

# Proposal Summer School 2019

## Swiss Institute in Rome

### Part I. The Project

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#### Title

Time After Time: Science, Art and Philosophy (Part II)

#### Organizing Institutions

Università della Svizzera italiana, USI: <https://www.usi.ch>

#### Affiliated Institution or Partners

Université de Genève: <https://www.unige.ch/lettres/philosophie/en/homepage/>

*eidos*, The Center for Metaphysics: <http://eidoscentre.org/>

University of Rome 3, Dept. Lettere, Comunicazione e Scienze dello Spettacolo:  
<http://filosofiacomunicazionespettacolo.uniroma3.it/>

Center for the Philosophy of Time, Milan: <http://www.centreforphilosophyoftime.it/>

#### Timeframe

The proposed date is: 2.09.2019- 7.09.2019 (6 Nights; 7 Days)

#### Thematic Abstract

Our summer school is the ideal continuation of our previous summer school “Time Time Time: Science, Art and Philosophy (Part I)”, that was a great success last year. As an ideal continuation it will have the same structure: it will look at time from the perspectives of science, art and philosophy. We are keen on expanding the focus of the school to include different special sciences (e.g. biology, psychology, neuro-science) and different forms of artistic expression (visual arts, cinema), together with sciences and artistic forms we already

explored last year (namely, physics and literature).

The summer school is tentatively structured around three thematic areas we did not address in the previous summer school: **Time Travel**, **Things in Time** and **Time and Action**. Each of these areas has been the focus of substantive investigation in science (we will focus on biology, physics and neuro-science), the arts (we will focus on literature, visual arts, and cinema) and philosophy.

In what follows we articulate the themes further.

## Time Travel

Time travel is one of the most fascinating areas of contemporary inter-disciplinary research. On the one hand, contemporary physics, especially relativistic physics, seems to allow for models in which time-travel is physically possible. On the other hand, time-travel presents many conceptual and logical difficulties. If time-travel is possible, could we change the past? If I were to go back in time, could I kill my grandparents, thus preventing me to time-travel in the first place? If time-travel will ever be possible, how come we have not met any future-time travellers yet? Or have we? Contemporary neuro-science has dedicated a great deal of attention to a related phenomenon, called *mental time-travel*, that consists roughly in the capacity to stretch one's imagination to comprehend more or less long temporal intervals. Finally, literature and visual arts —cinema, photography— have been long fascinated by the possibility and the consequences of time-travel. H.G Wells's *The Time Machine* is widely considered to be a classic, and cinema has given us memorable exploration of time travel scenarios in masterpieces like *Planet of the Apes*, *12 Monkeys*, and *Time Bandits*.

## Things in Time

Things persist through time, that is, they exist at more than one instant. But how do they do so? Common sense has it that things are extended in space, not in time. They are wholly present —as the saying goes— at each instant of their existence. But is this really the picture of things in time that science, or even art give us? It has been argued that physics favors a view according to which things such as ordinary chairs and tables are extended not only in space but in time as well. In that respect they are similar to *events*. As a matter of fact, some have insisted that things are just “boring events” —a memorable expression. Biology seems to confirm the picture. Individual biological units as well as entire species are better understood as entities that spread out across time. The literature of the last century seems to have come round to the same conclusion. It is part and parcel of the very poetic of two of the greatest writers of the last century, Marcel Proust and Samuel Beckett, that things literally extend through different epochs, even centuries.

When things persist in time, they do persist through change. Persistence

through change brings about all sorts of questions. Can something survive all kinds of change? For example, can a person become an insect as Gregor Samsa in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*? Some things can survive gradual changes. But what about radical ones? Is the Hamlet of the fifth act really the same person as the Hamlet in the first four acts of the tragedy? Particular things such as works of art complicate the matter. Is Michelangelo's *Moses* in S. Pietro in Vincoli the same statue, the same work of art after the massive restoration it went through?

## **Time and Action**

The issues mentioned so far, and more in general issues about time, are inextricably entangled with a practical dimension. Time travel in the future seems to entail that the future exists. How could you get somewhere if it did not exist? But, if the future exists, in what sense, if any, am I free to act? Is free-will just an illusion? If this were the case, what would be the consequences for e.g. moral responsibility? There is an important artistic trope that is closely related to the philosophical notion of free-will —or lack thereof— namely Destiny, and related notions such as fate and vocation. These notions have been a constant landmark throughout Western thought, from classic Greek tragedies to orthodox eschatology, from mechanistic philosophy of the enlightenment to romantic poetry, from early avant-garde movements to contemporary fiction.

Our summer school will address all of these questions, and will focus on the very particular examples that we mentioned above, as we are about to explain further.

## **Role of Italy, Rome and Science and Art Topics**

As in our previous summer school, Italy in general, and Rome in particular play a crucial role in our summer school. Furthermore, the interaction between science, art and philosophy is at its very core.

### **Role of Italy**

Our school has a substantive Italian dimension, in three important respects. First, we have established a partnership with two Italian Institutions, namely the University of Rome 3 (Rome), and the Center for the Philosophy of Time (Milan).

Second, we have invited different leading Italian experts in various fields. The list includes Mauro Dorato (Rome 3), Matteo Morganti (Rome 3), Mauro De-Caro (Rome 3), Giuliano Torrenco (Milan), Andrea Borghini (Milan), Elena Casetta (Turin), Valentina Valentini (Rome 2). The final relevant aspect concerns content. We will discuss Bill Viola's work on *Electric Renaissance* which re-interprets with the means of video-art classic Italian renaissance masterpieces;

we will show and discuss Antonioni's *Lo Sguardo* to tackle issues about the persistence of works of art, taking as an example Michelangelo's *Moses* in San Pietro in Vincoli; finally, we will show and discuss Pasolini's celebrated *Edipo Re*, as an exploration of fate, vocation and destiny in both literature and Italian cinema.

### **Role of Rome**

Our summer school has a special connection with Rome as well. The connection is twofold. On the one hand, one of our partners is the University of Rome 3. On the other hand, the connection extends to contents as well. As we already pointed out in the previous section, we will extensively discuss works of art that are closely related to Rome, namely Michelangelo's *Moses* and Pasolini's *Edipo Re*. As a matter of fact, we shall organize a guided visit to S. Pietro in Vincoli, and for the final event we plan to have an open screening of Pasolini's masterpiece. Finally, Rome —and the Istituto itself as an architectural space— will have a prominent role in the work of visual artist Dorine Aguerre. We shall discuss her work in the following section.

### **Role of Science and Art**

Our school has a prominent scientific dimension. It directly tackles fundamental issues about time in physics, neuro-science, and biology. It also considers the technological aspects related to conservation and re-creation of works of art. This scientific interest is not pursued in isolation. Philosophical issues and philosophical investigations about presuppositions and consequences of our best scientific practices will be a constant theme in the summer school. This constant interaction was the core of our summer school last year, and given the results, we intend to follow suit.

As for the arts we will continue the interaction with literature we established last year. Also, we will expand our focus to include visual arts as well. We already mentioned sculpture, cinema and visual arts in our remarks above.

We are also glad to report that a contemporary visual artist, Dorine Aguerre, has accepted to contribute with an original work explicitly designed for the summer school (should the project be accepted). Dorine's previous work is articulated around narrative construction through different medium such as sculpture, installation, video and sound. Playing with theatric codes, she considers space and time both as a physical elements and as abstract dimensions along which histories of different objects unfold. In particular her work deals with storytelling and its *mise en scene* questioning the transformation of a physical inanimate object into a cinematic image expressing its *history*. She accepted to create a specific video installation during the summer school which will draw from the topics developed in the lectures. She will focus in particular on questions of persistence —see **Things in Time**. The idea behind the project is that participants will be able to witness and interact not just with the final work but with her investigation on site and the artistic process leading to the final work itself.

She will film some of the background material before-hand, but she will substantially draw from Rome, the Istituto, and the summer school, thus creating an *artistic record and testimony* of the entire event.

## Technical/Infrastructural Requirements

Technical requirements are as follows:

**Lectures:** Lecture room with projector and blackboard.

**Art-Works:** A small studio for the week for the artist Dorine Aguerre to work in (this is supposed to be accessible to students and lecturers throughout the summer-school in order to “witness” the artistic process). The studio should be equipped with three desktop screens and media players. The artist will bring her own professional equipment for filming, recording, editing.

**Final Event:** Room with a projector and seats to screen Pasolini’s *Edipo Re*.

**Lodgings:** 12 rooms for the 20 students to share; 5 rooms for speakers and artists.

**Board:** Lunches and Coffee Breaks for the entire duration of the summer school.

## Tentative Program

### Monday

Registration and Welcome

13.30-15.30 Lunch

15.30. 16.30 Inaugural Lecture<sup>1</sup>

16.30 -17.00 Discussion

### Tuesday

9.30 10.30 Time Travel I (Physics)

10.30-11 Discussion

11.15 12.15 Time Travel II (Metaphysics)

12.15 12.45 Discussion

13.30-15.30 Lunch

15.30. 16.30 Time Travel III (Neuro-Science)

16.30 -17.00 Discussion

### Wednesday

9.30 10.30 Time-Travel IV (Visual Arts)

10.30-11 Discussion

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<sup>1</sup>This is a tentative schedule that is likely to change according to the availabilities of the speakers.

11.15-12.15 Things in Time I (Philosophy)  
12.15-12.45 Discussion  
13.30-15.30 Lunch  
15.30-16.30 Things in Time II (Physics)  
16.30-17.00 Discussion

#### **Thursday**

9.30-10.30 Things in Time III (Biology)  
10.30-11 Discussion  
11.15-12.15 Time and Action I (Philosophy)  
12.15-12.45 Discussion  
13.30-15.30 Lunch  
15.00-15.30 Screening of Antonioni's *Lo Sguardo*  
17.00 Guided Visit: Michelangelo's *Moses*, San Pietro in Vincoli

#### **Friday**

9.30-10.30 Things in Time IV (Visual Arts)  
10.30-11 Discussion  
11.15-12.15 Time and Action II (Visual Arts)  
12.15-12.45 Discussion  
13.30-15.00 Lunch  
15.30-17.00 **Meet The Artist.** Dorine Aguerre

#### **Saturday**

10.30-11.30 Time and Action III (Literature)  
11.30-12.00 Discussion  
12.30-14.30 Lunch  
  
15.00 **Final Event.** Screening of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Edipo Re*  
17.00 Discussion  
19.00 Closing Remarks. Final Aperò

## **Part II. Participants**

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### **Number and Types of Students — included CH and IT**

We are expecting to welcome 20 master and doctoral students from different Swiss universities (e.g. Lugano, Genève, Neuchâtel), as well as Italian ones. Based on our previous experience we are expecting students from different parts of the world, as well as of different backgrounds.

### **Number and Type of Researchers —included CH and IT**

1. Mauro Dorato (Roma 3, Physics)

2. Matteo Morganti (Roma 3, Philosophy of Physics, Metaphysics)
3. Mauro De Caro (Roma 3, Metaphysics, Philosophy of Action)
4. Giuliano Torrenco (Milan, Metaphysics)
5. Andrea Borghini (Milan, Biology)
6. Elena Casetta (Turin, Biology)
7. Stefano Tiozzo (Nice/Paris, Sorbonne, Biology)
8. Valentina Valentini (Rome, Theatre)
9. Dorine Aguerre (Geneva, Visual-Artist)

### **Other Participants Involved**

1. Kevin Mulligan (Genève and Lugano)
2. Fabrice Correia (Genève)
3. Christian Wüthrich (Genève)
4. Claudio Calosi (Genève and Lugano)

## **Part III. The Organizers**

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### **Organizing Team**

1. Kevin Mulligan (Genève and Lugano). Head of Team and Contact Person.
2. Fabrice Correia (Genève)
3. Christian Wüthrich (Genève)
4. Claudio Calosi (Genève and Lugano)

## **Part IV. Annexes**

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### **Estimated Budget**

The estimated budget is divided as follows:

**Board:** Lunch/Coffee Breaks (To be organized by the Istituto Svizzero in the Villa Mariani, to be paid by the University): 6 lunches, 6 coffee breaks, average of 25 persons, 15 Euros per person per day, 25 persons. **Total:** Euro 2250.

**Dinners:** 6 dinners, average of 7 persons per dinner: 60 Euros per person per dinner. **Total:** Euro 2520.

**Lodging:** Additional 2 Hotel Rooms:150 Euro per night per room (3 nights).  
**Total:** Euro 900

**Travel:** 4 Flights Economy (invited Speakers): 200 Euros per flight per person.  
**Total:** Euro: 800; 15 Train Tickets 2nd Class (Invited Speakers): 100 Euro per person per ticket. **Total:** Euro 1500.

**Guided Visit:** S. Pietro in Vincoli, Michelangelos Moses: Euro 200

**Materials:** Visual Arts Installation & Miscellanea: Euro 1000

**Final Screening Material:** (Including Assistance): Euro 830

**Total:** Euro 10.000

## Other Annexes

Enclosed with the present application find the **letters of support** from the organizing institutions, namely USI,<sup>2</sup> and the **CV-s** of the principal organizers —as mentioned in the **Organizing Team**.

## Confirmation

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If our proposal is selected, we will present the above information (except the budget and confidential documents) as part of the initial announcement of the “summer school”, on the websites of [swissuniversities](#) and the Swiss Institute in Rome (Istituto Svizzero).

On behalf of the prospective organisers,

**Date and Place:** 30.11.2018, Lugano.

Prof. Kevin Mulligan



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<sup>2</sup>The letter of support from the Université de Genève has been sent directly to the Istituto.