

FROM THE FRINGES. PRACTICES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONTACT ZONES

International Symposium
curated by Flavia Loscialpo and Alessandra Vaccari
coordinated by Clarissa Ricci

30 October 2025
Università luav di Venezia
AULA B - Ca' Tron

09:30-9:35: Welcome and Institutional Greetings by Francesco Musco, Deputy Rector for Research -
Università luav di Venezia

9:35-9:45 Introduction

Session 1 - "Margins as Method: Glitches, Undoings, and Alter-Institutions"

Chaired by Flavia Loscialpo (University of the Arts London)

9:50-10:10 "The Artist is the Glitch in the Matrix"

Nello Barile (Università IULM di Milano)

10:10-10:30 "Undoing Documenta. From Fringes to Center"

Clarissa Ricci (Università di Bologna)

10:30-10:50 "Decolonizing Funding. Alter-institutions in Palestine"

Marco Baravalle (iNEST, Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

Q&A 10:50 - 11:20

Break 11:20-11:30

Session 2 - "Spaces as Political Praxis: Dressing, Curating and Exhibiting Otherwise"

Chaired by Angela Vettese (Università luav di Venezia)

11:30-11:50 "The Ethical Imperative: the Responsibilities of the Fashion Curator in an Era of
Global Inequity"

Flavia Loscialpo (University of the Arts London) & Caroline Stevenson (University of the
Arts London)

11:50-12:10 "Dressed to protest: Reclaiming public space through clothing"

Antonella Giannone (Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin)

12:10-12:30 "Exhibitions as a Tool of Activism. The Guerrilla Girls Case"

Silvia Maria Sara Cammarata (Università degli Studi di Torino)

Q&A 12:30 - 13:00

Lunch break 13:00 - 14:30

Session 3 - "More-Than-Human, Decolonialities and Open Futures"

Chaired by Clarissa Ricci (Università di Bologna)

14:30-14:50 "Contemporary art and non-human forms of life"

Angela Vettese (Università Iuav di Venezia)

14:50-15:10 "From the fringes? 'Reframe and Resist: Decolonise Here and Now!', a Malaysian case study"

Leon Wainwright (The Open University, UK) and Rebecca Yeoh (Independent curator, Universiti Malaya)

15:10-15:30 "From the workshop to the experience of new 'forms-of-life'. Ten years of artists' residencies at the Casa Cafausica"

Cesare Pietroiusti (Artist and Lecturer at Università Iuav di Venezia)

Q&A 15:30-16:00

Closing remarks & ending 16:00-16:10

Symposium organised by Iuav University of Venice, Department of Architecture and Arts, in collaboration with the Centre for Fashion Curation (University of the Arts London); IULM University (Milan) and OBOE Journal.

Organising committee: *Francesca Castellani, Caterina Caputo, Jacopo Galimberti, Carlo Grassi, Flavia Loscialpo, Clarissa Ricci, Alessandra Vaccari, Angela Vettese.*

The symposium presents the first results of "ACP 21 - Arts and Cultural Populism in the 21st Century. Contradictory and Conflictual Aesthetics in Visual Arts Exhibitions", research group funded by the Department of Architecture and Arts of the Iuav University of Venice in 2024-RICERCA CALL 2024 LINEA 2.

*Agli studenti Iuav delle lauree magistrali in "Arti visive e Cinema espanso" verranno attribuiti 2 crediti.

Abstracts

SESSION 1

Margins as Method: Glitches, Undoings, and Alter-Institutions

The Artist is the Glitch in the Matrix, by Nello Barile (Università IULM di Milano)

The presentation explores the relationship between art and power in the age of deglobalisation, using glitch art as a key example. Glitch art, originally a symbol of resistance and authenticity, has been co-opted by the system itself, becoming a mainstream aesthetic and a tool for promoting power. One of the most interesting cases of hacking at the time of broadcast media is the 1987 "Max Headroom Incident," an unidentified TV signal intrusion that exemplifies early media piracy and the shock of unexpected disruption. It immediately became a mainstream phenomenon, anticipating

future trends. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the aesthetic of imperfections has opened to the "phygital" dimension. While the NFT aesthetic is highly varied, it frequently adopts glitch styles, pop imagery, and acid colours, digitising vivid, low-fidelity imagery. The presentation builds on the resistance strategy of the glitch. The 1999 film *The Matrix* illustrates the conflict between digital liberation (the hacker) and the system of control (the Matrix). The glitch in the Matrix is the proof of an imperfection of the system that can be exploited in a tactical way from the rebels.

Undoing Documenta. From Fringes to Center, by Clarissa Ricci (Università di Bologna)

Endorsing contemporaneity is a distinctive trait of biennials, as well as being a necessity intrinsic to the biennial format. Biennials need to nurture the rhetoric of the 'new' from one exhibition to the next. This paper analyses how this process involves proposing alternative systems, an area in which documenta 15 (2022) stands out. documenta 15 was curated by the Indonesian collective Ruangrupa, who presented a project intended to share curatorial decisions as a community experience. The focus was on the ecosystem of art production rather than on the artwork as an object in itself. Such an approach resulted in the administration of the entire exhibition, which minimised the authority of the institution, with the consequence of bringing documenta to the brink of collapse, interrogating the role of the 'fringes' and calling for a different understanding of what is alternative.

Decolonizing Funding. Alter-institutions in Palestine by Marco Baravalle (iNEST at Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia)

The paper analyzes how, in Palestine, the crisis of the neoliberal donor economy drives artists and cultural workers to build forms of alter-institutionality—that is, non-neoliberal modes of organizing the artistic field. The goal is to achieve autonomy from what decolonial activists call toxic philanthropy. Through the cases of *The Question of Funding* and *OWNEH*, and within a historical framework stretching from the post-Oslo period to the present, the paper highlights the ambivalence of the neoliberal artistic dispositif: from a co-opting governmentality to a colonial form of disciplining, intensified after 2023. It foregrounds practices of cooperation, mutualism, and the sharing of material and cognitive resources that open spaces of autonomy and revive an internationalism of the arts grounded in the commons. In this process, art does not place identity at its center, but rather the critique of funding infrastructures, managerial professionalization, and depoliticization.

SESSION 2

Spaces as Political Praxis: Dressing, Curating and Exhibiting Otherwise

The Ethical Imperative: The Responsibilities of the Fashion Curator in an Era of Global Inequity,

by Flavia Loscialpo (University of the Arts London) and Catherine Stevenson (University of the Arts London)

This contribution interrogates the ethical responsibilities of fashion curation amid intensifying global inequities, cultural erasure, and environmental devastation. From our position within fashion curation and cultural studies at London College of Fashion, we recognise the field as historically anchored in aesthetic display yet increasingly required to confront complicity, selective preservation, and structural inequality.

Drawing on Françoise Vergès' (2024) critique of the museum as 'battleground' and Stuart Hall's (1997) theorisation of 'selective tradition', we examine how fashion curation consecrates certain histories as heritage while marginalising others. This dynamic is reinforced by blockbuster exhibitions privileging luxury houses and corporate sponsors while systematically excluding fast fashion - the sector most implicated in environmental degradation and exploitative labour.

Building on bell hooks's (1989) theorisation of the margin as 'space of radical openness', we propose the margin as methodological stance for reconceptualising curatorial practice. Examining projects - from Buzigahill to The Nest Collective - that mobilise waste, circulation, and storytelling, we argue

that curating from the margins reconfigures exhibition-making itself, cultivating spaces where inequities become visible, and where margins and centres can meet on new terms.

Dressed to protest: Reclaiming public space through clothing, by Antonella Giannone (Weißensee Kunsthochschule Berlin)

In the protest, *clothed bodies* (Calefato) and clothing signs bring into play a complex dialectic between public and private spaces, between the personal and the collective. Drawing on recent research into the role of clothing in contemporary protest movements, this paper explores how clothed bodies can intervene in public spaces, disrupting their everyday functionality and the associated routines, and temporarily altering their appearance and usage. As a spatial tool, clothing generates new alliances between bodies and unexpected forms of social visibility in the context of protests. The discussion focuses particularly on the deep connection between clothing practices and marginalised identities, as described by bell hooks, and how this generates new forms and formats of protest.

Exhibitions as a Tool of Activism. The Guerrilla Girls Case, by Silvia Maria Sara Cammarata (Università degli Studi di Torino)

The paper examines the case of the Guerrilla Girls, focusing on their first two shows to explore how the exhibition format can serve as a tool for social advocacy by marginalized or underrepresented groups. Formed in New York in 1985, the anonymous collective initially gained visibility through their street posters in SoHo, but among their earliest initiatives was the organization of an all-women exhibition at the Palladium, a notorious bastion of machismo. The event proved a double-edged sword: despite its success, it forced the group to confront the reality that the traditional exhibition format is inherently a mechanism of power and exclusion—one that inevitably involves selecting some and excluding others. A challenge to this paradigm came two years later, in 1987, with *Guerrilla Girls Review the Whitney*. Engaging with institutional critique, this exhibition replaced artworks with data and charts to advance the demand for greater representation of women and minorities within the art world.

SESSION 3

More-Than-Human, Decolonialities and Open Futures

Contemporary art and non-human forms of life, by Angela Vettese (Università Luav di Venezia)

Contemporary art started to deal with ecological issues even before scientists realised that development was destroying the planet. Initially, this awareness manifested in art through a romantic conception of nature, referencing philosophers such as Spinoza and Schelling, as well as poets who rebelled against capitalism, such as David Thoreau. Over time, this reflection has become increasingly linked to the idea of humans as both the planet's saviour and its destroyer, with a particular focus on biodiversity. Some artists have started collaborating with non-human life forms and exploring practices such as agriculture, gardening and observing insects, mammals and fish. The relationship between humans and nature has been redefined as 'making kin' (Donna Haraway) and as an interpretation of the symbiotic relationship between living beings (Lynn Margulis), which is so strong that it can even alter genetic heritage. Artists such as Wolfgang Laib, Pierre Huyghe, Hubert Duprat and Daisy Alexandra Ginsberg have visualised their critique of the Anthropocene through accentuated Spinozism (according to Rosi Braidotti's thesis) and strong references to the globe and the universe as indivisible units whose importance can be emphasised through new artistic languages.

From the fringes? 'Reframe and Resist: Decolonise Here and Now!', a Malaysian case study, by Leon Wainwright (The Open University) and Rebecca Yeoh (Independent curator, Universiti Malaya)

This presentation reflects on 'Reframe and Resist: Decolonise Here and Now!', an exhibition and research project developed collaboratively by Rebecca Yeoh in Kuala Lumpur and Leon Wainwright in the UK, supported by the British Council's *Connections Through Culture* programme. The project approaches decolonisation not as a fixed goal but as an ongoing, lived process, explored through artworks that engage histories of displacement, ecology, and cultural memory in Malaysia.

Working together as curator-researchers, Yeoh and Wainwright consider how collaboration itself can model decolonial practice – foregrounding listening, care, and relational methods rather than institutional authority. Their exhibition and seminar series invite audiences to slow down, to dwell with complexity, and to recognise art as a site of mutual learning. 'Reframe and Resist' demonstrates how curating 'from the fringes' can foster transnational dialogue and community, extending beyond the gallery into teaching, writing and public engagement. It proposes decolonial curating as an open, modest and sustaining practice of exchange and renewal.

From the workshop to the experience of new "forms-of-life". Ten years of artists' residencies at the Casa Cafausica, by Cesare Pietroiusti (Università luav di Venezia)

Since 2016, the Lac o le Mon Foundation has been offering community residencies inspired by a model based on integration and synergy between education, research, artistic production, and new ways of engaging with the public, all according to a vision strongly situated in the context of a site – the Casa Cafausica - which thus becomes both the venue for a training program and a hospitable place, both an object of study and an object of care; a model for experiencing firsthand a way of life in which the investigation and awareness of ecological issues—in particular the limited availability of water and energy resources—is neither abstract nor ideological, but rather based on artistic creativity, the educational power of direct experience, and the strength of involvement determined by community sharing.

Participants profiles

Marco Baravalle is a research fellow within the iNEST project at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He currently teaches, or has taught, as an adjunct lecturer: Curatorship at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Phenomenology of Contemporary Art at NABA in Milan, and Visual Culture at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. He is a member of Sale Docks, a collective and activist space for the arts in Venice. He is also a co-founder of the Institute of Radical Imagination (IRI), a collective of activists, artists, curators, and researchers working at the intersection of art and the commons. Baravalle has published articles and essays on the relationship between art, activism, and ecologies, with a focus on curatorial practices. He co-edited two books: *Art For UBI (Manifesto)* (Bruno, 2022) and *Art For Radical Ecologies Manifesto* (Bruno, 2024). He is the author of the monograph *L'autunno caldo del curatore. Arte, neoliberismo, pandemia* (Marsilio, 2021). His forthcoming book, *The Battleground of Art. Alter-Institutions and Radical Curating in the Neoliberal Era*, will be published by Verso Books.

Nello Barile is associated professor at Iuav. He graduated in Sociology with a degree in Communication and Mass Media from the University of Rome "La Sapienza", where he also obtained a PhD in Communication Sciences. He has taught Sociology at the IED in Rome, Audio-visual Communication at Link-Campus University of Malta and Fashion Organisation at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Rome "La Sapienza". More recently, he has taught Media and Critical Studies and Political Communication at the Franklin University of Switzerland and Digital Media & Marketing at the Istituto Marangoni in Milan. He was editorial director of the scientific magazine *C:Cube. Culture:Communication:Consumption* and has carried out a research-funded study on "Made in Italy as a metabrand". At IULM, he began teaching Social Change and Cultural Consumption, while he currently teaches Media Sociology and Policies for Culture. He has lectured and visited major international research centres. He is the author of numerous Italian and international books and articles. In 2012, he obtained the National Scientific Qualification for the functions of Associate Professor.

Silvia Maria Sara Cammarata holds a PhD from Roma Tre University and is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Historical Studies, University of Turin. She has been part of the international project *Histoire des expositions au XXème siècle* (Centre Pompidou – Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Labex H2H Paris 8) and has collaborated with institutions such as Bourse de Commerce Collection Pinault, Pinacoteca Agnelli, and Castello di Rivoli. She collaborates with Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto. Her research examines the relationship between exhibition practices, critical debates, and contemporary art in the late twentieth century, and she recently published *Arte povera e identità italiana. Le mostre di Germano Celant 1981–1994*.

Francesca Castellani is a professor of contemporary art history at the Iuav University of Venice and teaches in the PhD program in History of the Arts in Venice. Since 1995, she has also devoted special attention to the history of Exhibit Display and the Venice Biennale, approaching it as a paradigm for the history of exhibitions. On this topic, she has organized conferences and study days - *Lo Scrittoio della Biennale* (Venice, Iuav and Ca' Foscari, 2009–present); *Esposizioni/Exhibition* (Parma, CSAC, 2017); *Staging Exhibit Display* (Venice, Iuav, 2022–2024) - and edited several volumes, including *Lo Iuav e la Biennale di Venezia* (2016), *Crocevia Biennale* (2017), *Esposizioni/Exhibition* (2018), and *Questioning Exhibit Display* (2024). She has also authored numerous essays on the subject. Her book *Sulla Biennale. Storie da un cantiere di studio* was published in 2024 by Postmedia, Milan. She coordinates the research group BiTES – Biennial Theories & Stories.

Antonella Giannone, Dr. phil., has been Professor of Fashion Theory, History and Sociology at the *weißensee kunsthochschule berlin* since 2013. She received her PhD from the Technical University of Berlin in the Department of Semiotics with a thesis on *Clothing as a Sign* (2003). She is the author of numerous publications in the fields of fashion theory, cultural studies and semiotics of clothing and bodies. These include *Protestkleider, Kleidung und die ästhetische Politik der Straße*, co-authored with Christina Threuter (Transcript 2024), which is currently being translated into Italian. She is a member of the German Fashion and Textile Network and of the scientific advisory board of *ZoneModa Journal* (Bologna, Italy).

Flavia Loscialpo is Senior Lecturer and Cultural Studies Course Leader for the School of Design and Technology at London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London). Her published research has been translated in several languages, and has focussed on: utopias; philosophical deconstruction and fashion; fashion curation; identity politics and otherness, racial capitalism and forced labour. Her current work explores the interconnectedness of social, racial and environmental justice in fashion, and she regularly collaborates with human rights activist and platforms for fashion activism such as Fashion Revolution. Through her research and curatorial activity, she has worked with several cultural institutions, such as the Barbican Centre, University of Borås (Sweden), London College of Fashion, the National Gallery London, KG52 Gallery (Sweden), the Thayaht-RAM Archive (Italy), Being Human – A Festival of the Humanities (AHRC), working on exhibitions and publications across art, design, and fashion.

Cesare Pietroiusti is an artist, and lives in Rome. He received a Degree in Medicine with an essay on Psychiatry (1979). Co-founder and editor of the Artist-run space "Jartrakor" in Rome (1977-1985) and of the magazine "Rivista di Psicologia dell'Arte" (1979-1984). One of the coordinators of the "Oreste" projects (1997-2001). Co-founder of "Nomads & Residents", New York (2000). Curator for the CSAV, the Advanced Visual Art Course at the Fondazione Ratti, Como (2006-2011). MFA Faculty, LUCAD, Lesley University, Boston (2009-2016). President of the board of PalaExpo, Roma (2018-2022). Lecturer at the Laboratorio di Arti Visive, IUAV University, Venice, (2004-ongoing) and at NABA, Roma (2021-ongoing) Co-Founder of Fondazione Lac o Le Mon, San Cesario di Lecce (2015 ongoing); www.nonfunctionalthoughts.net; www.pensierinonfunzionali.net

Clarissa Ricci is Adjunct professor at the University of Bologna. Her research focuses on the history and networks of exhibitions, biennials, fairs, and on the contemporaneity. She was a recipient of the Getty/ACLS Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art (2019–2020) and previously she was entrusted by Iuav University in Venice (2017–2019) with researching the foundation of Arte Fiera. Moreover she was a visiting scholar at Columbia University in New York City and was awarded a Library Research Grant by the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. She is author of *APERTO 1980-1993. La mostra dei giovani artisti alla Biennale di Venezia* (2022) and *Mercanti a Venezia: la Biennale e il suo Ufficio Vendite* (2025). She has edited *Starting from*

Venice. Studies on the Biennale (2011) and co-edited several other volumes. Moreover she is co-founder and deputy editor of the academic journal *OBOE journal* and editor of *Venezia Arti*.

Caroline Stevenson is Director of the Centre for Fashion Curation and Programme Director of the Cultural and Historical Studies Department at London College of Fashion (University of the Arts London). A curator and writer, she works across the fields of fashion and contemporary art with an emphasis on collaborative and critical methods of practice. Caroline has produced projects and programmed events for Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, ICA, Arcade East, Barbican, Tate Britain, Tenderbooks, Kunstverein München, TemporaryContemporary, Onomatopée, Dutch Design Week, the Fashion Space Gallery and a range of temporary spaces. Her curatorial practice has been recognised through several grants from Arts Council England and the British Council. She is co-founder of *Modus*, a curatorial platform and network for expanded fashion practice. *Modus* produces exhibitions, events and publications bringing together an international community of fashion practitioners and cultural institutions to promote dialogue and new collaborations between fashion practice and theory.

Leon Wainwright is a historian of modern and contemporary art whose work advances inclusive and globally informed approaches to the discipline. His research focuses on the Caribbean region, as well as Black and Asian diaspora communities in Britain. He has received major awards, including the Philip Leverhulme Prize in History of Art, and has led international research funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the ERC, and the AHRC. He is the author and editor of seven books, including two monographs, he founded the *Open Arts Journal* and is a long-serving editor of *Wasafiri* magazine of international writing. Wainwright has worked extensively with museums, heritage organisations, and broadcasters, serving as academic consultant for BBC programmes such as *Secrets of the Museum* and *Windrush: Portraits of a Generation*. He has held visiting roles at Yale, Oxford, Berkeley, and Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

Rebecca Yeoh is an educator, writer and independent curator whose work bridges literature, culture, memory and history. She holds an MA in Arts and Cultural Management from King's College London (2019) and a BA (Hons) in English Language and Literature Studies from Universiti Sains Malaysia (2017). Her curatorial practice spans Venice, Penang and Kuala Lumpur, where she explores how art can navigate fragmented histories and collective memory. Her curatorial journey has been supported by The Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur, CENDANA and The British Council through the *Connections Through Culture* programme. She is currently a PhD candidate at Universiti Malaya, focusing on how third-generation Malaysian Chinese artists and writers use memory to construct identity and legacy. Her ongoing work continues to trace how histories are remembered, retold, and reimagined for future generations.

Alessandra Vaccari is an Associate Professor at the IUAV University of Venice, where she conducts research and teaches fashion history and theory. With a background in contemporary art history, she works at the intersection of visual studies and design history. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on fashion and modernism in Italy and Europe during the early 20th century, the relationship between time and fashion, and the implications of contemporary fashion cultures for social and environmental change. She is the author of *Indossare la trasformazione. Moda e Modernismo in Italia* (2022) and co-editor, with Caroline Evans, of *Time in Fashion. Industrial, Antilinear and Uchronic Temporalities* (2020).

Angela Vettese studied philosophy and contemporary art. She was director of several art galleries and is now a respected art critic. She has co-curated several exhibitions at the Venice Biennale and in 2000s president of the jury. She is a member of various committees, including the Guarantors' Committee at Villa Panza in Biumo, the Scientific Committee at the Madre Museum in Naples and the Board of Directors at the AGO Foundation for Contemporary Arts in Modena. Since 1986, she has contributed to the "Domenica" supplement of the newspaper "Il Sole 24 Ore". She teaches at the IUAV University of Venice, where she co-founded and directs the Master's Degree Course in Visual Arts and coordinates the doctoral school in Visual, Performing and Fashion Arts. Her latest books are *El Arte contemporaneo entre el negocio e lenguaje* (second revised edition, 2023) and *La rivolta del corpo* (2024).