Jones (Oberlin College and Conservatory)
10.45-11.15: Discussion
11.30-13.00: Students' closing discussion

International Association for Aesthetics | SE | SE

Fondazione VOLTA
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Monday 29th May:

Digital aesthetics and values

08.00-10.00: Arrival and reception

10.00: Maddalena Mazzocut-Mis (Università degli Studi di Milano)
Introduction

10.15: Carole Talon-Hugon (Paris, Sorbonne)
La Créativité computationnelle (CC), une seconde mort de l'auteur?

11.00: Andrea Mecacci (Università di Firenze)
Digital Nihilism and Digital Humanism. An Aesthetic Genealogy

11.45: coffee break

12.00: Claudio Rozzoni (Università degli Studi di Milano)
Do I know how you feel? Valueception and Empathy in Immersive Environments

12.45-13.15: Discussion

15.00: Renato Boccali (Università Cattolica di Milano)
Artificial realities and visual illusion

15.45: Laura Aimo (Università Cattolica di Milano)
What is my value? Digital question in aesthetic education

16.30: Andrea Scanziani (Università di Milano)
Non-fungible Tokens: An Inquiry Into The Value of NFTs between Aesthetics and New Art Markets.

17.15-17.45: Discussion

17.45-18.30: Aesthetics and values: students' talks and laboratory

Tuesday 30th May:

Digital photography

09.30: Elena Tavani (Università degli Studi di Napoli) (online)
Il selfie come tecnologia del sé

10.15: Linda Bertelli (IMT, Lucca) (online)
Photography and the Optical Unconscious: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Adventures o Referentiality

11.00: coffee break

11.15: Sara Romani (Università di Colonia)
Digital image processing, an extension or radical change in photography? Documentation of the Symposium on November 12/13, 2004 at the Museum Folkwang Essen: reflections twenty years later

12.00-12.30: Discussion

14.30: Anna Maria Monteverdi (Università degli Studi di Milano)
Kamilia Kard (artista) *Will there be hybrid automata in a theatrical space? Theatre and AI, a unique hybrid of research and performance*

15.15: Lorenzo Manera (Università di Reggio Emilia)
From photography to synthography. Aesthetic perspectives on text-to-Image technologies

16.00-16.30: Discussion

16.30-18.00: Digital photography: students' talks and laboratory – Coordinator: Saverio Macri

Wednesday 31st May:

Art, photography and artificial intelligence

10.00-10.45: Giovanni Ferrario (Artist; Università Cattolica di Milano)
The fracture of a star

10.45-12: Drawing and colouring in the digital age: Students' talks and laboratory

14.00-14.45: Ruggero Eugeni (Università Cattolica di Milano)
ARIFaces. Augmented reality filters and the new status of algorithmic imaging

14.45-15.30: Antonio Somaini (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3) (online)
Automatism and Automation: On the "Surrealist" Dimension of Images Generated by AI

15.30-16.00: discussion

16.00-16.45: Arthur I. Miller (University College, London) (online)
Creative Machines The Future is Now

16.45-17.30: Alice Barale (Università di Milano)
Travelling through nature and city: the AI as a wandering companion

17.30-18.30: Art, photography and artificial intelligence: discussion with students

Thursday 1st June:

Art, photography and artificial intelligence

10.00: Katherine Thomson-Jones (Oberlin College and Conservatory)
Creativity in AI Art

10.45-11.15: Discussion

11.15: coffee break

11.30-13.00: Students' closing discussion



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