

Maria Chiara Manfredi

Sculpture and architecture conquer space. Examples between the Middle Ages and the Contemporary from the Sculptural Presences workshop.

Abstract

The 2016 Sculptural Presences Workshop had the common theme of investigating the relationship between architecture and art, and was organized by the University of Parma (coordinated by Carlo Quintelli), the IUAV University of Venice, the University of Bologna, the Polytechnic Institute of Milan, and the La Sapienza University of Rome.

Of that theoretical-practical experience – the workshop had as its purpose the design of new museum spaces of the CSAC in relation to specific works of art – this article is a precise account of all the contributions made in various ways by the numerous speakers who attended.

Parole Chiave

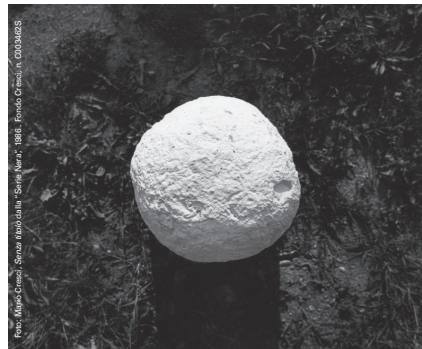
CSAC — Architecture — Sculpture — Art

The *Sculptural Presences* Workshop had the common theme of investigating the relationship between architecture and art, and was organized by the University of Parma (coordinated by Carlo Quintelli), the IUAV University of Venice, the University of Bologna, the Polytechnic Institute of Milan, and the La Sapienza University of Rome

The discussions while being in a specific place, the CSAC of the Valsere-
na Abbey in Parma, with diversified and careful visions of the relationship
between architecture and sculpture, migrating from one discipline to another
on the concept of “space”, is revealed in quite a different dimension today.

Rereading the context of the workshop held in the summer of 2016 in the
present moment leads us to better appreciate that opportunity for meeting and
sharing which is not currently allowed. The exploration has been furthered
after these few years have passed, bringing out unimaginable meanings, albeit
in a phase of moving away from the places where art lives and is preserved.
The opportunity for comparison while being in a specific place, the CSAC
of the Valserena Abbey in Parma, with diversified and careful visions of the
relationship between architecture and sculpture, allowed us to move from one
discipline to another around a notion of “space”, which reveals a different
validity today.

The occasion of having to possibly “find space” for the sculptural works that are
kept in the abbey, as always happens, was the motive fueling discussion among
different speakers who, during the nine days of the workshop, articulated logi-
cal sequences and expanded the boundaries on an ancient cultural theme. This
continuous interweaving of different points of view between theory and practice
brought many real situations to the work table, accompanied by rare testimonies
that can only derive from the direct experience of individual teachers and artists.



CSAC Workshop 21-29 Luglio 2016

Presenze scultoree

nel chiostro, nel recinto, nel parco

Parma, Archivio-Museo CSAC, Abbazia di Valserena

Università di Parma, IUAV di Venezia, Università di Bologna,
Politecnico di Milano, Roma Sapienza

Archivio-Museo CSAC

Via Viazza di Paradigna 1, Parma
www.csacparma.it
info: proart@csacparma.it

giovedì 21

- ore 10 Accoglienza e distribuzione dei materiali di lavoro
- ore 12 **Valserena, un'abbazia del circuito cistercense**
Arturo Calzona, Giorgio Milanese
- ore 15.30 **Presenze scultoree: le possibilità del luogo abbaziale**
Carlo Quintelli

venerdì 22

- ore 10 **Il Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione: una storia in divenire**
Francesca Zanella, Carlo Quintelli
Laboratorio
- ore 18 **Scultura - Incontri: Paolo Icaro Chissotti**
- ore 21 **A partire da "Corpo e Spazio" di Martin Heidegger**
Lamberto Amistadi, Ildebrando Clemente,
Rita Messori, Carlo Gandolfi, Davide Colombo

sabato 23

- ore 9.15 **Scultoreo parmigiano** Stefano Cusatelli
ore 9.45 **Scultura lingua morta?** Vanja Strukelj
ore 10.15 **Lo scultoreo architettonico** Enrico Prandi
- ore 15 **Architettura in scena** Orazio Carpenzano

domenica 24

- ore 12 **Arte e architettura** Mauro Marzò
Laboratorio
- ore 18 **Scultura - Incontri: Alice Cattaneo**

lunedì 25

- ore 10.30 **Esporre con arte, esporre l'arte: l'esperienza italiana**
Giampiero Bosoni
- ore 12 **Le particelle elementari**
Alessandro Rocca
Laboratorio
- ore 18 **Scultura - Incontri: Alis/Filliol**

martedì 26

- ore 17.30 **Aria spaziosa**
Marco Vallora
Laboratorio
- ore 21.30 **Les statues meurent aussi** di Chris Marker e Alain Resnais, **Lo sguardo di Michelangelo** di Michelangelo Antonioni
introduce Michele Guerra

mercoledì 27

- ore 11.30 **Dis-locazioni artistiche. Interventi nel paesaggio come nuova modalità di sviluppo del territorio**
Marco Borsotti
- ore 18 **Scultura e architettura**
CSAC Lectures
Franco Purini

giovedì 28

Laboratorio

venerdì 29

- ore 17 Presentazione pubblica dei progetti con giuri accademico

Gli appuntamenti **Scultura-Incontri**, la **CSAC Lectures** e la proiezione del 26 luglio sono aperte al pubblico e ad entrata libera
Le conferenze del sabato mattina si terranno al Teatro Farnese di Parma, tutte le altre all'interno dell'Abbazia di Valserena



metodo di
progettazione applicata
ai sistemi integrati
della città



FONDAZIONE
MONTEPARMA

Fig. 1-3.

Poster of the Workshop *Presenze scultoree nel chiostro, nel recinto, nel parco* [Sculptural Presences in the cloister, in the enclosure, in the park], CSAC, Parma 2016.

Pictures from the Workshop lessons. Photos by Paolo Barbaro.



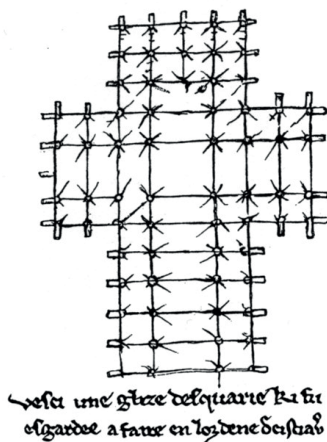


Fig. 4-6.
Villard de Honnecourt, Drawings
from the Notebook, 13th century.

Baptistry of Parma.

So little by little, involving students and the public, a real “cultural context” of investigation emerged. From the Quintavalian school of studies on the Middle Ages to a Milanese philosophy of exhibition that distinguishes architectural space in relation to art, but also through the contribution of the Bolognese school of Ancona with reflections on the relationship between history and project by Aldo Rossi and Guido Canella, and lastly not forgetting the long shadows of Petitot and Aleotti.

This experience can be reinterpreted in three different paths. The first brings the role of the context to light, a place and a time, in which figure and architectural form are realized. The second focuses on the experiment and the immediacy of the creative process, or rather on the complete vision of the three invited artists. The third accounts for an intense theoretical depth that guides the relationship between architecture and sculpture through the exploration of the term “space” after the influence of the critical reading of a guiding text such as *Body and Space* by Martin Heidegger. Returning to those reflections today is useful to bring out the main characters that emerged from that “continuous investigation of a mysterious relationship of man with space” (Heidegger) and therefore with art, architecture, and sculpture.

The duration of the nine-day workshop allowed to articulate and intertwine the students’ project work with very different contributions, for example considering the panel on the theme of the medieval art historian, contemporary art historian, and the architect. The “director” of these nine workshop days, Carlo Quintelli, an expert of the CSAC archive and the abbey site where he has carried out projects and research for many years, expressly wanted to bring together “knowledge” that seemed to be separated in daily academic life. The organization and thought behind this theme, in the discussions and also in its design, therefore sought to open up a reflection that sees in the context – the site, Valserena – the focal point to which to tend speculations and converge intuitions and experiences, from the Middle Ages to the contemporary.

Pressed by the relationship between architecture and sculpture, Arturo Calzona, Medieval Art historian and one of the first actors of the newly born CSAC in the 1970s, re-proposed the drawings of Villard de Honnecourt, sheets where every form is part of the geometric logic: everything is related to it, even the human figure.

The abbey context of the workshop itself recalled Gothic design logic, testimony of an “ars cum scientia” architecture and in it, grafted onto the geometry of the spaces, the relationship between architecture and sculpture on facades, capitals, and vaults is revealed. Even St. Bernard of Clairvaux, theologian of the Cistercian rule, wrote of the sculpture of the early Middle Ages: “What is that ridiculous deformed monstrosity and shapely deformity doing in the cloisters?”, introducing a new rule for geometry which, once again, as the art historian Giorgio Milanese tells us in referring to the lines of the Abbey of Valserena, orients both the architectural spaces and the plastic forms of the sculpture, testifying how the abbey symbolizes the historical past of the connection between art and architecture and the meaning of their underlying measure and form.

With his reflections, Stefano Cusatelli recalled how the context of Parma expresses a precise sculptural and architectural identity which is indeed that (medieval) of Benedetto Antelami, but also of Simone Moschino (among others the facade of San Giovanni), of Giovan Battista Aleotti in the 17th century (the Farnese Theater), of Ennemond Alexandre Petitot in the 18th century, which push forward works where the figure of architecture and joint sculpture

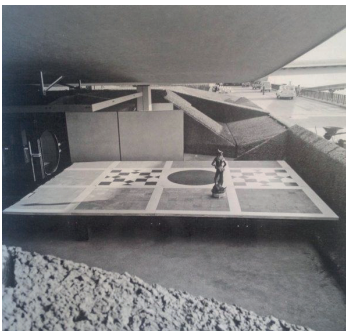
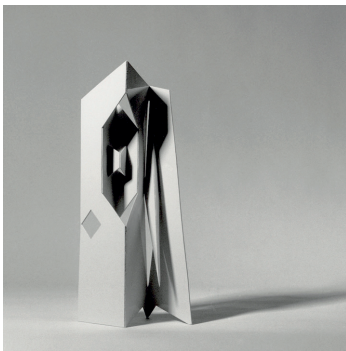
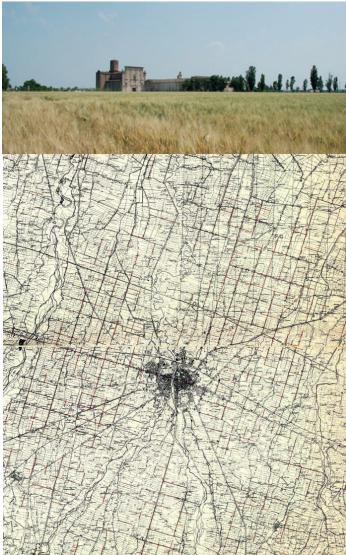


Fig. 7-11.

Abbey of Valserena and centuriation of the Parma area.

Bruno Munari, *Scultura da viaggio*, 1959.

Carlo Scarpa, *Poetry Section*, Italian Pavilion at Expo 67 Montréal.

Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield*, 1982.

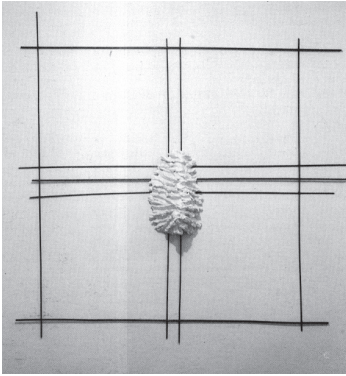
outline a single space. Furthermore, in different ways in Parma, both in the Middle Ages and in the flourishing Farnese era, the introduction of spatial, sculptural, and pictorial research conducted elsewhere arose, for example in France (the Baptistry influenced by Saint Gilles) or in Rome (the sculptures of Parma from the Palatine Hill). The context and the occasion in which a certain architecture or sculpture arise is accompanied by that migration and contamination of both disciplines, in the design of places and forms.

Geometric nature of architecture as a form that Carlo Quintelli refers to the centuriation itself on which the abbey is grafted and to its position in the territory, well outlined by a historical map of the early 19th century where an imaginary thread is drawn consisting of visuals and territorial morphology from the Bell Tower of San Giovanni - in the religious center - to the Tower of San Martino (the former name of Valserena). The abbey architecture is an “articulated building body placed with a plastic prominence on the horizon of the plain,” in the image of Mario Cresci’s white Sasso di Matera. In fact, the areas defined by Quintelli for the workshop project become successive dimensional limits with a morphological character and meaning: the cloister, the enclosure, and the park. They recall the measurements that Cresci himself uses as an anthropological tool for interpreting the artifacts, the territory, and the architecture of Matera.

Mario Cresci is one of the donors who over time have strengthened the vast archive collection of the CSAC, a place of historical memory of the fruitful relationship between architects, painters, sculptors, but also between architects who painted and artists who designed. Looking from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, the Institute of Art History of the University of Parma and CSAC have been addressing the equal relationship between the arts since the end of the 1960s, contextualizing in order to understand but not to divide. The sculptors’ works preserved here testify to their precise links to the past, relationships with space and architecture: think of Ceroli and Pardi, Consagra and Spagnulo, Paolini and Uncini to name just a few in the collection.

The works of the artists present in the archive also stand out within a very articulated story of Italian art criticism, on the role and dilemmas of being a sculptor of which Vanja Strukelj speaks. She underlines how the definition of sculpture given by artists sometimes does not correspond to the traditional and commonly used definition of sculpture, as is the case for example for Bruno Munari’s *Travel Sculptures* preserved in the archive, very light and mobile creations. The art historian shows how there are still identities of sculptors today for which the debate that precedes them lives on, both in the relationship with matter or with the emancipation from statuary, archetypal reflections of those fundamental passages in the definition of sculpture, from 15th-century problems between liberal and mechanical arts, to the age-old question of the primacy of the arts.

It highlights the fruitful relationship that architecture establishes with art in the construction of Giampiero Bosoni’s installations. Proceeding from the 1930s to today, from Persico to Nizzoli, from Castelli Ferrieri to Castiglioni, Rogers and Carboni, from Albini to Scarpa, then Munari, Carmi, Ponti, Sottsass, Rosselli for which the single occasion, context, event takes form and is expressed in a continuous interaction between architecture, sculpture, painting, and the idea of “space”. And not only that, the introduction of materials in historical passages is then revealed in the installation techniques, just as the material in sculpture is often the raw material of the gesture.

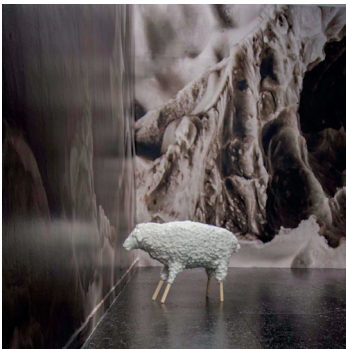


The intervention of Alessandro Rocca brought the relationship between architecture and space to light. Starting from the artistic avant-gardes up to the present day, it intercepts numerous keywords such as montage, assemblage, stage, landscape, disurbanism, gardens. Terms that reveal themes underlying the works and work of numerous artists, collecting issues shared by art and architecture: from Duchamp's experiments and reflections in Le Corbusier, where the design of modernist space appears close to Dada designs. From the figures of East 128 that recall the construction of the perspective image, the themes and examples follow one another, from Agnes Denes to Kathryn Miller to Thomas Demand.



Thus Marco Borsotti showed how in the present day there are new exhibition examples, contexts that art appropriates thanks to institutions that aim to redefine the relationships between context and globality, ensuring that the works are carriers of content in having placed themselves within different modalities of relationship and fruition. Museum-exhibition forms are created that generate models in which the territory - the place, the landscape, the site - becomes the main link of conjunction and interpretation of the work.

The second reinterpretation path brings out the experimentation of the individual artist in his relationship between work and space. The sculptors' case becomes the protagonist and immediately leads to the concreteness of the images. Three different sculptors, Paolo Icaro, active since the 1960s, the younger duo Alis/Filliol, and Alice Cattaneo open their workshop to the questioning gaze of architects. How do you sculpt?



The Turin sculptor Paolo Icaro brought Giacometti as an example of a sculpture that almost seems to not want to occupy space, which tapers as it approaches absence and thus declares the lack of a tangible desire. To be present in space there is a gesture, a step, a raised hand. On the contrary, Icaro recalls waxy wax merging with external space, seeming to almost be modeled by winds and earth by Medardo Rosso. Icaro's exploration establishes a relationship with space, with philosophy, and with the art that precedes it. Like the work *Osservazione delle stella Sirio*, a sculpture-instrument, a one meter tube that comes out of the wall, to remove the distance of millions of km from the Moon.

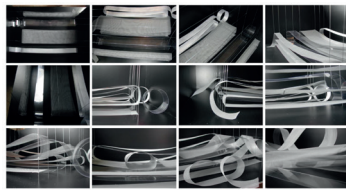
The sculptor Alice Cattaneo instead evokes the 14th century, speaking of a Madonna with child in which a tension is established in the distance between the two bodies, and she refers to this in her contemporary sculptural construction made of plastic, iron, and wood. She connects her relationship to Picasso, to the research of Vchutemas, taking up themes of images and previous research that fascinate her. She established that places are fundamental for her, from the start she has worked when she finds herself in a space, structuring it with few materials and gestures. As in previous works such as the *Palazzo delle Stelline*, recalling Leonardo's room, the *Synagogue of Ostia*, alluding to the non-existent architrave, and the *Archaeological Museum of Acqui Terme*, relating to the ancient sculpture that her works observe and resume.

Fig. 12-14.
Paolo Icaro, 1991.

Alice Cattaneo, *Untitled*, 2016.

Alis Filliol, *Ultraterra*, 2016.

The Alis/Filliol duo works with their own bodies as the protagonist of the work, in the volumes created by lost snowmelt and in the wrapping in which the artists place themselves to build the figures with their bodies. Autonomous works with respect to the context, where the environment does not act in the first place but, for example, it is music that contributes to the work and evokes spaces, to the point of "creating landscapes" as in the 2015 Biennale.



The applications of the contemporary art historian, the historian of cinema, and of architecture that relates to the theater also contribute to this reinterpretation of “experimenting”. First of all Marco Vallora evaluates the path of the two artists he met during the workshop, Alis/Filliol, considering the work real, intense, meaningful, and taking it as an example against the rhetoric of manuals and bureaucracy. Vallora argues that within the relationship between architecture and sculpture it is important to understand that contemporary art is not an “inextricable tangle” and, at the same time, it is not a substitute with a filler function (take the example of *Puppy* at the Guggenheim in Bilbao). With the difference that art can move away from its “object”, while architecture cannot renounce its visibility but like the Shakespearean Antonio and like literature as well as sculpture teaches, a way must be found to leave room for beauty and a creator void.

An example of beauty brought by Michele Guerra, professor of History of Cinema, and which is confirmed in Michelangelo Eye to Eye (2004), the short film that Michelangelo Antonioni made at the age of 75, of his steps approaching Michelangelo Buonarroti’s Moses inside the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, showing the close-ups and the emotions of a relationship between his face as an observer and the marble that appears in a mirror between past matter and highly expressive life in progress. On the other hand, the film *Les statues meurent aussi* by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais (1954) exemplifies a beauty, that of African art, on which the imposition of Western interpretation transforms the religious fetish into a commodity, highlighting everything that is lost in the idea of space and sculpture by rejecting the true cultural origin.

The theater also represents a place of experimentation for the relationship between architecture and sculpture; Orazio Carpenzano provided his personal vision, presenting his works that combine dance and architectural forms. The designs and geometries join the movement that modifies shape. The shows presented, *Physico*, *Sylvatica*, *Pycta*, and *Lalunahalalone*, show the stage as a terrain that reveals designed geometries to which the body gives life and dimension, movement and light, and which makes the theater the place where the idea of space is investigated.

Enrico Prandi brought sculptural architecture to the foreground, i.e., that architectural work between form and monument, between figure and path, through the drawings of the walkable figure of San Carlo at Arona and of those architectures that refer, beyond sculpture, to something else, to a metaphor, to an image. Among these works, monuments are given the most tangible point of promiscuity: from the BBPR in Milan, to the Rossi of Segrate, from Fiorentino to Rome, and above all Carlo Aymonino who uses sculpture and composes architecture according to sculptural forms. Think of the 1985 drawing for the Venice Biennale where the framed landscape tells of architecture and sculptures in a single gesture.

Architecture is often accompanied by a theoretical thought which some protagonists explore, including Franco Purini. In his continuous relationship with drawing and solid forms, the architect uses black and white photographs of his buildings (and models). A continuous reference from the sign to the figure, from the form to the solid, observes the architecture as a living creature. Architecture is an art, i.e., the architect must think like an artist. This is how Palladio built the Venetian territory, but today his work is a creature that has changed in its own condition and like every form of art, brings it to life, reveals it, as is the case when a work of art is such. Purini argues that if its tangible and

Fig. 15-18.

Luciano Fabro, *Lo spirato*, 1973.
Photo by G. Ricci.

Still from Michelangelo Antonioni’s film, *Lo sguardo di Michelangelo*, 2004.

Orazio Carpenzano, *Project for Sylvatica*, 2005

Carlo Aymonino, Gabriella Barbini, *Project for the completion of St. Mark’s basin*, Third International Architecture Exhibition, Biennale di Venezia, 1985.

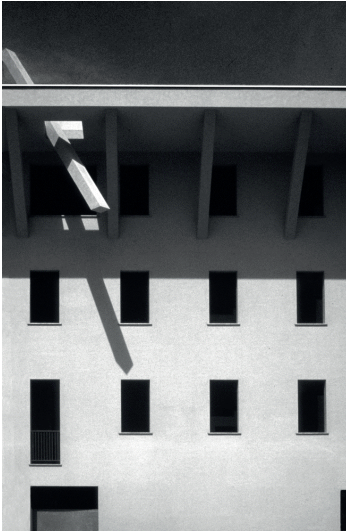


Fig. 19-20.

Franco Purini, Pirrello House, Gubbio, 1990.

Franco Purini at the Workshop, Abbazia di Valserena, Parma 27 July 2016. Photo by Paolo Barbaro.

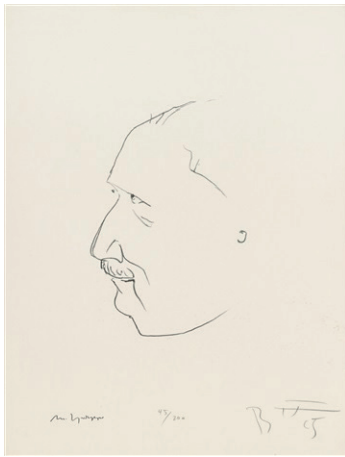
pictorial components do not emerge, architecture has diminished, in a tension towards the expression of “that which is mysterious in human construction”.

The idea for the workshop began with the desire to reread the text *Body and Space*, the 1964 transcription of a speech by Heidegger on the occasion of an exhibition by his sculptor friend Bernhard Heiliger. The short essay hides numerous pitfalls, as exposed by the round table conducted at the end of the workshop which, mediated and conducted by Rita Messori, brought some aspects of the text and the theme to light. Heidegger’s legacy (1964) is also found in some significant expressions: referring to ancient Greece he underlines how “the architectural and sculptural works of the great masters spoke for themselves. They spoke, that is, they indicated the place to which man belongs”. In changing thought and landscape, Heidegger recognizes that in any case “it is the artist who creates a comparison with space” and, broadening the reflection, “space makes room as space only insofar as man has space, [...] it orients itself and things in it and thus guards and protects the space as such.” Art, be it architecture or sculpture, seems to be what protects a sense of space, exploring its possible boundaries.

Rita Messori highlighted the evidence of Heideggerian thought: having first raised the theme of space by adopting an anti-Cartesian vision, space does not have a uniform and measurable dimension. Instead, “the work of art brings space into play and this brings the very idea of art into play. The work of art is to implement the truth.”

Heidegger also introduces the experience of space through living. Messori concluded by observing how “making room” in Heidegger is a continuous process, a manifesting process, the definitions show themselves over time as an event and continuous manifestation of the truth. For an architect - Lamber to Amistadi points out - the importance of this text is undeniable for founding a space as a space full of meaning. In the round table, Ildebrando Clemente and Carlo Gandolfi continued with the examples of architectural “doing” by speaking on the Heideggerian theme with the art historian Davide Colombo.

The conclusion of the workshop and its conferences, work, and meetings left different directions open for a moment such as the present, when the architecture of museums is empty, sculpture is not seen, and the eyes see only the forms of our everyday space. Numerous questions open up about the spaces that are “missing”, about spaces where gestures, bodies, traces of culture in-



dicare and still delimit the free place, that poetic hiding place, to which man belongs each time.

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Fig. 21-22.

Portrait of Martin Heidegger by Bernhard Heiliger, 1965.

Round table Starting from Body and space by Martin Heidegger, Cloister of the Abbey of Valsereina, Parma, July 22, 2016. Photo by Paolo Barbaro.

Maria Chiara Manfredi was born in Parma in April 1987. After completing her classical studies in high school she earned her Bachelor's degree from the Polytechnic Institute of Milan in 2013 under Prof. Daniele Vitale with a thesis on Milano Bovisa. An idea of the city. The station, the squares, the theater. She is currently working on her Ph.D. at the CSAC of the University of Parma with research on the relationship between the project archives and contemporary exhibitions. She has been supporting and collaborating in the Centre's exhibition activities since 2015. She has carried out brief work and research experiences in Portugal and in the USA.