Introduction

Engaging the Contemporary is a yearly event organised by the Philosophy Department at the University of Malta. This year's ninth iteration of the conference is jointly organised by the Philosophy Department of the Universities of Malta and Turin, and will take place in the beautiful city of **Turin, Italy**.

We live in a time defined by fast paced and unprecedented technological advancements, and an increasing awareness of the intricate web of beings which envelop, stabilise, and sustain our everyday existence. In this edition of *Engaging the Contemporary*, we seek to explore and (critically) assess the philosophical complexities surrounding the relation between humans and nonhumans.

The conference seeks to provide a platform for scholars to engage in interdisciplinary discussions that transcend traditional boundaries, in order to encourage dynamic dialogue between scholars working within diverse fields such as animal studies, technology studies, and new forms of realism and materialism. Through this collective exploration of interdisciplinary thought, we aim to illuminate the multifaceted philosophical dimensions that govern our relationships with various nonhuman entities with which we share the world.

Keynote Speakers

Tiziana Andina is Full Professor of Philosophy at the University of Turin (Italy). Since 2016 she is the director of the research center LabOnt – Center for Ontology at the University of Turin (www.labont.it). She has been a fellow at Columbia University (2008-2009) and of Käte Hamburger Kolleg University of Bonn (2015) as well as Visiting Professor at ITMO University Russia (2014) Nanjing and Wuhan University China (2019). She has published many articles on philosophy and the philosophy of art in several international journals. Her recent work concerns the definition of art and social ontology. Her publications include: Il volto Americano di Nietzsche La Città del Sole 1999 Il problema della percezione nella filosofia di Nietzsche Albo Versorio 2005

Arthur Danto: Philosopher of Pop Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2011 The Philosophy of Art: The Question of Definition. From Hegel to Post-Dantian Theories Bloomsbury Academy 2013 An Ontology for Social Reality Palgrave-Macmillan 2016 What is Art? The Question of Definition Reloaded Brill 2017 A Philosophy for Future Generations. The Structure and Dynamic of Transgenerationality Bloomsbury 2022 and (ed. by) Bridging the Analytical Continental Divide. A Companion to Contemporary Western Philosophy Brill 2014. She is co-editor of the international series Brill Research Perspectives in Art and Law and of the international series Analytic Aesthetics and Contemporary Art (Bloomsbury Academic). Since 2020 she is editor of Rivista di Estetica.

Maurizio Ferraris is Full Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Turin and is the president of Labont (Center for Ontology) and of "Scienza Nuova", an institute of advanced studies – dedicated to Umberto Eco and uniting the University and the Polytechnic of Turin – aimed at planning a sustainable future, both from a cultural and from a political point of view. Visiting professor at Harvard, Oxford, Munich, and Paris, columnist of "Corriere della sera" and "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", author of successful television programmes and over seventy books translated worldwide, in his long career he has determined a new course of thought and studies in at least six areas: history of hermeneutics, aesthetics as theory of perception (*Rational Aesthetics*), social ontology (*Documentality*), metaphysics (*New Realism*), technological anthropology (*Dochumanity*), and philosophy of economics (*Webfare as Digital welfare*). In 2005 he wrote the world's first philosophical book on the mobile phone: *Where Are You? Ontology of the Mobile Phone.*

<u>Conference Organisers</u>

Conveners

Prof. Tiziana Andina (University of Turin)
Prof. Claude Mangion (University of Malta)

Organising Team

Dr Robert Farrugia (University of Malta)
Dr Erica Onnis (Cusano University/University of Turin)
Dr Niki Young (University of Malta)
Francois Zammit (University of Malta)

Programme

Day 1, 20 November: Palazzo Nuovo
Via Sant'Ottavio, 20, 10124 Torino

8.45-9.00	Registration	
	Auditorium Quazza **Chair: Erica Onnis**	
9.00-9.30	Welcome Address Tiziana Andina (UniTo) & Claude Mangion (UM)	
9.30-10.30	**Keynote**: Maurizio Ferraris, University of Turin	
10.30-11.00	Break	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
11.00-12.30	**Parallel Session One Chair: Valeria Martino**	**Parallel Session Two Chair: Erica Onnis**
	Greta Francesconi Giving birth in a Post-Anthropocentric world	**Eamon Reid** Flattening Processes: The Tensions Between Pluralistic Machine Ontologies and (a Possible) Liberal Politics
	Martina Todaro The Promethean Drift of Dante's Transumanar	**Rita Serpytyte** Things, Objects and Reality
	Francos Zammit Homo Economicus as The New Cyborg.	**Audronė Žukauskaitė** Toward and Organism-Oriented Ontology
12.30-14.30	Lunch Break	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
14.30-16.00	**Parallel Session**	**Parallel Session**

	Chair: Martina Lillo	Chair: Giulio Sacco
	Michael Ardoline Interiority and Control: Subjectivation in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism	**Inna Häkkinen** Imagined Realities of Nuclear Optimism: Literary Dimensions of Romantisizing the Atom
	Sebastian Nähr-Wagener Technology as Dispositif and the Production of Subjects	**Costanza Penna** No title supplied
	Rodrigo Guiomar Carrasco Flores Fields of Sense and Cosmotechnics: towards an Andean concept of technology	**Martin E. Rosenberg** The Ontology of How and the Epistemology of Now: Jazz Improvisation at the Intersection of Materialist Phenomenology and Panpsychism
16.00-16.15	**Break**	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
16.15-17.45	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Martina Lillo**	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Giulio Sacco**
	Timothy Tambassi Is Extensible Markup Language perspectivist?	**Oliver Norman** Performing the non-human Other : On Monsters, Club-Kids, and Aliens. Beyond Drag as a Gender Performance
	Evangelos Koumparoudis Defining Death and Dying in Relation to Information Technology and Advances in Biomedicine	**Jetske Brouwer** No title supplied
	Marco Emilio, Cristina Viano e Irene Domenicale The Challenge of Tokenizing Collective Agency	**Robert Booth** 'We Should all in Part be Naturalists': Ecophenomenology, Ecofeminism, and Environmental Education Policy

Day 2, 21 November: Palazzo Nuovo
Via Sant'Ottavio, 20, 10124 Torino

9.00-10.30	Parallel Session Chair: Costanza Penna	Parallel Session Chair: Giulia Beltritti
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
	Luca Valentino Making sense of nonhuman impacts on society: Against the new materialist approach	**Zachary Goldberg** Using Wittgenstein to Fulfill the Principle of Explainability in AI
	Emily Dellheim Intersect, interact, Imagine: Relational Becomings, Inclusive Encounters and New Materialism in Museum Education	**Giovanna Di Cicco** From Social Robots To Moral Robots? Empathy and moral standing in the age of affective robotics
	Leonardo Geri On vicarious causation and the third, new object	**Irene Olivero** Evaluating and Re-Engineering AI's Social Impact: A Conceptual Engineering Framework
10.30-11.00	**Break**	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
11.00-12.30	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Costanza Penna**	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Giulia Beltritti**
	Kristupas Sabolius The Compossibility of Coexistence	**Arjen Kleinherenbrink** Why non-humans do not have agency
	Matteo Maria Paolucci Spacing (as) Coexistence: Nancy and Morton on 'World' and 'Nature'	**Tyler Tritten** Habit as Organon of Philosophy: A Cosmology
	Agnieszka Jagła	**David Roden** Of Minds and Hyperminds

	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
	Shifting boundaries between the human and the nonhuman in The Stone Gods by Jeanette Winterson	
12.30-14.30	Lunch	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
14.30-16.00	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Giulia Miotti**	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Valeria Martino**
	Maximilian Margreiter When is AI-Art Art?	**Drew M. Dalton** New Realism and the Metaphysics of Nihilation: Engaging the Thermodynamic Revolution
	Michael Miller Autopo(i)etics and Authorial Technique in the Work of Holly Herndon and Sasha Stiles	**Andrea Cocciarelli** Posthuman ontologies and achieving queered personhood
	Regine Rørstad Torbjørnsen Autopo(i)etics and Authorial Technique in the Work of Holly Herndon and Sasha Stiles	**Niki Young** Not an Abyss but a Dynamo: Alphonso Lingis and the Animal
16.00-16.15	Break	
	Sala Lauree Gallino	Auditorium Quazza
16.15-17.45	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Giulia Miotti**	**Parallel Session** **Chair: Valeria Martino**
	Poppy Wilde Who's in Control?: Posthuman subjectivities and feminist resistance in videogaming	**Andrea Gentili** Who speaks for the nonhuman? Nature's representation and the law
	Antonis Sarris Virtual and Hyperreal Intersections: Baudrillard and Deleuze in Alain Damasio's novel Les Furtifs	**Katie MacDonald and Suzanne McCullagh** The Rights of Nature and Multi-Species Political Community

	Jasmijn Leeuwenkamp Saving 'nature' from humans with rights: ecocide, rights of nature, and the hidden dimensions of predation and use.	Giacomo Pezzano and Marco Pavanini Comic Ideas: The Nonhuman Constitution of Philosophical Cognition

Day 3, 22 November: Scienza Nuova
Corso Rodolfo Montevecchio, 38, 10129 Torino

9.30-10.30	**Keynote**: Tiziana Andina, University of Turin
10.30-11.00	**Break**
11.00-13.00	**Session One** **Chair: Erica Onnis**
	Federico Comollo Phytosemiotics: the Key to a Vegetal Ethic
	Viola Di Tullio Beyond instrumentality: rethinking plants as agents in environmental philosophy
	Maria PatriciaTinajero A Multispecies Translation and Ethical Aesthetics Approach to Reimagining Human-Plant-Soil Relations
	Agata Kowalewska Feralizing the Plantationocene with weedy rice
12.30-14.30	**Lunch**
14.30-16.00	**Session Two** **Chair: Giulio Sacco**
	Vaiva Daraškevičiûtė Aesthetis of "Artificial Nature": Between Rejection and Uncanny
	Nataliya Atanasova Objet, cache-moi: the subject's presence in a hostile world
	Alicia Macías Recio

	From Aesthetic Appreciation to Ecological Action: Art as a Means to Address the Challenges of the Anthropocene
16.00-16.30	**Concluding Remarks** Tiziana Andina (UniTo) & Claude Mangion (UM)