Title - Understanding Natural History: Nature, Evolution and Human Beings. A New Philosophical Framework

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ERC sector – SH5

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Organization of PI – University of Padua

Iuav role – partner

Other partners – Polytechnic University of Turin

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Description – What is natural history? Recent years have seen a powerful new wave of studies labelled "natural histories": from The Natural History of Morality or The Natural History of Economics to the very controversial Natural History of Rape and Natural History of Earth and its Future. These studies attempt to discuss numerous human traits and phenomena. But what does it mean to call something a natural history? What is the conceptual anatomy of such study? What are the general philosophical stakes of a paradigm that unifies "history" and "nature"—two apparently opposed notions—within the same conceptual domain? This project puts the concept of "natural history" under a critical lens to closely assess its structure, import, and theoretical consistency.

Objectives – The project will elaborate a new critical philosophical framework for understanding 'natural history' and its key methodology and conceptual categories. It will first focus on specific natural histories to clarify their shared methodology and structure and to highlight some of their problematic conceptual issues. Second, it will work out the broader philosophical conception of "nature" and "history" involved and situate it in relation to current discussions around the biological and social-normative constitution of human beings and their environment.