ELEONORA ROARO

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BIO

Eleonora Roaro (Varese, 1989) is a visual artist and researcher based in Milano. She holds degrees in Photography (BA – IED, Milano), Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies (MA – NABA, Milano), and Contemporary Art Practice (MA – University of Plymouth). Currently, she is a lecturer in Aesthetics, New Media Aesthetics, Multimedia Communication, and Modern Art History at NABA, Milano (BA Cinema and Animation, BA Creative Technologies, MA Creative Media Production). Additionally, she teaches Phenomenology of Contemporary Art at IED Milan (BA in Product Design). Starting in 2025, she is also a PhD candidate at Transtechnology Research, University of Plymouth.

Her work has been shown since 2011 in many galleries and museums such as La Triennale (Milano), Fabbrica del Vapore (Milano), Casa degli Artisti (Milano), CAMERA (Torino), MACRO (Roma), CAMeC (La Spezia), Casa Cavazzini (Udine), mudaC (Carrara), E-Werk (Freiburg), Maison de la Culture (Clermont- Ferrand), La Friche (Marseilles), Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Madrid and Prague).

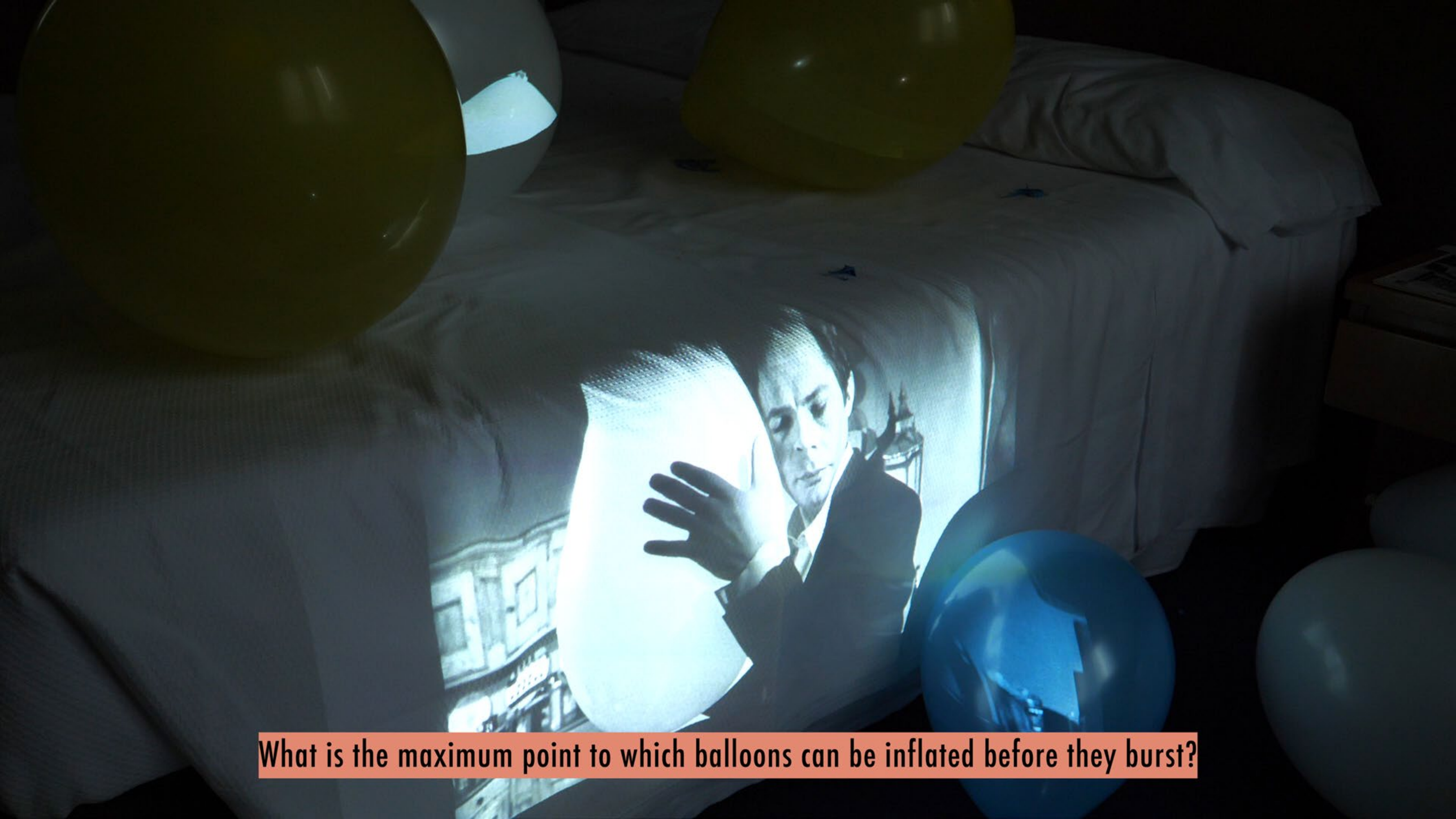
As a research fellow at the Università degli Studi di Udine, she contributed to the 2019 project “VR and AR in the valorisation of cultural and art heritage”. From 2020 to 2024, she was part of the project “Sensing Dolce Vita: An Experiment in VR Storytelling,” which won the MISTI Global Seed Fund (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA; SISSA, Trieste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia).

STATEMENT

Her practice is based on the moving image, with a focus on cinema history, archaeology of cinema, and archives. Engaging with a diverse range of media – including video, photography, performance, AI, virtual reality, and sound – she frequently revisits, reenacts, and remediates obsolete devices and iconographies to understand the influence of technologies and images on our perception and cultural imagery. As such, display and duration – especially the loop – are key elements of her practice.

Through an approach that weaves together experimentation and historical research – particularly the legacy of Fascism and the Economic Boom – Roaro actively interprets cultural texts from the past in order to critically activate them in the present, often through performance and reenactment. A part of her current research, based on archives and oral sources, investigates the relationship between architecture, spectatorship and urbanism in 20th-century cinema theatres.

“The Boom: After Marco Ferreri” (2024)



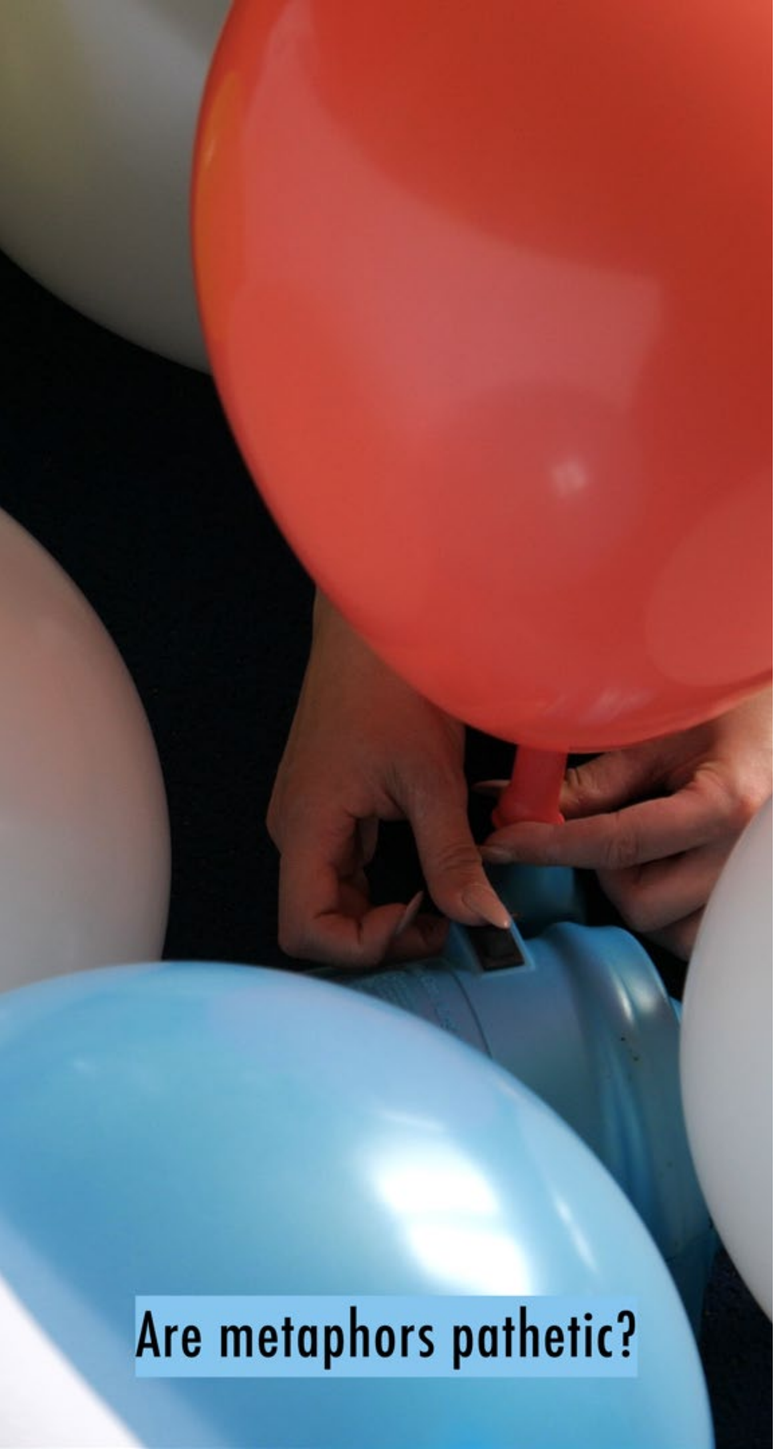
What is the maximum point to which balloons can be inflated before they burst?

“The Boom: After Marco Ferreri” is a video essay divided into three chapters that explores the themes and complex genesis of a film by Marco Ferreri, known by various titles including “L’uomo dei cinque palloni” or “Break Up” (1963–1967). Conceived as a critique of the economic boom, the film stars Marcello Mastroianni as an entrepreneur and is set in the centre of Milano, in an apartment on Corso Europa 9, with views of the Duomo and the Santuario di San Bernardino alle Ossa.
The first chapter, “Views,” reflects on the changes in the city centre, now characterised by inaccessibility and urban transformations. Through a montage that combines live footage, Google Earth images, and hotel booking sites, the artist explores the transformation of the film’s apartment into a hotel, and the concept of ‘views’. The second chapter “Automation” addresses the themes of automation and measurement, distinctive elements of capitalist society in the 1960s as well as today. In the final chapter, “Metaphors,” the artist reenacts some actions from the film in a room of the hotel on Corso Europa 9, and stages the protagonist’s question: what is the maximum point to which balloons can be inflated before they burst?
The audio of the project mirrors the heterogeneity of the chapters and the original film (comprising serigraphs, photographs, black-and-white and colour scenes). The first chapter alternates field recordings from the centre of Milano with recordings of a computer’s electromagnetic field. The second and third chapters feature a montage of extracts

Eleonora Roaro, “The Boom: After Marco Ferreri”
Single-channel video | 11’37’’
3840×2160 UHD 16:9
Sound: Emiliano Bagnato
Edition 3 + PA | 2024

Special thanks to: Marco Brianza, Edoardo De Cobelli, Raffaella Nobili, Katy Richardson.

Eleonora Roaro, “Catherine Spaak”
Ambient audio in stereo | 7’22’’
2024



from the film: in “Automation,” one of the main themes of the soundtrack introduces excerpts related to the protagonist’s obsession with quantification; in “Metaphors,” diegetic sounds and a persistent bass line, which in the film underscores moments of greatest tension, provide the backdrop to a free and obsessive composition of significant fragments from the movie and a statement by Marco Ferreri about his relationship with tangerines.

The installation is enriched by the remains of the balloons used in the performance and various ephemera from Marco Ferreri’s film, including three posters from different countries (France, Belgium, Australia) that highlight its complex production and reception history. The ambient audio consists of the co-star Catherine Spaak’s manipulated laughter, used in the film not to express joy, but to soften the tension and obsession of her partner, Mastroianni. The fragmented and distorted laughter reflects a dynamic where the desires and needs of women are subordinated to the psychological necessities of men, as depicted in Ferreri’s film, rather than being valued as autonomous and legitimate expressions. In an echo of her subjugated role in the film, in which she is primarily a body, here she is reduced even further to a mere voice.

Is the centre still the centre if not recognizable as such?

“Irma Vep” (2023–ongoing)

330 ml
100% recyclable

"People took the silence of the movies for granted because they never quite lost the feeling that what they saw was after all only pictures."[1]

Irma Vep is one of the earliest femme fatales – or *vamp*, a contraction of *vampire*, of which the name Irma Vep is an anagram – in the history of cinema. Portrayed by the actress Musidora, she is a black catsuit-wearing burglar in the silent crime serial film "Les Vampires" (1915) written and directed by Louis Feuillade. She initially inspired the surrealists[2] and later filmmakers such as Olivier Assayas, who created a film (1996) and then a TV series (2022) titled "Irma Vep." Both of these works are metanarrative pieces that attempt to reenact the original serial, with the actress, in the first case, wearing a black vinyl catsuit purchased from a sex shop.
Irma Vep is an alter ego of the artist Eleonora Roaro, based on interviews with professional dominatrices ("pro dommes" for short) active between Milan and Turin. She is a collective character that allows a reflection on sex work, fetishism, desire, and images in contemporary society, in an "onlife"[3] dimension where the boundaries between online and offline are increasingly blurred. With her latex catsuit and glossy boots, Irma Vep is a virtual image that embodies fetishistic and sadomasochistic (SM) impulses. As Arnheim[4] wrote a few years after the invention of sound films, in silent cinema – which operates exclusively through images – sight is the main sense. Therefore, silent film offers the opportunity to explore the connection between images

Eleonora Roaro, "Irma Vep"
Single-channel video | 5'54''
3840×2160 UHD 16:9 | Silent
Edition 3 + AP | 2023
Camera and DOP: Marco Brianza
Costume: Francesca Mulè

Eleonora Roaro, "@irmavep_nowhere"
IoT sculpture (3D printing in PLA, microcontroller Arduino, pink LED strip)
23x8x25 cm | Edition 3 + 2 PA | 2023
NeRF scanning and 3D model optimization: Alessandro Passoni
3D printing + IoT: Marco Brianza

Eleonora Roaro, "Irma's Heels"
Instagram filter | 2023
3D model: Alessandro Passoni

Eleonora Roaro, "Irma Vep"
Drawing | 21×29.7 cm
Edition 69 + AP | 2024

and fetishism, as well as fetishism *for* images. "The fetish would be entirely like a symbol, but similar to an impressed and fixed plane, an impressed image, a photograph to which one would always return."[5]
Irma Vep is a performance that allows us to consider SM practices as a cultural performance: they stage power dynamics that can simultaneously draw from and disavow their social referents.[6] Sexual relationships, much like political relationships, are perceived as power struggles, with the peculiarity that, in the case of SM, these positions are interchangeable, as gender roles are.[7]
Irma Vep is a transmedia storytelling project that currently consists of: a video ("Irma Vep"), in which the narrative is conveyed through text as in the intertitles of the silent era; an IoT[8] sculpture titled "@irmavep_nowhere", a 3D printed replica of the boot worn in the video, that lights up in pink when users and Irma Vep – within the ambiguity of whether she is a physical person or a bot – interact with each other on Telegram, an app used by sex workers to communicate with clients; an Instagram filter ("Irma's Heels") that allows the shiny 3D boot model to be placed anywhere in the world; and a series of stylised drawings of the boot ("Irma Vep").

1 Rufolf Arnheim, "Film as Art" (University of California Press, 1957), p. 33.
2 Annette Förster, "Women in Silent Film: Histories of Fame and Fate" (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), p. 211.
3 Luciano Floridi, "The Onlife Manifesto: Being Human in a Hyperconnected Era" (Springer Cham, 2015), pp. 7–13.
4 Arnheim, "Film as Art", p. 33.
5 Gilles Deleuze, "Sadismo e masochismo" (Edizioni IOTA, 1973), p. 30. [translation of the author]
6 Margot Weiss, "Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality" (Duke University Press, 2011), p. 17.
7 Antonaio Monegal, "Reading Sade: A Philosophy of Freedom" in "Sade: La Libertat o El Mal" (CCCB, 2023), p. 132.
8 Internet of Things.

For him it was more about the images.

Screenshot of the Instagram filter “Irma’s Heels”

Installation view, NOWHERE gallery, Milano, 2023

“Pallas’s Cat There is a Picture in my Head” (2023–24)

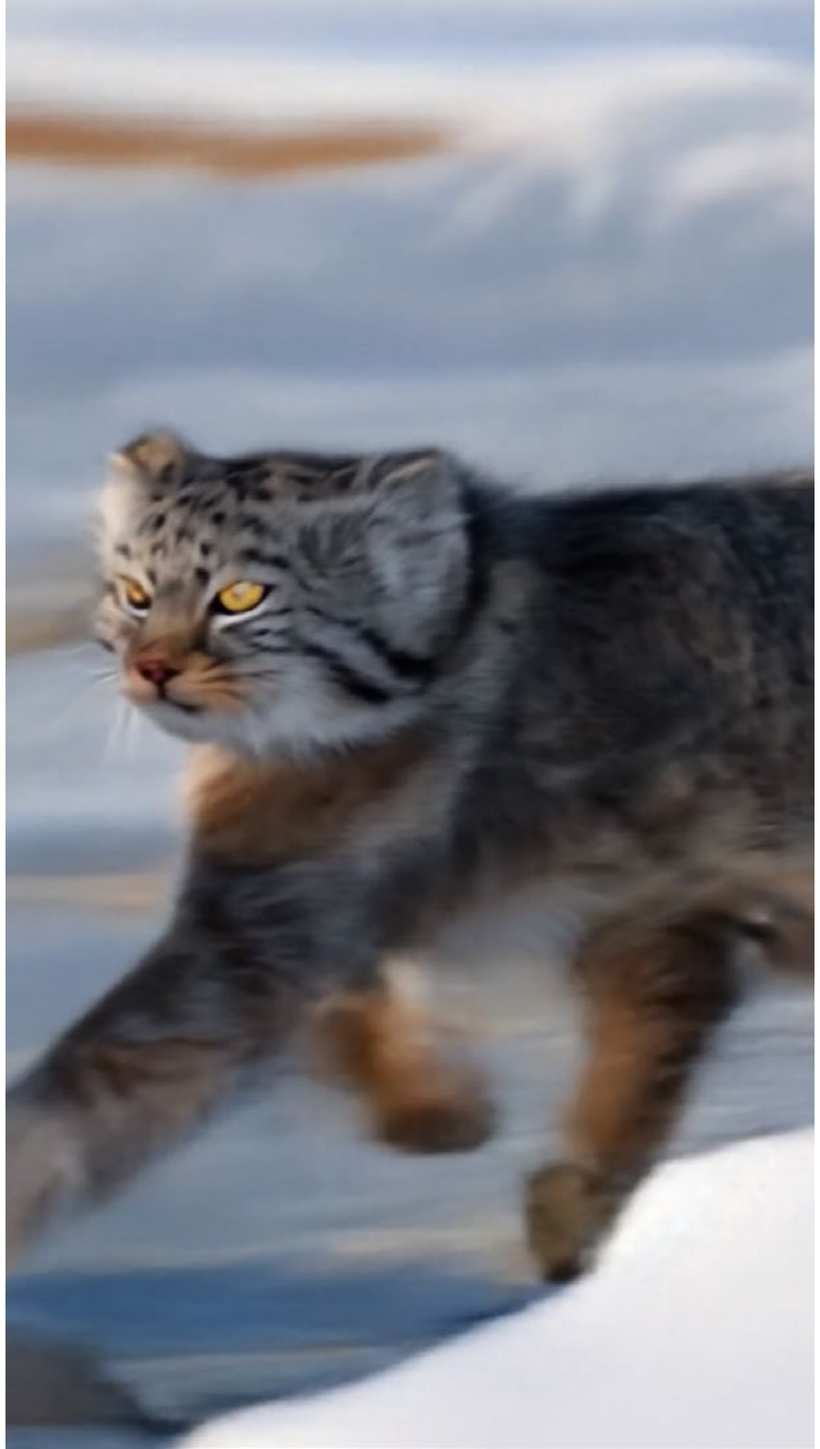
CUTE

This project explores the potential of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in artistic creation, as well as its standardisation. It stems from a provocative question: can a catchy, potentially viral song be created with almost no skills in music composition, using AI and software? The resulting artwork, “Pallas’s Cat There is a Picture in My Head” (2023), is a pop song and video featuring an AI-generated musical base and lyrics, with vocals by artist Eleonora Roaro. The song explores the interaction between humans, animals and machines, and blurs the boundary between automatic creation and human intervention.
The inspiration for the project came from a viral reel on Instagram and TikTok featuring a Pallas’s cat or manul, a small wild cat from central Asia, in a zoo trying to keep its paws warm by putting them on its tail on a winter day. The video loops obsessively with a soothing effect, while the lyrics – written in the font commonly used for memes – appear on the screen like karaoke and ironically allude to the desire to appropriate online content, even if it could be dangerous.

Eleonora Roaro, “Pallas’s Cat There Is a Picture in My Head”
Single-channel video | 2’00’’
1920x1080 HD | 16:9
Edition 3 + AP | 2023

Vocals, lyrics and music: Eleonora Roaro
Sound engineer: bluEsForCE productions (William Novati)
Producer and additional vocals: In.Visible (Andrea Morsero)
Special thanks to Gabriela Galati

Installation view, sm-dot gallery, Udine, 2023



The “Fur Pop Remix” inverts the making process employed in “Pallas’s Cat There is a Picture in My Head,” where the lyrics and the music were generated by AI while the video consisted of looped found footage. In this case, the audio adopts a traditional compositional technique, remixing, which does not create anything new but reassembles pre-existing elements. The video clips, on the other hand, are generated by employing frames taken from Instagram reels as prompts for the generative AI. This results in a montage in which each Pallas’s cat, in its transformation into the next, incorrectly morphs into a domestic cat, a tiger, or an imaginary feline. This occurs due to the AI’s comparative lack of specific knowledge of the Pallas’s cat or its movements, since other felines are far better known. Consequently, the AI processes the images based on the available data, leading to results that are at times amusing and at other times uncanny. The project demonstrates the current technical capabilities of generative AI, and reveals both its statistical and probabilistic nature as well as its manner of categorising which is distinct from that of humans.

Eleonora Roaro, “Pallas’s Cat There Is a Picture in My Head (Fur Pop Remix)”
Single-channel video | 3’00’’
1080x1920 HD | 9:16
Edition 3 + AP | 2024

AI video clips: Siri Crespi, Alexandra Gripenhoftner From, Eleonora Roaro

“Cinema Statuto” (2023)

The audio-video installation “Cinema Statuto” investigates the process of constructing truth through photographic and video documentation of the Statuto cinema incident in Turin. On February 13, 1983, at 6:15 pm, during the screening of the comedy film “La Chevre” (1981), a fire at the Statuto cinema located in via Cibrario in Turin resulted in the death by asphyxiation of 64 people within a couple of minutes: 31 women, 31 men, a boy, and a girl. This incident, the most severe in post-war Turin, marked a significant turning point in the augmentation of safety regulations in entertainment venues across the nation, leading to the closure of numerous public buildings and drastically altering audience habits.

The project relates a RAI news broadcast with footage shot immediately after the incident to the judicial experiment initiated by magistrate Bruno Caccia, archived at the Turin Court Archive. During the judicial experiment – which is used to establish whether or not an event occurred in a particular manner – the Statuto cinema is set on fire for a second time to test various hypotheses about the ignition of the flames with surviving witnesses of the actual fire. The incident is reenacted, and the trauma is re-lived to know the truth. The enlarged photograph on the wall, taken by firefighters on the night of 13 February 1983, contextualises the location and moment of the incident.

The audio in the project is in two channel, with the left channel comprising excerpts from the documentary “Sale per la Capra” (2012) and sounds that realistically reconstruct the judicial experiment, while

Eleonora Roaro, “Cinema Statuto”
Two-channel video, 1’30’’
1920×1080 HD | 16:9
Sound design: Emiliano Bagnato
Edition 3 + AP | 2023

Courtesy: Fabrizio Dividi, “Sale per la capra” (2012); Rai Teche, Torino; “Quaderno di Storia Pompieristica” n. 7 February 2020

https://vimeo.com/846870111

the right channel explores the dimension of memory, evoking the soundscape of the cinema hall at the time of the incident, drawing from survivors' testimonies, fragments of dialogue, the main theme of the film "La Capra" (1981), and the noises heard during the fire.

Installation view, CAMERA, Torino, 2023

“Odeon VR” (2020–2023)

The virtual reality 8-minute experience shows the former Odeon cinema (1936-2002) in Udine as it was shortly after its inauguration. The evocative reconstruction of the movie theater, created using archival materials and oral testimonies, highlights the potentiality of digital and immersive media in preserving cinema heritage: in 2004, the Odeon cinema was declared of historical and artistic interest due to the prestige of its decorations and the architecture by Ettore Gilberti. Furthermore, the project is an experiment in retro-spectatorship that evokes a historically situated spectator: with the headset, the user becomes the protagonist of a narrative set in a specific historical period, in this case, during the fascist regime in Italy.
In February 1939, a child goes to the Odeon cinema to watch Walt Disney's animated film "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (dir. David Hand, 1937). She looks around and explores the surroundings: the outdoor area of the cinema and the foyer, then the auditorium and the first gallery. Two films from the Istituto Luce are screened while the oral testimonies of some key figures in the history of the movie-theatre accompany the experience: historical reconstruction and the realm of memory intertwine in an immersive narrative.

Eleonora Roaro, "Odeon VR"
VR application for Oculus, 8'33''
2020-2022

Stereoscopic 360° video, 8'56''
2020-2023

Credits
Artistic Director: Eleonora Roaro
Scientific Director: Andrea Mariani, Università degli Studi di Udine
Experience Designer: Alessandro Passoni, Virtew s.r.l.s.
Sound Designer: Emiliano Bagnato
Sound Engineer: Giacomo Vidoni, Digital Storytelling Lab
Stereoscopic 360° Video Editor: Saul Clemente, Operaventuno

Produced by:
Università degli Studi di Udine - DIUM
Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici e del

patrimonio culturale – Dipartimento di eccellenza, 2018-2022 MIUR;
Progetto HEaD – Higher Educational and Development – POR FSE 2014-2020, "Realtà aumentata e realtà virtuale per la valorizzazione del patrimonio artistico e culturale" 2019-2020;
MISTI – MIT-Friuli Venezia Giulia (FVG) Global Seed Fund, "Sensing Dolce Vita: An Experiment in VR Storytelling", 2020-2022.

In collaboration with:
Cinecittà – Archivio Storico Istituto Luce (Roma)
Digital Storytelling Lab, Università degli Studi di Udine

“Corvetto 1954” (2022)

The video “Corvetto 1954” invokes the memory and transformations of the Corvetto neighborhood (Milano) through the use of found footage taken from the documentary “Milano vive,” originally produced by Mario Milani in 1954 on behalf of the municipal administration of that era. This black and white promotional film portrays the new urban development and schools during the years of the economic boom. The sequences chosen by the artist - repeated, enlarged, and decelerated – primarily focus on the construction efforts undertaken by INA-Casa, involving the creation of new public housing complexes in the Corvetto area. More broadly, the video focuses on the urban planning transformations that have fundamentally altered the appearance and lifestyle of an area which was rural peripheral just a few years prior.

Eleonora Roaro, “Corvetto 1954”
Single-channel video | 2’43’’
1920×1080 HD 16:9
Sound: IN.VISIBLE
Edition 3 + AP | 2022

“Estate 1936” (2022)

“Estate 1936” [“Summer 1936”] investigates the legacy of seaside colonies for children during fascism, starting with the case of the former Balilla Tower in Marina di Massa. Designed by architect Vittorio Bonadé Bottino on the initiative of Edoardo Agnelli for FIAT employees and inaugurated in 1933, the 52-metre tower could accommodate up to 800 children.
An Istituto Luce film from 1936, edited by the artist, shows the rigid routine and ‘unusual discipline’ (Casabella no. 167, 1941, p. 2) that characterised the summer colonies, which were actually designed to support the Fascist consensus: this was not true free time in which to play, but rather a series of organised activities in which order, rhythm, and collective movement were predominant.
In a performance realised by the artist, some actions inspired by the rules of the colonies are repeated, highlighting alienation and indoctrination. Black and white postcards, a fascist poster, and a floor plan emphasise the iconography of the Balilla Tower, underlining the rigour of modernist architecture – rigour that is reflected in the actions of the children who lived in those places, and whose memory has often been erased.

Eleonora Roaro | “Estate 1936”
Single-channel video | 33’26” (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | silent
Edition 3 + AP | 2022

Giornale Luce nr. B0940 Agosto 1936
Single-channel video | 01’41” (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Muto
Courtesy Cinecittà S.p.A.

Eleonora Roaro | “Estate 1936”
Eight vintage postcards | 2022

MASSA - Torre del Balilla

Marina di Massa - Camping e Colonia F.I.A.T.

Marina di Massa - Colonia Fiat

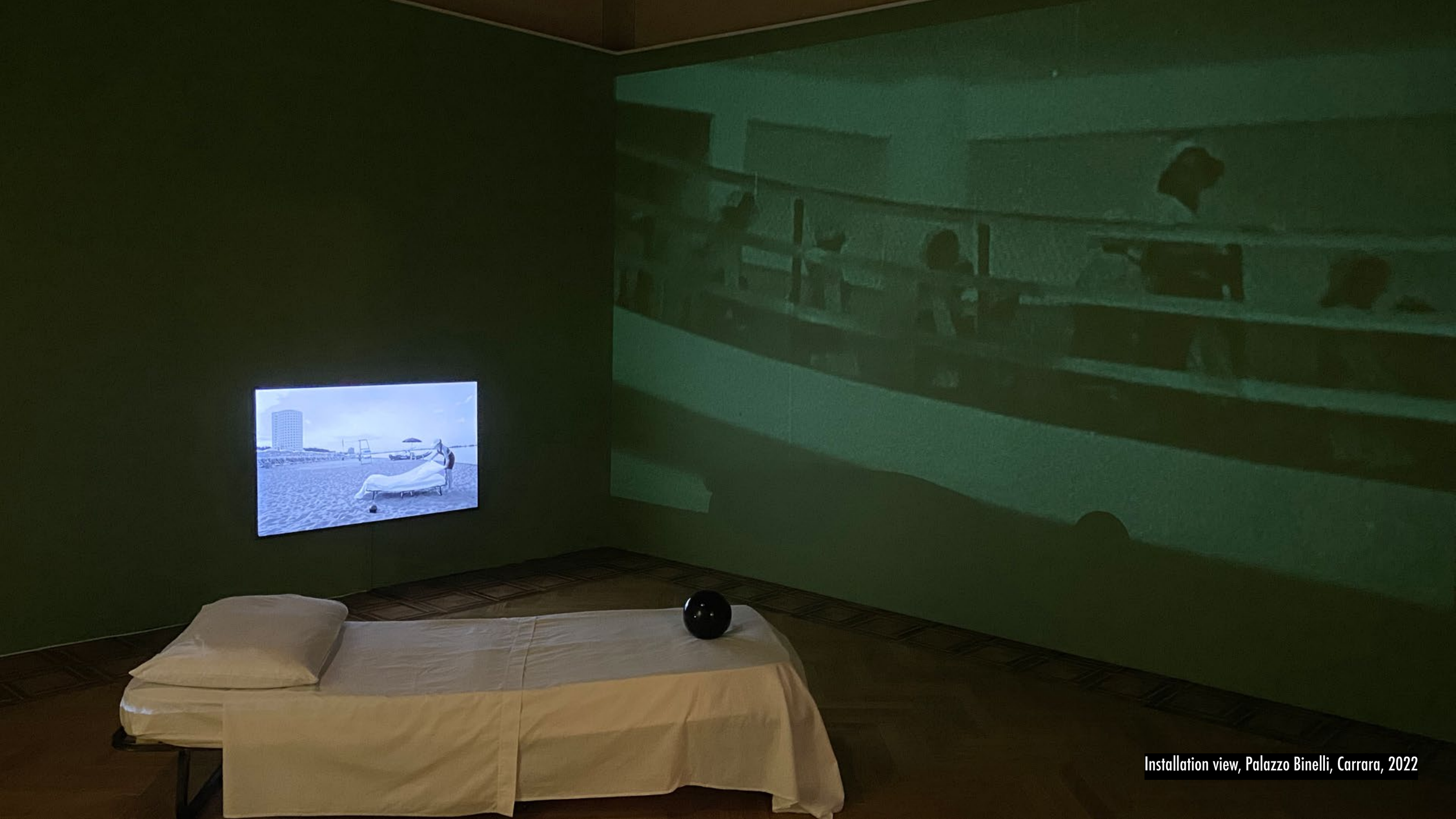
Marina di Massa - Torre Fiat

Marina di Massa - Colonia "Fiat"

Marina di Massa - Torre Fiat

MARINA DI MASSA - LA TORRE BALILLA FIAT

Marina di Massa - Colonia Fiat



Installation view, Palazzo Binelli, Carrara, 2022

“FIAT 633NM” (2021)

The single-channel video “FIAT 633NM”, based on a corpus of approximately 360 photographs dating from 1937-1938 originally owned by the artist’s great-grandfather, aims to deconstruct the role of fascist-era colonial enterprises in Italian East Africa (Africa Orientale Italiana, AOI, currently Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia). These enterprises were often either erased from collective memory or nostalgically falsified. The video focuses on 52 images depicting Fiat trucks, mainly the 633NM model, which were obsessively photographed on multiple occasions. As infrastructures and technology were propagandistic tools employed by Mussolini to emphasise modernity and progress, the Fiat truck is an emblem of the fascist rhetoric and colonial dream. The images of the trucks are in dialogue with panoramic postcards of the Ethiopian desert from the 1930s, alluding to the colonial idea of uncontaminated land to be conquered. They are assembled to create an imaginary landscape, with soundtracks by Emiliano Bagnato that use Washint tape loops (a traditional Ethiopian wooden flute). The audio track in the foreground, on the other hand, is a manipulation of the “Seconda Fantasia Ascari Eritrei” from the 1930s in which the Eritrean soldiers of East Italian Africa, to a tribal and hypnotic melody, repeat “Viva l’Italia!” [“Long live Italy!”], “Mussolini!” and “Viva il Re!” [“Long live the King!”].

Eleonora Roaro, “FIAT 633NM”
Single-channel video | 4’10’’ (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9
Sound design: Emiliano Bagnato
Unique edition + artist’s proof | 2021

Winner of the public call “Cantica21. Italian Contemporary Art Everywhere” – Under 35 section promoted by MAECI-DGSP and MiC-DGCC.
Part of CAMeC Museum’s collection (La Spezia, IT).

https://vimeo.com/752710840

Installation view, CAMeC, La Spezia, 2021

Installation view, Museo Diffuso, Torino, 2022

”Garibaldi 99” (2020)

Installation view, Casa degli Artisti, Milano, 2021

Developed during the residency at Casa degli Artisti in Milano, the project “Garibaldi 99” focuses on archival material and oral testimonies related to the cinema theatre situated in Corso Garibaldi 99, Milano – a few meters from the residency location – known as the Garibaldi Cinema (1906-1962), the Paris Cinema (1964-1989) and Multisala Brera (1994-2008). Having run for 100 years as a neighbourhood cinema, it was an important cultural and meeting place for local inhabitants.
An installation aims to link together heterogeneous archival materials with layers of images, projections, sound and videos. In this way, the socio-economical and urban changes stem from the micro-historical studies and value is given to the spectators’ memories and habits.
A digital collage of a photograph and a blueprint of the cinema from the 60s is enlarged and projected on the wall. The phrase “I silenti sogni entrarono così nella sala” [“thus silent dreams entered the theatre”] concludes Carlo Emilio Gadda’s story “Cinema” (1931), which ends with the beginning of a silent film screening at Cinema Garibaldi. This phrase becomes a beam of light projected into the room, evoking the primal dimension of the cinematic experience.
In the video “fregüia” (*crumb* in Milanese dialect), a spectator’s testimony is transformed into visual material, linked to the presence of a Motta store near the cinema and the consumption of sweets during the screenings. A Buondì, the first snack to be industrially produced in Italy by Motta since 1953, first wrapped in plastic, is crushed between

Eleonora Roaro, “fregüia”
Single-channel video | 3’00’’
1920x1080 HD 16: 9
Sound: In.Visible
Edition 3 + AP | 2020

Eleonora Roaro, “I silenti sogni entrarono così nella sala” [“Thus the silent dreams entered the theatre”]
Single-channel video | 2’00” (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Silent
Edition 3 + AP | 2020

Eleonora Roaro, “Cinema Paris”
Digital collage, 2020

https://vimeo.com/571790355 (fregüja)
https://vimeo.com/571790482 (sogni)

the hands of the artist and reduced until there is nothing left. In this way, a testimony linked to cinema becomes, in turn, visual material. On the one hand, it represents a cross-section of Italian history based on the production and consumption of packaged food; on the other, it is a metaphor for archival work, carried out from incomplete traces, scraps, and crumbs.
In five podcasts (“Piazzale Loreto”, “Marialuisa”, “Cinema Garibaldi/ Paris/Brera”, “fregüia” and “Gadda” the artist’s voice and excerpts of interviews reveal the research process. A grey binder contains fragments of books, documents from archives (particularly Archivio Civico Fotografico, Cineteca Milano, Cittadella degli Archivi), transcripts of interviews and podcasts, emails, and notes. In this way, together with archival sources, both the research process and the failed attempts are valorised showing the difficulties of historical investigation and restitution.

I silenti sogni entrarono cosí nella sala.

“Vanishing Point” (2019)

Robert Smithson’s earthwork “Spiral Jetty” (1970) is located at the Rozel Point peninsula on the northeastern shore of the Great Salt Lake, Utah. This place, characterized by its rose colours, contains deposits of oil that had been subjected to unsuccessful drilling attempts for decades. The art installation had been underwater for thirty years; nonetheless, as stated by Geoff Dyer in the book “White Sands”, visitors kept going on the site. In 2002 a drought revealed the work again, and from that moment it has been mostly visible. In the video-performance “Vanishing Point” the camera is positioned next to the last stone of the Spiral Jetty. From that point, the artist walks towards the lake until she disappears in the water, as had happened to Smithson’s work for a long time. The distance covered is an anthropometric form of measuring of the ongoing process of desertification, climate change and entropy. The title refers to the chapter in Jean Baudrillard’s “America” (1986) dedicated to the American deserts among which he also describes Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake. “The unfolding of the desert is infinitely close to the timelessness of film”, he states when he describes the unreal and abstract atmosphere of these solitary and empty landscapes.

Eleonora Roaro, “Vanishing Point”
Single-channel video | 06’24’’
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Silent
Edition 3 + AP | 2019

https://vimeo.com/358587301

“CineMi” (2018)

Eleonora Roaro, “CineMi”
Two self-produced volumes | 2018

Conducted using archives and first-hand sources, “CineMi” investigates the memories of Milano cinema theatre active from 1896 to 1955, with a focus on spectatorship, architecture, and urbanism.
The research, according to the New Cinema History framework, investigates how movie theatres influence and determine the experience of the audience, which is always determined by the context: in line with Vivian Sobchack’s notion of embodiment, the spectator is neither ideal nor absolute, but bonded to his physicality. During the twentieth century, cinemas in Milano were widespread, built ex-novo or readapted from previous buildings, and constituted a tangible presence in the urban fabric, especially in the periphery where they represented one of the few places of social gathering and cultural promotion. In fact, Milano, apart from a few exceptions, has completely removed the memory of former cinemas: the buildings have been destroyed or redeveloped.
The archives consulted for this project are Cittadella degli Archivi, Archivio del Corriere della Sera, Archivio del Lavoro, Archivio Fiera Milano, Archivio Fotografico a2a, Civico Archivio Fotografico, Raccolta Stampe Bertarelli, and Cineteca Italiana. Particularly important is the Cittadella degli Archivi archive, which preserves documents such as notary acts, blueprints, and photos. The Civico Archivio Fotografico provides documents from the very beginning of the twentieth century, whereas the Raccolta Bertarelli is a collection of posters, tickets and flyers. The Corriere della Sera archive supplies

important data, particularly about the attendance at screenings. The tree books by Mario Cavallé “Tecnica delle costruzioni di cinema e teatri” published in 1951 e 1954 and Antonio Cassi Rametti “Edifici per spettacoli” (1945) provide an insight into movie theatre architecture, pointing out how the new technological innovations met the audience’s new needs. In addition, people have been interviewed in order to collect memories of those places and to reconstruct a more emotional and personal experience of movie-going.

ARIEL

VIA FAA DI BRUNO 8

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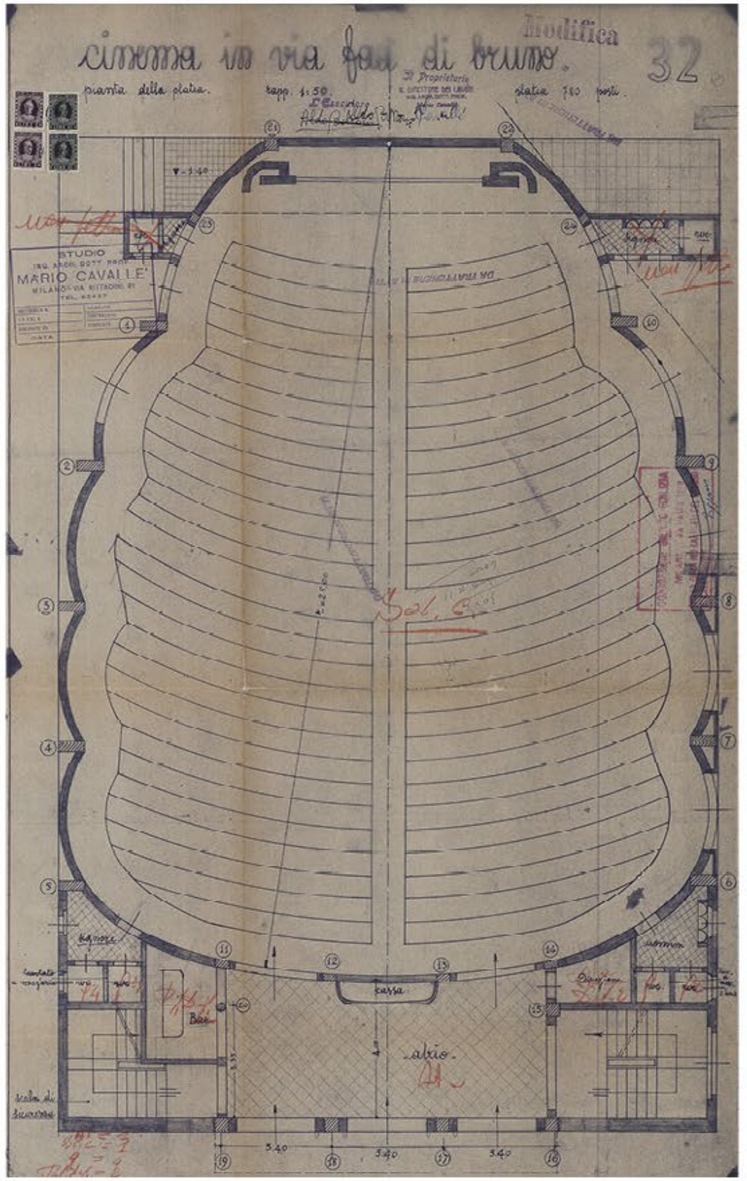
VIA FAA DI BRUNO 8



“30/07/2017” (2017)

Google

On the 30th of July 2007 both Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni died. Not only did this directors contribute to depicting the sense of incommunicability and alienation post-economic boom, but they also created a grammar of film more focused on images than narrative. Moreover, the role of women in their careers and private lives was similar, as they were often seen as muses.
The performance "30/07/2017" is a homage to both the directors that examines the idea of the muse and the role of the *male gaze* in cinema (Laura Mulvey, 1975). Two women in two separate locations remain in front of the camera from sunrise to sunset and do nothing for the whole length of the day, as if something is always about to happen. The women do not eat or drink, nor comfort themselves in any way; their role is one of object only, reflecting the idea of a muse and extrapolating it into a reality for the women involved. The endless waiting becomes more and more exhausting, and the denial of basic human needs more and more difficult, showing what is beyond the image of beauty when it is only about withstanding the desire to do something else, to relax, to relieve the boredom. The women are in similar domestic environments, fulfilling similar roles, but they cannot see each other: they can only be seen live on a screen, and only while daylight exists; reinforcing the voyeuristic attitude of cinema and remarking upon the importance of light in film-making. At the same time, however, the live-stream method brings the contemporary into the scene, so that these muses are not of the golden age, but of now.

Eleonora Roaro and Katy Richardson,
"30/07/2017"
Live-stream performance on YouTube
Single-channel video | 15h58'00''
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Sound
Edition 3 + 2 AP | 2017

https://vimeo.com/234627721

“Happily Ever After” (2016–18)

“Happily Ever After” is a mixed-media installation made of sound and a collection of black and white vernacular photographs related to the Western wedding ritual, taken between the 1920s and the 1960s. In these images, every male figure has been erased with fuchsia nail polish. This ironic act of *damnatio memoriae*, on one hand, serves as a critique towards the institution of marriage and its standardisation, on the other it reflects on the aesthetic homogeneity of this photographic genre, highlighting the repetition of situations and poses.
The sound is a collage of television news reports related to femicides (specifically the one by Giuseppe Pellicanò, the explosion on Via Brioschi in Milan that occurred in the summer of 2016) and acts of violence against women, alternated with distorted wedding marches.

Eleonora Roaro, “Happily Ever After”
Mixed-media installation (vintage photographs, sound by Alice Lamperti and Ismael Lô)
Unique edition | 2016–2018

“00:00:01:00” (2016)

The project “00:00:01:00” consists of seven one-second video performances: the title refers to the timecode used in video-editing software. In seven different prehistoric sites in Cornwall (UK), the artist pops a balloon, an object typically associated with parties. This ironic gesture serves as a metaphor for geological eras and the Anthropocene: as it took the Earth many years to transform and grow, similarly humans in one second – corresponding to the beginning of industrialization to today – are destroying the entire ecosystem of the planet. The project also reflects on the idea of landscape and wilderness as cultural constructs: not only are these places, often perceived as unspoiled and consequently frequently depicted by British painters during the Romanticism, often located near industrial areas, but are also altered by human activities, representing prehistoric forms of architecture and human intervention in the environment.

Eleonora Roaro, “00:00:01:00”
Seven-channel video | 2′00″ (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Sound
Edition 3 + AP | 2016

https://vimeo.com/195364203

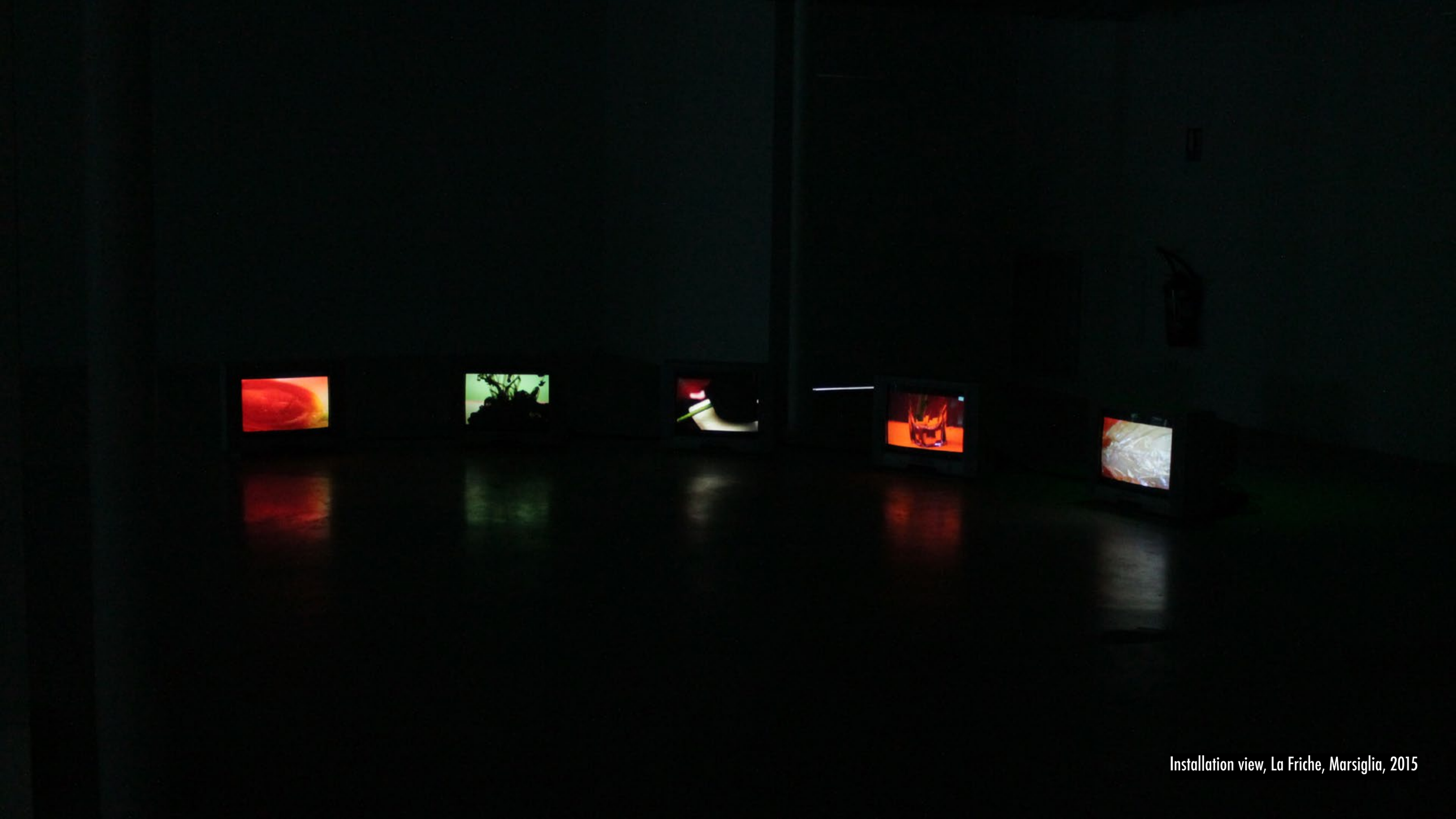
Installation view, Luisa Catucci gallery, Berlino, 2017

“Tulipomania” (2015)

“Tulipomania” is a video installation that re-enacts the iconography of Flemish and Dutch still lifes as a symbol of the vanitas during the Golden Age. In particular, it focuses on the representation of the tulips and, consequently, the speculative bubble known as tulipomania: in 17th-century Holland, the price of tulip bulbs skyrocketed and then suddenly collapsed, causing significant economic damage to the population.
In each video, the tulip undergoes a process of transformation that drastically alters its initial condition, linking reflections on economic speculation with those on illusion and value attribution as common aspects of human nature.

Eleonora Roaro, “Tulipomania”
Five-channel video | 06’02”
1920 x 1080 HD 16:9
Music: Massimiliano Viel, “Danza (su una marca di J.B.Lully)”, performed by Icarus Ensemble + Lumen
Editon 3 + AP | 2015

All: https://vimeo.com/131229167
Tulipomania #1 [excerpt]:
https://vimeo.com/131224852
Tulipomania #2 [excerpt]:
https://vimeo.com/132076833
Tulipomania #3 [excerpt]:
https://vimeo.com/132746571
Tulipomania #4 [excerpt]:
https://vimeo.com/132146265
Tulipomania #5 [excerpt]:
https://vimeo.com/133336688



Installation view, La Friche, Marsiglia, 2015

“Naked Lunch” (2015)

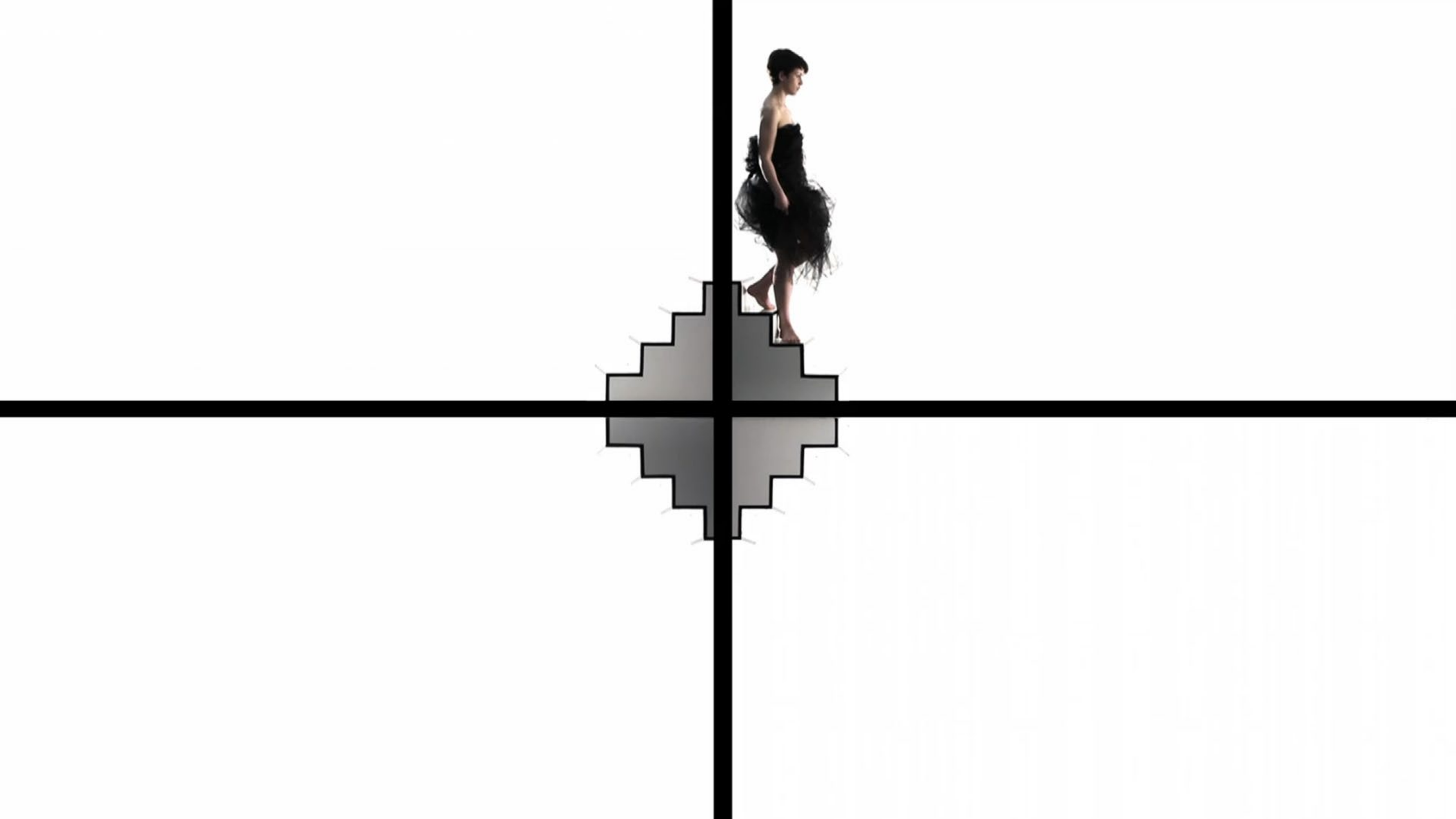
“The title means exactly what the words say: naked lunch, a frozen moment when everyone sees what is on the end of every fork.”

In “Naked Lunch,” a reflection on eating disorders allows us to consider what nourishes and sustains us as human beings from all angles. It is a video performance in which the artist stages an imaginary meal: she eats alone without paying attention to the very act of eating, to the extent that she does not realize that the plate and glasses are empty. Many of the actions we undertake in our existence are empty and automated; we live under the illusion that what we do is nourishing and enriching us. During rare moments of clarity, we realise that our food does not exist, only to return to old habits and mental patterns. Everything repeats itself. The rewind emphasises the fictional dimension of the work and highlights the rupture of the scenic fiction.

Eleonora Roaro, “Naked Lunch”
Single-channel video | 1’50’’ (loop)
1920×1080 HD 16:9 | Silent
Edition 3 + AP | 2015

9 William Borroughs, “Naked Lunch” (Grove Press, 2001).

“Loop” (2011-2014)



In the project titled “Loop”, the artist revisits devices from the archaeology of cinema, such as zoetropes, praxinoscopes, and magic lanterns, which enable the viewing of moving images. These instruments are based on the repetition of a sequence of photographs and represent an action that is continuously reiterated, allowing stories to be told with just a few moving frames. The loop, seemingly just a technical limitation, thus becomes a narrative engine (Manovich, 2001), as in the case of the four-channel video “E non ti raggiungevo mai” – inspired by Marcel Duchamp’s “Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2” (1912) – in which the artist endlessly goes up and down the stairs.
In the case of the zoetropes, from a technical perspective, the sequence is created by isolating and extracting frames from a digital video that resemble the chrono-photographic experiments carried by Eadweard Muybridge. Additionally, the use of the turntable is tied to the recovery and re-enactment of old technologies, which, in this context, are deprived of their primary function and transformed into mere motion generators. “Tutto qui” is Eleonora Roaro’s first zoetrope and, in minimalist aesthetics, represents the cycle of life: birth, reproduction, and death. The LP used as the base for the zoetrope is Franco Battiato’s “Fetus” (1972), featuring an image of a fetus, thus forming a conceptual connection to the photographic sequence. “Achille amava la signoraTartaruga, infinitamente” is a reinterpretation of Zeno’s paradox of impossibility of motion, which ironically becomes a metaphor for desire.

Eleonora Roaro, “Tutto qui” [“That’s All”]
Zoetrope, dimensions variable
Edition 3 + AP | 2011
LP: Fetus – Franco Battiato (1972)

Eleonora Roaro, “Achille amava la Signora Tartaruga, infinitamente” [“Achille Used to Love Mrs. Turtle, Endlessly”]
Zoetrope, dimensions variable
Edition 3 + AP | 2012
LP: Das Musikalische Opfer – Johann Sebastian Bach (1747)

Eleonora Roaro, “E non ti raggiungevo mai” [“And I Could Never Reach You”]
Four-channel video | 01’31” (loop)
1920x1080 HD 16:9
Sound: Kali
3 Editions + AP | 2012

Zoetrope, prototype, 2012