

# *The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America*

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



**Annual Report  
2019–2020**



The Italian Academy is a premier global center for research in the humanities and sciences, founded in 1991 on the basis of an agreement between Columbia University and the Republic of Italy. Its chief commitment is to promote groundbreaking cross-disciplinary work while addressing international social issues.


## Fellowship Program

As the core of the Academy's work, the Fellowship Program invites scholars to dedicate one or two semesters to research. Each group has a balance of postdoctoral researchers, mid-career scholars, and full professors; they are chosen by a jury of experts in the relevant fields.


## Other Initiatives

- **The Arts, Humanities, and Neuroscience Project** has for over 20 years hosted resident scientists and regularly presented conferences on cutting-edge research.
- **The International Observatory for Cultural Heritage** is dedicated to all issues relating to the survival, protection, and conservation of cultural heritage; the Observatory is the home of the **Weinberg Fellowships** project as well as other research initiatives and symposia.
- **The NOMIS Project on Migrations and Mobility** explores the transition from foraging to farming.
- Since 2006, the **Alexander Bodini Foundation** has offered Fellowships in adolescent psychiatry and supported occasional year-long initiatives in the social sciences.
- **Cultural programs** include a concert series bringing world-class Italian music to New York; the Premio New York, a prize for emerging Italian artists; and public art exhibitions throughout the year.





**Fellows** are invited to contribute to the work of Columbia departments including Anthropology, Art History & Archaeology, Comparative Literature/Italian, Economics, History, Math, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Religion, Sociology, and in the Schools of Law, Business, Engineering, Architecture, and in the Earth Institute



**Neuroscience Researchers** at the Academy work in Psychiatry, Psychology, Biology labs and centers at the Columbia University Irving Medical Center; at the New York State Psychiatric Institute; and the Zuckerman Mind Brain Behavior Institute





**Early-career Fellows**  
move on from the  
Academy to new  
professorships or other  
research opportunities

**334 Fellows in residence** across twenty years

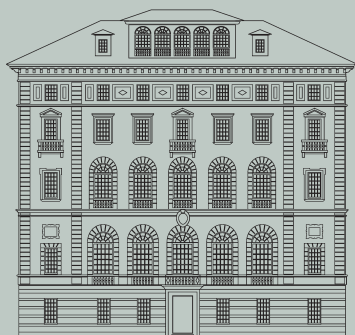


**Fellows come from** the United  
States, Italy, Australia, Austria,  
Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus,  
Denmark, England, France, Ger-  
many, Greece, Iraq, Israel, Japan,  
Mongolia, the Netherlands, Nigeria,  
Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Swe-  
den, Switzerland, Turkey, and the  
United Kingdom



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

**THE  
ITALIAN ACADEMY  
FOR  
ADVANCED STUDIES  
IN AMERICA**



**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2019—2020**

**NEW YORK 2020**





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## Governance of the Academy

The President of Columbia University serves as President of the Academy; the post of Honorary President is held by the President of the Republic of Italy. The Chairman of the Board is the Provost of Columbia University. The Director is the Head of the Academy.

Honorary President of the Academy

**SERGIO MATTARELLA** President of the Republic of Italy

President of the Academy

**LEE C. BOLLINGER** President of Columbia University,  
Seth Low Professor of the University

Chairman of the Board of Guarantors

**IRA KATZNELSON** Interim Provost of Columbia University,  
Ruggles Professor of Political Science and History, Deputy Director of  
Columbia World Projects

Director of the Academy

**DAVID FREEDBERG** Pierre Matisse Professor of the History of Art  
at Columbia University



# Board of Guarantors

## DANIELE BODINI

*Chairman Emeritus, American Continental Properties Group, New York*

## JONATHAN COLE

*Provost and Dean of Faculties Emeritus; John Mitchell Mason Professor of the University, Columbia University*

## ALAIN ELKANN

*Writer, Journalist*

## ANNA FOÀ

*Publisher, Tqqun Edizioni, Milan*

## MARK A. MAZOWER

*Ira D. Wallach Professor of History; Director, Institute for Ideas and Imagination, Columbia University*

## RENATO MIRACCO

*Art curator and critic; former Cultural Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C.*

## KATHARINA PISTOR

*Michael I. Sovern Professor of Law, Columbia University*

## GIANNI RIOTTA

*Journalist; Pirelli Visiting Professor of Italian Studies, Princeton University*

## ARMANDO VARRICCHIO

*Ambassador of Italy to the United States*

## SYDNEY HOUGHTON WEINBERG

*Trustee, Sidney J. Weinberg Jr. Foundation*

## Senior Fellows

### **QAIS AL-AWQATI**

*Robert F. Loeb Professor of Medicine and Professor of Physiology and Cellular Biophysics at Columbia University*

### **ENRICO ARBARELLO**

*Ordinario di Geometria, Sapienza Università di Roma*

### **RICHARD AXEL**

*Nobel Laureate and University Professor, Columbia University*

### **TEODOLINDA BAROLINI**

*Da Ponte Professor of Italian, Columbia University*

### **LINA BOLZONI**

*Ordinario di Letteratura Italiana, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa*

### **MARIA LUISA CATONI**

*Professor in Ancient Art History and Archaeology, IMT Institute for Advanced Studies Lucca*

### **VICTORIA DE GRAZIA**

*Moore Collegiate Professor of History, Columbia University*

### **PAOLO GALLUZZI**

*Direttore dell'Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Firenze*

### **CARLO GINZBURG**

*Ordinario di storia delle culture europee, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa*

### **ANTHONY GRAFTON**

*Henry Putnam University Professor of History, Princeton University*

### **DENIS HOLLIER**

*Professor of French, New York University*

### **ERIC KANDEL**

*Nobel Laureate and University Professor, Columbia University*

### **FRANCESCO PELLIZZI**

*Editor of Res and Research Associate in Middle American Ethnology at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University*

### **EDMUND S. PHELPS**

*Nobel Laureate and McVickar Professor of Political Economy, Columbia University*

## **RENZO PIANO**

*Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Genoa and Paris*

## **GIACOMO RIZZOLATTI**

*Direttore del Dipartimento di Neuroscienze ed ordinario di Fisiologia, Università di Parma*

## **SALVATORE SETTIS**

*Già Direttore della Scuola Normale Superiore ed ordinario di Storia dell'arte, Pisa*

## **HORST L. STORMER**

*Nobel Laureate and I. I. Rabi Professor of Physics, Columbia University*

## **NADIA URBINATI**

*Kyriakos Tsakopoulos Professor of Political Theory and Hellenic Studies, Columbia University*

## **MARINA WARNER, DBE**

*Professor of English and Creative Writing at Birkbeck, University of London*

## **HONORARY FELLOW**

## **DANIELE BODINI**

*Chairman Emeritus, American Continental Properties Group, New York*





## Staff

### David Freedberg

*Director*

Pierre Matisse Professor of the History of Art, Columbia University

### Barbara Faedda

*Executive Director*

### Allison Jeffrey

*Assistant Director*

### Abigail Asher

*Communications and  
Development Officer*

### Karen DeGraffenreid

*Business Manager*

### Adelle Parsons

*Program Manager*

### Barron Preston

*Operations Coordinator*

### Rick Whitaker

*Theater Manager*

## STUDENT ASSISTANTS (PART-TIME)

Janisse Collado

Alexander Christopher Cooney

Mary Kathryn Fellios

Paolo Iacovelli

Christopher E. Mingo

Karime Nickol Robles

Marisa C. Sylvester

## Director's Report

In the second semester Covid-19 firmly halted the academic year 2019–2020 but, as Provost Ira Katznelson said, the Italian Academy “showed us how to adjust nimbly to difficult circumstances—how to maintain activity and standing; it moved quickly and took great care to manage the Fellowship humanly and intellectually, keeping to the intellectual schedule of interactions of colleagues.”

Amid the sorrows and losses that followed, all of us at the Academy were grateful to Provost Katznelson and all our colleagues at Columbia who supported the Academy through the disruptions of the pandemic and our transition to online programs.

I was touched when—after a few days’ break during which the Fellows left New York—we resumed our weekly seminars, now online, which every Fellow continued to attend, whether from Turkey, from Germany, from Mexico, from Italy, or elsewhere.

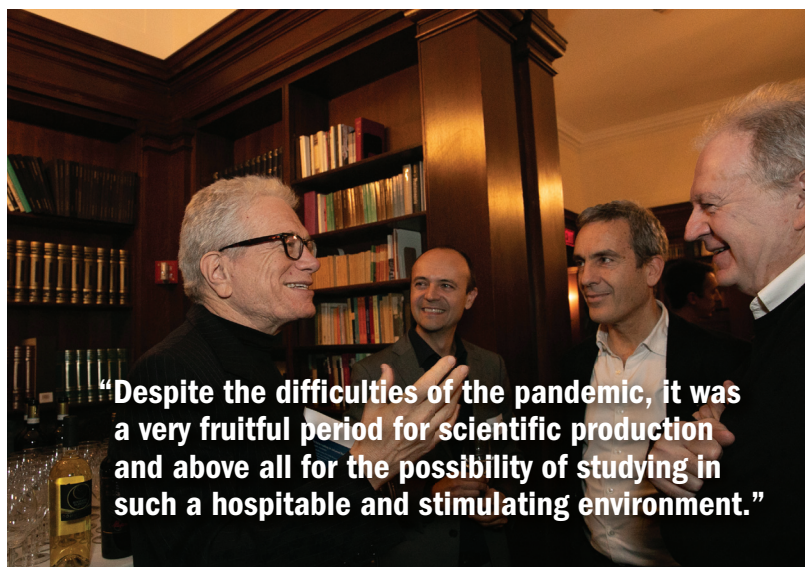
Even before the lockdown and departures from campus, the community spirit amongst the Fellows this year had been notable, and that spirit continued on despite the physical distances that separated us. As so often, we felt honored to have so brilliant and promising a group of scholars with us and I have no doubt that they will move on to make the kinds of contributions both to society and to scholarship that their brief period with us presaged. Even before she left, the Alexander Bodini Fellow in Transitions from Globalism to Nationalism and Populism, Marina Calloni, was appointed to the Italian government’s planning commission on post-COVID planning. Weinberg Fellow Gianmarco de Felice, known for his expertise in—among other things—the seismic assessment of cultural and heritage sites, offered valuable insights for our International Observatory for Cultural Heritage. And Gerhard Wolf, Director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, was a distinguished interlocutor for colleagues in various departments at Columbia, from Art History to Spanish.

Even so brief a mention of some of our wonderful Fellows will give an indication of how much we owe to the institutions that support us: first, the Sidney J.

Weinberg Jr. Foundation, which has brought us 12 Fellows in the past three years, from Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Croatia, America, the U.K., and Singapore.

We are also grateful for the NOMIS Foundation's support of the work of Dušan Borić and his team that studies ancient DNA, analyzes bones and pottery, and maps burial practices to trace patterns of migration of farmers into the territory of hunters and gatherers. This work gained wider notice with a *New York Times* article (8/20/19), "An Archaeological Puzzle on the Danube."

Finally, the Alexander Bodini Foundation continues to generously back the work not only of Marina Calloni but also that of Alessia Mastrodonato, who continued her research in Prof. Christine Ann Denny's lab dedicated to halting the process of Alzheimer's disease-related memory loss and to using rapid-acting antidepressants (such as ketamine) to improve mood and behavior. It's worth mentioning here that Alessia formed part of a group of no fewer than four other outstanding Fellows in our long-established Arts, Humanities, and Neuroscience Program: Marta Benenti from the Consorzio FINO (Filosofia del Nord Ovest), who worked on aesthetic experience and sensory imagination; Anna Ipata from the IMT School for Advanced Studies in Lucca, investigating the role of the cerebellum in learning new visuomotor associa-





tion tasks; Dario Maestripiè from the University of Chicago, who used interdisciplinary perspectives from cognitive science, behavioral economics, and evolutionary biology to see how the mind deals with knowledge and truth; and Manuela Piazza from the Università di Trento, who makes important contributions in unveiling the neurocognitive underpinnings of basic mathematics and of word semantics.

As always, our Fellows in the humanities, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, literature, urbanism and archaeology, law, medieval history, Renaissance history, contemporary history, and the history of music and of architecture were of the highest caliber and promised to make of this year one of our best. One way or another we hope to welcome all of them back again soon.

Although our Fellowship and research initiatives maintained a steady pace, Covid dealt a blow to our normally very active program of events. A full list will be found on the following pages of the conferences, talks, and exhibitions presented live to large crowds in our Teatro in the fall and winter, and those that we postponed in spring.

As our programs were postponed or went online, so did the gatherings of the Center for the Ancient Mediterranean and of the University Seminar in Modern Italian History—both long hosted at the Academy. As always, these organizations presented talks and meetings that shed new light on ancient and modern Italy and its neighboring regions.

In closing, I wish to thank the staff of the Academy. A varied and excellent program such as ours requires much from our small team, and their courtesy and effectiveness was visible to all in the busy days on campus in fall 2019 and winter 2020, and never more so than in the uncertain and challenging days of spring 2020, during the windstorm of crises that hit the University with the onset of the coronavirus.

For their unstinting support of our programs and initiatives, I thank the lively and attentive Board of Guarantors as well as Ambassador Varricchio, Consul General Francesco Genuardi, and their staffs. Let me conclude by once more thanking Ira Katznelson and his entire office for their extraordinary support during what was certainly one of the most difficult years Columbia has ever faced.

DAVID FREEDBERG, *Director*



# Fellows in Residence

## FALL 2019 AND SPRING 2020

Dušan Boric

*Nomis Foundation Fellow*

*University of Cambridge (U.K.)*

PROJECT: On the move: prehistoric mobility and the spread of agriculture in Eurasia



Alessia Mastrodonato

*Alexander Bodini Research Fellow in Developmental and Adolescent Psychiatry*

*Columbia University: Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, Inc., New York State Psychiatric Institute (NYSPI; U.S.A.)*

PROJECT: Identifying the neural correlates of fear generalization during development

SEMINAR Apr 2020: "Finding the memory engram"



Özden Mercan

*Bilkent Üniversitesi (Ankara, Turkey)*

PROJECT: The Ottoman diaspora in Renaissance Tuscany

SEMINAR Nov 2019: "Ottoman communities in Tuscany"

SEMINAR Feb 2020: "From Istanbul to Livorno: the flow of people, technologies, and practices"



James Norrie

*University of Oxford (U.K.)*

PROJECT: Religious heritage and monetization: the problem of simony in medieval Italy, c. 1050–1130

SEMINAR Nov 2019: "Money, value, religious revolt: Re-coining the eleventh century"

SEMINAR Feb 2020: "Re-coining the eleventh century in Italy: Value, gender, and religious revolt"



## FALL 2019



Marta Benenti

*Consorzio FINO (Filosofia del Nord Ovest; Italy)*

PROJECT: Aesthetic experience and sensory imagination

SEMINAR Dec 2019: "Metaphorical perception and mental imagery"



Rich Benjamin

*Russell Sage Foundation (New York, U.S.A.)*

PROJECT: Daniel Fignolé: Black/Italian exiles, the word and the world

SEMINAR Oct 2019: "Daniel Fignolé, the word and the world"



Mirjam Brusius

*Weinberg Fellow in Architectural History and Preservation*

*German Historical Institute London*

PROJECT: People inside ruins: heritage, photography, and counter-archives

SEMINAR Oct 2019: "Outside the archive: museums, institutional boundaries and the difficulty of writing histories of archaeology and heritage"

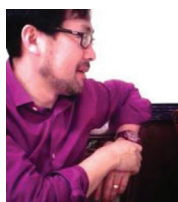


Francesco Gardani

*Universität Zürich (Switzerland)*

PROJECT: Syntactic transfer in the Italian spoken in New York City

SEMINAR Oct 2019: "Syntactic transfer in New York City Italian"



Hiro Hirai

*Radboud Universiteit (Nijmegen, the Netherlands)*

PROJECT: Cardano's dream interpretation in Renaissance medicine and natural philosophy

SEMINAR Dec 2019: "Cardano's dream interpretation in Renaissance medicine and natural philosophy"



Anna Ipata

*IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca (Italy)*

PROJECT: The role of the cerebellum in learning new visuomotor association tasks

SEMINAR Sep 2019: "The role of the cerebellum in learning new visuomotor association tasks"

Enajite Ojaruega

*Delta State University (Abraka, Nigeria)*

PROJECT: Representations of madness and other nervous conditions in female characters in African literature

SEMINAR Nov 2019: "Female mental illness in African culture, society, and literature"



Francesco Zimei

*Istituto Abruzzese di Storia Musicale (Italy)*

PROJECT: The founding of Italian opera in New York: Lorenzo da Ponte and *L'Ape musicale* in context

SEMINAR Sep 2019: "Lorenzo Da Ponte and his *L'Ape musicale*: an operatic legacy for New York"



Alen Žunić

*Weinberg Fellow in Architectural History and Preservation*

*Sveučilište u Zagrebu (Croatia)*

PROJECT: Urban heritage of modernism on the Adriatic coast: transformation of the Italian post-industrial Mediterranean landscape

SEMINAR Oct 2019: "The urban heritage of modernism on the Adriatic Coast: transformation of the Italian post-industrial Mediterranean landscape"



## SPRING 2020

Carolyn Behrmann

*Fellow for the Academy project "Law and its Manifestations"*

*Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Italy)*

PROJECT: Perceiving law: early modern normativity and the senses

SEMINAR Feb 2020: "Perceiving law: early modern normativity and the visual common"



Carmen Belmonte

*Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Italy)*

PROJECT: Preserving a difficult heritage: the afterlife of Fascist monumental art in contemporary Italy

SEMINAR Mar 2020: "Preserving a difficult heritage: the afterlife of Fascist monumental art in contemporary Italy"







Marina Calloni

*Alexander Bodini Fellowship in Transitions from Globalism to Nationalism and Populism*

*Università di Milano – Bicocca (Italy)*

PROJECT: What the people want: an analysis of the populist trend in Italy

SEMINAR Apr 2020: "What do the people want? The clash of irreconcilable populisms in Italy. The case of the Five-Stars Movement and of the Lega"



John Collins

*CUNY: Queens College & the Graduate Center (U.S.A.)*

PROJECT: What is left on the Brazilian periphery? Populism, critique, and the lives of democracy after Lula

SEMINAR Mar 2020: "Demise of the Big House: populism, problems of national intimacy, and sexual revanchism"



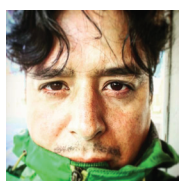
Gianmarco de Felice

*Weinberg Fellow in Architectural History and Preservation*

*Università degli Studi Roma Tre (Italy)*

PROJECT: Seismic assessment of cultural heritage: safety and conservation

SEMINAR Mar 2020: "Safety and preservation of cultural heritage: to do or not to do?"



José Antonio González Zarandona

*Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation (Victoria, Australia)*

PROJECT: Images of destruction, destruction of images: a political iconology of iconoclasm in the 21st century

SEMINAR Apr 2020: "Images of destruction, destruction of images: a political iconology of iconoclasm in the 21st century"



Dario Maestripietri

*The University of Chicago (U.S.A.)*

PROJECT: How the mind deals with knowledge and truth: interdisciplinary perspectives from cognitive science, behavioral economics, and evolutionary biology

SEMINAR Jan 2020: "How the mind deals with knowledge and truth: interdisciplinary perspectives from cognitive science, behavioral economics, and evolutionary biology"

Manuela Piazza

*Università di Trento (Italy)*

PROJECT: Efficient teaching practices and the neuroscience of learning  
SEMINAR Apr 2020: "The teacher as neuroscientist"



Cristina Ruggero

*Weinberg Fellow in Architectural History and Preservation*

*Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte (Munich, Germany)*

PROJECT: Majestic shadow of the past: documentation and narrative  
photography of Hadrian's Villa and Tivoli (1850–1930)

SEMINAR Feb 2020: "Majestic shadow of the past: Tivoli and Hadrian's  
Villa in photography between documentation and narrative (1870–1930)"



Gerhard Wolf

*Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Italy)*

PROJECT: Clasts and chronotopes of disasters: elements for an eco-art  
history of Italian urban and landscape heritage

SEMINAR Apr 2020: "Ecologies, art histories, catastrophes. A project, an  
interruption, a new dimension"

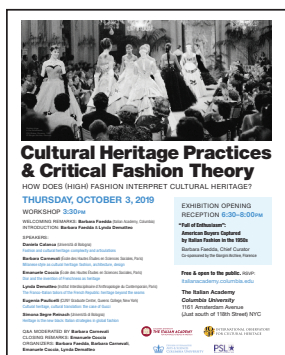


# Public Events

## SYMPOSIA, LECTURES, CONFERENCES

October 3: Conference and Exhibition

*Cultural Heritage Practices and Critical Fashion Theory: How Does (High) Fashion Capture and Interpret Cultural Heritage?*



**SPEAKERS:** Daniela Calanca (Università di Bologna); Barbara Carnevali (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris); Emanuele Coccia (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris); Lynda Dematteo (Institut Interdisciplinaire d'Anthropologie du Contemporain, Paris); Eugenia Paulicelli (CUNY Graduate Center, Queens College); Simona Segre Reinach (Università di Bologna)

**ORGANIZERS:** Barbara Faedda (Italian Academy) with former Academy Fellows, Barbara Carnevali (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), Emanuele Coccia (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), and Lynda Dematteo (Institut

Interdisciplinaire d'Anthropologie du Contemporain)

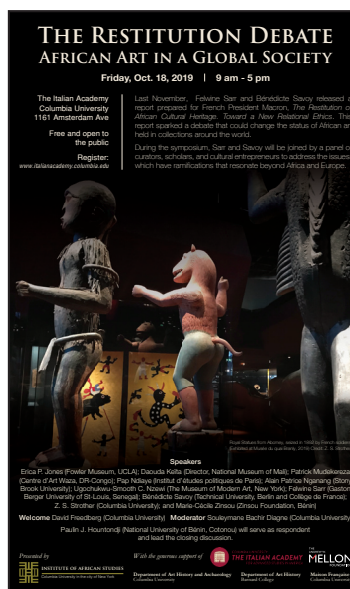
**CO-SPONSORS:** The Division of Humanities in the Arts and Sciences at Columbia; Paris Sciences & Lettres (PSL); Exhibition co-sponsored by The Giorgini Archive (Florence)

*International Observatory for Cultural Heritage*

October 17–18: Conference

*The Restitution Debate: African Art in a Global Society*

**SPEAKERS:** Erica P. Jones (Fowler Museum, University of California, Los Angeles); Daouda Keïta (Musée National du Mali, Bamako); Pap Ndiaye (Institut d'études politiques de Paris); Alain Patrice Nganang (Stony Brook University, New York); Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi (The Museum of Modern Art, New York); Ciraj Rassool (University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa); Felwine Sarr (Université Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis, Senegal); Bénédicte Savoy (Technische



Universität Berlin; Collège de France); Zoë Strother (Columbia University); and Marie-Cécile Zinsou (Fondation Zinsou, Cotonou, Bénin)

ORGANIZERS: Zoë Strother (Columbia), Souleymane Bachir Diagne (Columbia), Felwine Sarr (Université Gaston Berger, Saint-Louis, Senegal), Bénédicte Savoy (Technische Universität Berlin; Collège de France)

CO-SPONSORS: The Italian Academy, the Department of Art History and Archaeology (Columbia); The Department of Art History (Barnard College); The Maison Française (Columbia)

*International Observatory for Cultural Heritage*

*Presented by the Institute of African Studies with a grant from the Mellon Foundation*

November 15: Roundtable Discussion

***Competing Truths: Art and the Objects of History after the Council of Trent***

SPEAKERS: Karl Appuhn (New York University); Christia Mercer (Columbia); Felipe Pereda (Harvard); Alessandra Russo (Columbia); Pamela H. Smith (Columbia); Stefania Tutino (UCLA)

ORGANIZERS: Alessandra Di Croce (Columbia University; former Academy Fellow); Hannah Friedman (Columbia University); Grace Harpster (Georgia State University)

CO-SPONSORS: The Kress Foundation; The Frick Collection and Art Reference Library; and, at Columbia University, the Department of Art History, Department of History, Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life; Heyman Center for the Humanities







**Organizers:** Barbara Faedda (Columbia) and Paolo Carta (Università di Trento)

**CO-SPONSOR:** Italy's Autonomous Region of Sardinia

**April 1 (Postponed):** Edward Said Memorial Lecture  
*Strangers in a Strange Land: Displacement, Asylum and the Travelling Tale*

**SPEAKER:** Marina Warner

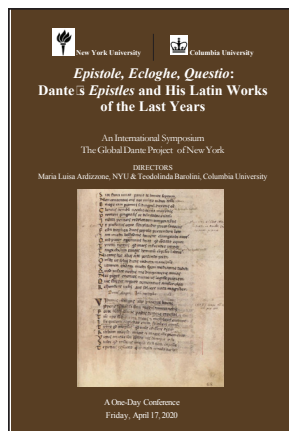
**CO-SPONSORS:** The Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities



**April 17 (Postponed):** Global Dante Project Conference  
*Latin works: Epistles, Eclogues, "Quaestio de aqua et terra"*

**ORGANIZERS:** Teodolinda Barolini (Columbia) and Maria Luisa Ardizzone (New York University)

**CO-SPONSORS:** Department of Italian Studies; The Medieval and Renaissance Center, Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò (all at New York University); The Department of Italian (Columbia); Banca Intesa Sanpaolo



**April 22 (Postponed):** Conference  
*Climate Change: Activism, Strategies and Experiences of Indigenous Peoples*

**CO-SPONSOR:** The Mellon Foundation

## CONCERTS

Series: October 10, 11, and 12

*Beethoven Perspectives: the works for cello and piano, plus 3 world premieres*

Francesco Dillon (cello) and Emanuele Torquati (piano)

I.

**On Oct 10:**

Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 1

Arturo Fuentes (b. 1975): *Questo Mare* (2019, world premiere)

Beethoven: 7 Variations on Mozart's "Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen"

Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 4



## II.

On Oct 11:

Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 2

Daniela Terranova (b. 1977): *Variazioni sul bianco* (2019, world premiere)

Beethoven: 12 Variations on Mozart's "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen"

Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 3

## III.

On Oct 12:

Beethoven: 12 Variations on Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*

Helena Winkelman (b. 1974): *Vis-à-vis Goya* (2019, world premiere)

Beethoven: Cello Sonata No. 3

November 7

**Ramin Amir Arjomand, piano**

Arjomand: Improvisation

Giacinto Scelsi: *Quattro Illustrazioni* (1953)

Scelsi: *Poemi* (1934/37)

J.S. Bach: *Fugue No. 8 in d-sharp minor* (from *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book II)

November 20

**Magdalena Baczewska and the Cassatt String Quartet**

Robert Schumann: Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44

Johannes Brahms: Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

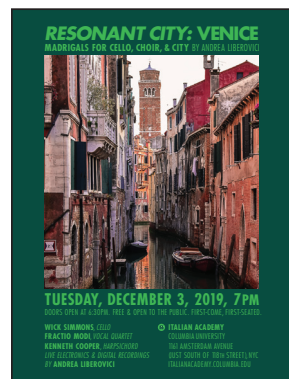
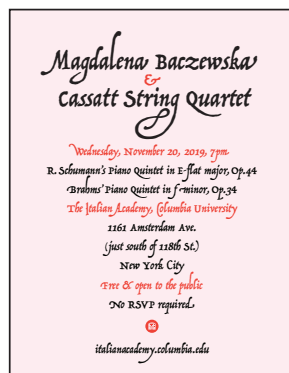
December 3

**Resonant City: Venice**

Wick Simmons, cello

Fractio Modi, vocal quartet

Madrigals for cello, choir, and city by Andrea Liberovici



April 20 (POSTPONED)

### **Beethoven's Literary Afterlife**

Roundtable discussion and performance

*Part of Carnegie Hall's year-long Beethoven Celebration*


Nicholas Dames (Columbia), Arden Hegele (Columbia), and Nicholas Chong (Rutgers) with moderator Elaine Sisman (Columbia)

Beethoven: Violin Sonata No. 7

Chad Hoopes, violin and Anne-Marie McDermott, piano

Recital  
Roundtable Discussion

**Beethoven's Literary Afterlife –  
POSTPONED**  
Part of Carnegie Hall's year-long Beethoven Celebration



Event Date  
Mon, Apr 20, 2020, 6:15 pm

POSTPONED

Location  
The Italian Academy  
1161 Amsterdam Avenue,  
New York, NY 10027  
(Just south of 118th Street)

Share

Series: February 19, March 4, April 29/30

### **A residency by Ensemble Échappé**

Benjamin Grow and Nina C. Young, artistic directors  
I.

On February 19:

Christopher Trapani: *Convergence Lines* (2017)

Isabel Mundry: *Dufay Bearbeitungen* (2003/4)

Elliott Carter: *Tempo i tempi* (1998–99)

II.

On March 4:

Tania León: *One Mo' Time* (2018)

John Glover: *Eat The Document* (2019)

Caterina di Cecca: *La verità ricurva* (2017)

Luciano Berio: *Folk Songs* (1964)


III.

On April 29/30 (Postponed):

Jonathan Dawe: *Being Ariodante* (2020, world premiere)

Opera for countertenor, soprano, mezzo, tenor, ASL-fluent actor,  
and instrumental ensemble

A RESIDENCY BY



ARTISTIC DIRECTORS  
Benjamin Grow  
Nina C. Young

MUSICIANS  
Julian Robinson  
Isabel Mundry  
Elliott Carter  
John Glover  
Christopher Trapani  
Caterina di Cecca  
Luciano Berio  
Tania León  
Jonathan Dawe  
Matthew Rios  
Amy Campbell  
Chad Hoopes  
Anne-Marie McDermott

**February 19 7:30pm** *Convergence Lines*  
Christopher Trapani | *Convergence Lines*  
Isabel Mundry | *Dufay Bearbeitungen*  
Elliott Carter | *Tempo i tempi*

**March 4 7:30pm** *The Truth is Curved*  
Tania León | *One Mo' Time*  
John Glover | New song cycle with vocalist Blythe Gissart  
based on Dana Spiotta's novel *eat the document*  
Caterina di Cecca | *La verità ricurva*  
Luciano Berio | *Folk Songs*

**April 29 & 30 7:30pm** *Being Ariodante*  
**Ensemble Échappé's** premiere performances of a fully staged new opera by Jonathan Dawe, *Being Ariodante* (2020) in the countertenor, soprano, mezzo, tenor, instrumental ensemble. A glacial prelude in American Sign Language. This tragic tale of young adults is set in Glasgow in the present day. The music is text in both English & Italian and by Jonathan Dawe. Directed by Matt Murphy.

**Free & open to the public.** No RSVP required.  
Ensemble Échappé is a "polished, ambitious young symphony..." – *The New Yorker*

**The Italian Academy | Columbia University**  
1161 Amsterdam Avenue (just south of 118th Street)  
New York City | [italianacademycolumbia.edu](http://italianacademycolumbia.edu)





## EXHIBITIONS

October 3 – February 28

*"Full of Enthusiasm": American Buyers Captured by Italian Fashion in the 1950s*

CURATOR: Barbara Faedda

CO-SPONSOR: The Giorgini Archive, Florence

May 29 – present

*Amatrice in Focus*

*Earthquakes and Photography—Recording the Past, Planning the Future*

An online exhibition by Francesco Gangemi, Italian Academy Fellow 2017

WITH OTHER RESEARCHERS: Rossana Torlantano (Università "G. D'Annunzio" in Chieti – Pescara);

Valentina Valerio (Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali di Roma)

CO-SPONSOR: Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max-Planck-Institut; Soprintendenza archeologia del Lazio (official partner)



## Art, Humanities, and Neuroscience Project

This project at the Italian Academy is one of the oldest cross-disciplinary programs of its kind in the world. During this year, the Academy's neuroscience work was marked by the presence of five Fellows. The Alexander Bodini Fellow in developmental and adolescent psychiatry was Alessia Mastrodonato, whose work is detailed on the following page and in the next chapter. She was joined by several other Fellows working in the neurosciences.

First among them was Marta Benenti, who came to the Academy with a project on aesthetic experience and sensory imagination and who noted after her stay that, thanks to the researchers working in the building with her, she reconsidered the role of art history in her own work, broadening her knowledge of music, cultural heritage, and re-appropriation while exploring the leading approaches to mental imagery in the philosophy of mind.



**“The kind expertise, creativity, and interdisciplinary efforts put forth by each of the Fellows pushed me to rethink my own research in novel ways.”**

Anna Ipata was studying the role of the cerebellum in learning new visuomotor association tasks; her research brought the first evidence in non-human primates of the participation of the cerebellum in higher-order cognitive processing.

Dario Maestripieri, who addressed how the mind deals with knowledge and truth, did cost-benefit analyses to explore questions such as: Under what conditions are human minds predisposed to be committed to the truth rather than accepting beliefs and facts that are false?

Manuela Piazza investigated efficient teaching practices and the neuroscience of learning by reviewing the main principles underlying learning and the main factors that facilitate it, assessing behavioral and neurophysiological data and then focusing on Montessori pedagogy.

## Alexander Bodini Foundation Fellowships

For over a decade, the Alexander Bodini Foundation has (with the guidance of Daniele Bodini, a Guarantor of the Academy) supported a researcher in developmental and adolescent psychiatry at the Academy. In this year, new funding permitted another opportunity: the Alexander Bodini Fellowship for studies in the transition from globalism to nationalism and populism.

This new Fellowship was held by Marina Calloni, who came with a project titled, "What the people want: an analysis of the populist trend in Italy." She is a Full Professor and Chair of Social and Political Philosophy at the Università di Milano – Bicocca (Italy), and Director of its ADV (Against Domestic Violence) center; she is also Deputy President of the Italian Society of Political Philosophy. While at the Academy, she was appointed by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to the committee (chaired by Vittorio Colao) developing projects for Italy's post-pandemic re-launch. She was a research fellow at the University of Frankfurt under Jürgen Habermas and a senior researcher and director of the International Network on Research on Gender at the London School of Economics. She has collaborated with many international institutions including the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNDP, and UNHCR.

The Alexander Bodini Fellow in developmental and adolescent psychiatry was Alessia Mastrodonato, who works at Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) in the laboratory of Dr. Christine Denny, and who took up a new position as Janssen Fellow in Translational Neuroscience at Columbia after her time at the Academy. Her project at the Academy was titled, "Identifying the neural correlates of fear generalization during development," and her work focuses on investigating the mechanisms underlying ketamine-induced stress resilience and how individual memories are modified by ketamine administration. She is author of several papers in important journals; within two years of joining her lab at Columbia, she had published two first-authored manuscripts, in *Biological Psychiatry* and *Scientific Reports*, and co-authored a third manuscript in *Neuropsychopharmacology*.



# International Observatory for Cultural Heritage

## PUBLIC EVENTS

The Academy drew an overflow crowd for its full-day symposium on the restitution of African cultural heritage artifacts—"The Restitution Debate: African Art in a Global Society." The speakers were curators, scholars, and cultural entrepreneurs from Mali, Senegal, South Africa, France, and many U.S. states.

For an academic approach to fashion studies, the Academy organized a workshop—"Cultural Heritage Practices & Critical Fashion Theory How Does (High) Fashion Interpret Cultural Heritage?"—and an exhibition—"Full of Enthusiasm': American Buyers Captured by Italian Fashion in the 1950s."

## SCHOLARSHIP

While our public halls were packed for these free events, the upper floors of the Academy housed the scholars who did research throughout the year: the four Weinberg Fellows, whose work is described in detail on the following pages.

## NEW FUNDING

The Sardinia Cultural Heritage Project is supported with a new grant from the island region itself; this three-year program will launch with a conference on the history and restoration of the ancient stone statues known as the Giants of Mont'e Prama.



## HOSTED PROJECTS

The Academy is also working with two former Fellows on digital exhibitions and interactive databases. The first is “FRIDA—Festivals in Renaissance Italy: Digital Atlas” which, with funding from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, has former Fellow Francesca Bortoletti developing a project on humanistic and court culture (Venice is the center of the pilot project). The second is “Amatrice in Focus,” an online exhibition on the earthquake-flattened town of Amatrice and the fate of damaged cultural heritage, created by former Fellow Francesco Gangemi under the auspices of the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max-Planck-Institut. (For an earlier example of such a hosted project, read about the Digital Serlio Project on our website).

The Advanced Program of Ancient History and Art, Columbia’s first credit-bearing archaeology course trains junior scholars at Hadrian’s Villa, the UNESCO World Heritage site. Created by the Italian Academy and by the University of Rome’s H2CU, this program paused briefly in the pandemic. (Read more on our website.)

This year, the Academy’s initiative “Law and its Manifestations”—comprising research and seminars that look at law and its images—welcomed Fellow Carolin Behrmann, who was working on a project titled “Perceiving law: early modern normativity and the visual common.”



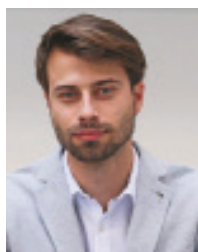
## Weinberg Fellowships

The third full year of the Weinberg program brought four new scholars and practitioners to the Academy, with projects on the conservation of architecture from all geographic areas and periods. Established with a \$1.15 million gift from the Sidney J. Weinberg Jr. Foundation, the program stands out as a highly visible marker of the Academy's International Observatory for Cultural Heritage. The Weinberg Fellows continue to enhance the Columbia campus with original work; they collaborate with professors based here, and they inaugurate new joint projects and develop new resources.

To introduce them briefly (as their own detailed reports are found at the end of this booklet): in the autumn the Academy welcomed, first, Mirjam Brusius from the German Historical Institute (England), who studies material and visual culture with a strong interest in the history of photography, museums, collecting, archaeology and heritage; and Alen Žunić from Sveučilište u Zagrebu (Croatia), whose work focuses on transformation of the Italian post-industrial Mediterranean landscape. In the spring, the Weinberg Fellows were Gianmarco de Felice—who works at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre (Italy) and who reports on the effect of seismic activity on the safety and conservation of cultural heritage—and Cristina Ruggero—from the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte (Germany), whose project was titled “Majestic shadow of the past: documentation and narrative photography of Hadrian's Villa and Tivoli (1850–1930).”



Mirjam Brusius



Alen Žunić



Gianmarco de Felice



Cristina Ruggero

## NOMIS Foundation Project on Migrations and Mobility

In 2019–2020 this project, funded at the Academy by the NOMIS Foundation, was very active on two continents. The project “On the Move: Prehistoric Mobility and the Spread of Agriculture in Eurasia” is led by Dušan Borić, an anthropological archaeologist who received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge and who has published widely on a variety of archaeological topics. The project engages evolutionary anthropology, genetics, and archaeology to address a fundamental demographic and cultural change in human evolutionary history: the transition from foraging to farming. “Understanding human culture and its evolution is essential to gaining valuable insights that can help address the global challenges facing us today. The key to this lies in studying migration, mobility and the nature of social interactions between groups of humans,” said Borić. In 2019, new fieldwork conducted in the scope of the project at the site of Vlasac in the Danube Gorges area of the Balkans revealed a new Mesolithic (c. 8500 BP) human burial. Samples were collected for radiocarbon and optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating, aDNA, and strontium isotope analyses in various museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Romania, and Greece. Collaborative links for various analyses were established with experts from several universities in the USA and Europe. A new lab was set up for this project at Columbia’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory campus, to perform Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry (ZooMS) analyses of small bone fragments to identify species, specifically screening for human remains. A project post-doc, Dr. Paul Duffy, worked on collating chronological data from various Early Holocene sites across southeastern Europe and Italy in order to analyze long-term patterns of human demographic histories.

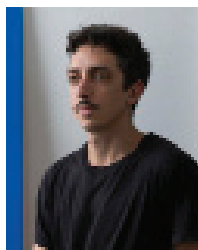


## Premio New York

Ruth Beraha and Agostino Iacurci, the winners of the Premio competition, arrived for their residency in January 2020 and worked until the pandemic obliged them to leave N.Y. (with an expectation of returning to complete the residency after the crisis).

Ruth Beraha's project was *The Voice from the Underground*, a fictional art history surviving in an iconoclastic era. Agostino Iacurci's project was *Tracing Vitruvio*, an oneiric journey through the pages of *De Architectura*.

The Premio brings emerging Italian artists to New York for a 6-month residency at the ISCP (International Studio and Curatorial Program) in Brooklyn, with the support of the Academy, the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, and—in Italy—the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism.



Agostino Iacurci



Ruth Beraha



**"I will always be grateful for the Italian Academy's visits to places which were highly relevant for my research, such as the exhibition on recovered treasures by the Italian Carabinieri at the United Nations headquarters."**



## Fellows' Reports

### CAROLIN BEHRMANN

I am very grateful for the opportunity to work in the frame of the Italian Academy project "Law and its Manifestations" on a book project that explores the "visual common sense" and the perception of norms. Being at the Academy has been a great privilege and all professional and personal experiences in these early times of the pandemic have made a profound and lasting impression. The power of norms results from their capacity to bind a community together. My project aims at explaining how visibility bridges or blocks the cognitive gap between norms and the understanding of them. What are the historical and cultural dimensions to sensory experience that help to understand the notion of legal normativity, the establishment of values? How, the projects asks in particular, do we learn to make sense of political and legal realities through visibility and sensory education? During the 17th and 18th centuries, a period of a rapid growth of the distribution of visual media, the common visual knowledge expanded to extremely diverse fields. Visual models of reality do not only bridge the "cognitive gap" between rule and behavior, they organize the visual field and superimpose dominant models upon other ways of perceiving reality. These questions became topical during my stay at the Academy. With the ongoing global pandemic, the perception of the "common sense" and informal rules that affect our behavior, have been sharpened and profoundly changed. We experience a groundbreaking global transformation of norms and what has been defined as "common." If "crisis" means a new sense of time and the moment before a decision or judgment is made, this is the moment to sharpen our critical historical approaches towards the process and generation of norms.

My heartfelt thanks go to the whole staff of the Italian Academy, for the thoughtful and considerate organization of our stay, the meetings and seminars. I also thank the other fellows for the open discussions and sense of community in these times of emergency. Ideally, fellowships are meant to act as stimulus, and the cross-disciplinary exchange at the Italian Academy has been extraordinary in this respect, eliciting questions of our disciplinary comfort zones and sparking discussions about ongoing politics. I thank the institution for its independence and seriousness and especially David Freedberg for the insistence to bring humanities and sciences together, defying the "Grenzpolizei" between the disciplinary borders. There was unfortunately not as much time as planned to connect with the scholarly community at Columbia University and other institutions in New York, but I am very glad to

have met Peter Goodrich (Cardozo Law School), to connect with the fellows of the Heyman Center for Humanities at Columbia University, to get inspired through 'The Making and Knowing Project' led by Pamela Smith (Center for Science and Society at Columbia University), and exchange with friends and colleagues of the Columbia Art History Department such as Diane Bodart, Zainab Bahrani, and Avinoam Shalem. Our stay at the Academy in person might have been shorter than planned, but the deeper the experience, the longer these moments were lived.

*Carolyn Behrmann is an associate researcher at the Kunsthistorisches Institut, Max-Planck-Institute (Florence) and the Käte-Hamburger-Kolleg for Advanced Studies "Law as Culture"(Bonn); she teaches art history at the University of Basel.*

## CARMEN BELMONTE

During the spring semester that I spent at the Italian Academy, I developed the project *Preserving a difficult heritage: The afterlife of fascist monumental art in contemporary Italy*. It focuses on the cultural and material history of selected works of fascist-era and colonialist monumental art, examining their afterlife from postwar to contemporary Italy. The aim is to analyze the diversity of approaches adopted for their display and conservation in contemporary Italy, investigating the role played by the art-historical discipline.

It was a great privilege to discuss my hypotheses and develop this project as part of the interdisciplinary community of the Italian Academy, taking advantage of the extraordinary sources and the rich libraries of Columbia University. Bringing together humanities and sciences, the Italian Academy gathers the ideal cohort to critically discuss and rethink research projects going beyond disciplinary borders. The weekly seminars with the intense and vivid debates directed by David Freedberg have often been a stimulus for further readings and new research questions. (Even though a productive intellectual exchange took place also in informal conversations in the library or visiting museums and exhibitions together.)

In just a few months, a strong sense of community was established among the fellows and then strengthened during the Covid-19 emergency that suddenly suspended all in-person meetings and pressured many of us to go back to our home countries. The weekly seminars started again via Zoom and we soon got used to discussion within the new virtual format.

Therefore, during the semester, we experienced the transition from the vibrant and dynamic life of New York to quarantine. In this time I wrote an article for a peer-reviewed journal, focusing on the cultural debate developed around exhibitions dedicated to fascist-era works of art in Italy during the Eighties, and I worked on a transdisciplinary book project on the afterlife of fascist-era heritage which I am editing in collaboration with the Bibliotheca Hertziana and the American Academy

in Rome (Hirmer, expected 2021). In the intellectual environment of Columbia University, I had the opportunity to attend the vibrant program of lectures and concerts organized by the Italian Academy, the Columbia Seminars in Modern Italian Studies and the Preservation Lecture Series. Moreover, the fellowship gave me the opportunity to be in touch with specialists in modern and contemporary Italy such as Mia Fuller and Romy Golan, and to present and discuss my work in several academic institutions and museums. I was invited to give a lecture at the Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley (titled “Colonial Battles in Nineteenth-Century Italian Visual Culture: Art, Illustration, and Photography”) and a talk at the Istituto di Cultura in New York related to the exhibition “Propaganda. The Art of Political Indoctrination in Italy, 1902–1950” curated by Nicola Lucchi at the Casa Italiana, NYU. I gave a talk on the work and exhibition “Spazio disponibile” by Dawit L Petros at the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery in Toronto, Canada, within the series “Italy and East Africa: Unexplored Histories”; I presented the paper “From Ras Mudur to Rome. Michele Cammarano’s paintings and writings in Eritrea (1889–1893)” at OTTOCENTISMI: Symposium of the Interdisciplinary Network for Nineteenth-Century Italian Studies at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, and I was the guest lecturer at a session of the graduate seminar entitled “Marble. A Material History of Sculpture” (prof. Fernando Loffredo) at the University of Boulder, Colorado. Some of these events were rearranged in a virtual format due to the pandemic. Though it was brief and sharply interrupted, the time spent at the Italian Academy remains one of my richest research experiences and I am deeply grateful to David Freedberg, Barbara Faedda, and to all the staff for providing us such outstanding research conditions.

*Carmen Belmonte is a Research Fellow at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck-Institut.*

## MARTA BENENTI

The semester I spent at the Italian Academy has been crucial for my research. The Academy gave me the opportunity to develop my project in the most comfortable and helpful environment ever. It put me in contact with prominent experts in my field, like Christopher Peacocke (Columbia) and Elizabeth Camp (Rutgers) and provided access to all sources and facilities available at Columbia. Moreover, the intense events agenda of the Academy made this experience culturally enriching. The daily intellectual exchange with colleagues from all over the world was particularly challenging. Genuine interest and disinterested support have characterized most relations that developed at the Academy. As an early stage researcher I benefited from the many discussions with senior colleagues, and as a philosopher I had the

chance to deal with extremely diverse, multidisciplinary and high-profile projects. In particular, thanks to my colleagues, I was forced to reconsider the role of History and especially Art History in my own work; I broadened my knowledge of music; I became passionate in debates about cultural heritage and re-appropriation; I submitted my project to neuroscientists and got promising feedback. One of the most remarkable results was a tangible improvement in my capacity to make fundamental topics of my research available to non-specialists. On the other hand, I got acquainted with previously neglected methods and epistemological strategies.

During my stay, besides completing my first monograph based on my Ph.D. dissertation (forthcoming for De Gruyter), I carried out a project concerning mental imagery and metaphorical perception. I reviewed the most recent literature concerning human capacity to form mental images in the cognitive sciences, including the latest neuroscientific data, and explored the leading approaches to mental imagery in the philosophy of mind. Meanwhile, I worked on the philosophical notion of “metaphorical perception” conceived as the perceptual experience of features “as being something else.” I presented an accessible overview of these topics and put forward a plausible explanation of metaphorical perception in terms of mental imagery. In doing this, I relied on the numerous examples provided by New York museums, exhibitions and cultural events on the one hand, and by my colleagues’ intriguing research on the other hand.

*Marta Benenti is now a postdoctoral research fellow in Philosophy at the University of Turin.*





## RICH BENJAMIN

It was a rare and welcome opportunity to work as Fellow at the Italian Academy. The level of intellectual stimulation and research productivity delivered by this fellowship far exceeded my expectations. During my semester, I made tremendous progress securing, reading, annotating, and analyzing primary sources (located on and off campus). To this research boon, I add the invaluable weekly seminars, where I enjoyed my colleagues' detail-specific interrogation of each weekly presenter's research, alongside a meta-view contextualization in regards to interdisciplinary debates. The occasion to present my own research, in the presence of seminar guest Merit Janow, Dean of Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs, was an invaluable use of effort, collaboration, and time. The approach and substance of my Academy research critically depends on a nimble, sophisticated blend of social science and humanities scholarship. The Academy Director, staff, and Fellows delivered me tremendous critical feedback particularly in terms of research methodology and content.

The value and productivity of this fellowship now speak for themselves to my thinking: As a direct result of my time at the Italian Academy, I secured a significant book contract on the topic of my work while there.

*Rich Benjamin continues his work as a political analyst and a cultural anthropologist.*

## MIRJAM BRUSIUS

Recent crises involving the destruction of heritage sites in the Middle East raise new questions about the very concept of 'heritage' and how it developed in modern history. The current discussion tends to split 'East' and 'West' in an unhelpful way and promotes 'preservation' over 'destruction' at the expense of a more nuanced and more effective understanding of how heritage and preservation has been determined over time and from different perspectives.

My intervention comes at a time when the 'Western preservation paradigm' is no longer unchallenged. Museums have come under increasing pressure to deal with calls for repatriation regarding colonial era collections, as debated at the landmark symposium "The Restitution Debate" presented by the Academy's International Observatory for Cultural Heritage (among others) during my fellowship period. New displays at the American Museum of Natural History, at the Guggenheim Museum and MoMA are signs of a shift towards making museums more inclusive and representative in terms of gender and race. Our weekly seminar discussions testified that these changes are timely and yet controversial: What does it mean to preserve 'difficult' heritage in public space, from confederate monuments in the US, to fascist

architecture in Italy? How do colonialism and fascism intersect in heritage studies, e.g., when discussing colonial fascist architecture in the Balkans? What to make of the fact that urban spaces deriving from the Fascist era are still used and appropriated as right-wing groups are on the rise? Does the sheer quantity of buildings in NYC built by enslaved people make critical debates about architecture futile, or should this be all the more a reason to acknowledge the racial ideologies that undergirded these material legacies? In other words, how should heritage be commemorated and preserved, who should be recognized, and who decides?

In my project I developed a historically based critique of what constitutes heritage; an “invented construct” shaped by Western ideology and power. I challenged the notion that there is “a heritage,” which matters to everyone and thus needs saving. I contextualized a range of approaches to preservation, focusing on people living inside and around “heritage sites” in the former territories of the Ottoman Empire. I also engaged with the role of more traditional archives as legacies of colonialism and asked how a range of alternative sources such as photography and oral histories—counter-archives—can help develop new narratives. What’s at stake, and why is it difficult for people, nations and institutions to engage with the material legacies of colonial and fascist regimes more critically, and listen to subaltern voices that were previously left out? Critical historical research on colonialism is sometimes dismissed as a trope and those who study it are dismissed as merely “ideological”; I also addressed the risks and resistance such research entails, from lack of access to archives to institutional exclusion and marginalization. I want to thank Professors David Freedberg, Barbara Faedda, Zainab Bahrani and Nadia Abu El-Haj for their intellectual and moral support; the Italian Academy staff for their kind assistance; and Sydney Weinberg for her open mind and generosity in advancing critical heritage research. This kind of support is crucial to pluralize a debate which has been monolithic for too long.

*Mirjam Brusius returns to her position as Research Fellow of Global and Colonial History at the German Historical Institute London.*

## MARINA CALLONI

In my long life as a researcher I have never had to modify research questions so many times: radical changes have become so rapid that theories seem inadequate to grasp them.

When I wrote my application for the Italian Academy in 2018 I was interested in understanding why forms of nationalism and populism had so quickly replaced globalization in public discourse. Since the field was too vast, I decided to focus my analysis on existing national varieties of populism. I thus wrote my application on the Italian case and in particular on the Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S, 5 Stars Movement)

and the Lega (League) that I defined as populist because of the persisting propaganda and the standing employment of generic words like *il popolo* and *gli Italiani*, which sophisticated algorithms and social media contributed to reinforce over time. In 2018 they constituted a “yellow-green” national government.

While I was getting ready to organize the work in 2019, the M5S-Lega government (with Giuseppe Conte as Prime Minister) fell, so my interest shifted to the analysis of those reasons, which caused a clash. Due to the government crisis, in summer 2019, a new center-left “yellow-red” government replaced the “yellow-green” coalition: 5 Stars Movement remained in power (and had to reframe some populist slogans), Conte was reappointed as Prime Minister, the Democratic Party (PD) with the Free and Equal (LEU) party joined the government, while the League shifted to the parliamentary opposition.

Finally, while I was finishing this work at the Italian Academy in Spring 2020, the epidemiological catastrophe of Covid-19 broke out, disrupting globally political programs and the existence of millions of people. This devastation also affected Italy. I thus reframed my initial research question as follows: “What could the populist national slogan ‘Italians first’ mean in a global tragedy?” What could the “will of the people” practically signify when a national community has to face a tragedy that is radically changing both private and public lives as a result of the constant danger of being infected?

The pandemic crisis has radically transformed the Italian political, social, cultural, and economic scenario, highlighting not only the emptiness of previous political frameworks and the crisis of populist demagogic propaganda, but also the need for rethinking democratic institutions in facing both the virus consequences and preexisting matters.

In the end, my research tried to underline how in real emergencies, populist parties are unable to support propaganda-imaginaries or to destabilize entirely the structures of liberal constitutions unless they become illiberal and authoritarian. What the “people” want in cases of emergencies is the protection of health, the development of innovative political strategies, the activation of adequate economic measures, a reinforced role of science / research, and cultural transformations, despite the clamor of negationist movements, conspiracy activists, and extreme right ideologists, who deny and refuse even factual truths.

From a global perspective, the analysis of the Italian case can contribute not only to enrich the international debate on populisms in political theory but to offer the opportunity to understand the impossible coexistence of confused multi-populist experiments. In particular, the Italian case shows the necessity of verifying the consistency of political legitimation against fake populisms as a result of the resilience of people in times of emergency, who demand “difficult” truths and factual

transformative actions.

*Marina Calloni returns to her roles: Full Professor and Chair of Social and Political Philosophy at the University of Milano – Bicocca, and Director of its ADV (Against Domestic Violence) center; and Deputy President of the Italian Society of Political Philosophy. She was also appointed by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to the committee (chaired by Vittorio Colao) developing projects for Italy's post-pandemic re-launch.*

## JOHN COLLINS

The Italian Academy fellowship program brought together an extraordinary group of scholars in Spring 2020. The kind expertise, creativity, and interdisciplinary efforts put forth by each of the fellows pushed me to rethink my own research in novel ways. In short, I found myself exposed to and offered a chance to engage seriously in a wealth of creative projects that will surely inspire ongoing, novel approaches to my own anthropological research.

More concretely, my thinking and writing conducted under the auspices of the Italian Academy in Spring Semester turned on an attempt to develop new approaches to problems of populism in the Americas, with a focus on Brazil of the last twenty years. Discussions with Fellows, Columbia faculty and staff, and visitors to the seminar were instrumental in helping me to approach in new and more complex ways what I have dubbed an “iconoclastic” approach to populism, or one that takes seriously the affective forces generated by and taking shape around objects and bodies at specific moments in Brazilian political and electoral processes.

In dialogue with seminar participants, I sought to contextualize this emphasis on what might be referred to as “vital” politics within political economic shifts in Brazil of the last two decades, and this led to the writing of a chapter entitled “‘Look at That’: Cures, Poisons, and Shifting Rationalities in the Backlands that have become a Sea (of Money).” This text will appear in July 2021 in an edited volume, *Precarious Democracy* (Rutgers University Press). It represents the first published writing as relates to *Three Lives*, my book manuscript currently in preparation. This ethnography examines the relationship between previous, Left-center federal governments and Brazil's rightward tilt under current President Jair Bolsonaro as experienced by three working class women in the city of Salvador, Bahia. Based on fieldwork in a working class, peripheral neighborhood of the sort often referred to as a favela in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, I seek in this text to disaggregate the category of “populism” in Brazil and, in the process, come to a fuller understanding of the roles and concerns of “the people” in liberal democracies today.

Discussions and resources offered by the Italian Academy were critical to its development in 2020 and will form a backbone to the manuscript when completed

in 2021. What I found most amazing about these discussions was the extent to which other seminar participants' backgrounds in the neurosciences as well as art history pushed me to question, and expand upon, more standard social scientific approaches to authoritarian politics, its principal actors, and its motivating forces.

*John Collins returns to his position as Associate Professor of Anthropology at Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY).*

## GIANMARCO DE FELICE

I was at the Italian Academy for the spring semester as a Weinberg Fellow in Architectural History and Preservation. My research project concerned the seismic assessment of cultural heritage, with the purpose of developing a close link between safety and preservation. The aim of my research at the Academy was to establish the fundamentals of the mechanics of historical buildings whose ancient design rules we have forgotten. A deeper understanding of the structural behavior of monuments, based on geometry, equilibrium and displacement control, rather than material strength, is the key to avoid harmful interventions of seismic retrofitting due to lack of knowledge and respect for historical buildings.

Despite the difficulties linked to the progressive spread of the pandemic, it was a very fruitful period for scientific production and above all for the possibility of studying in such a hospitable and stimulating environment. Two of my contributions were published in *Frontiers in Built Environment* during the months I spent at the Academy. The first one was dedicated to new compatible technologies for the repair of ancient masonry structures (Lessons Learned on the Tensile and Bond Behavior of Fabric Reinforced Cementitious Matrix Composite), and the second was on methods of structural analysis of historical buildings (Discrete and Continuous Approaches for the Failure Analysis of Masonry Structures Subjected to Settlements).

During my stay at the Academy I had the chance to build interesting relationships with both the Department of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics at Columbia University and the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia GSAPP. In addition to conducting my own research, I enjoyed listening to the presentations from other fellows in such different contexts far from my usual studies. That was an extraordinarily inspiring opportunity to have cross-disciplinary interactions between the sciences and the humanities. The multidisciplinary environment of the Academy has prompted me to look at my research in a broader perspective, making fruitful interactions with scholars, bringing new ideas and discovering unexpected outcomes of my studies. I naturally made a link between the different disciplines, to find a common alphabet in which scientific approach and technological innovation are guided and marked by humanistic thought.



I really enjoyed the peaceful and homelike atmosphere of the Academy and the inspiring cultural interaction with other fellows. I am grateful to the Italian Academy and to Ms. Sydney Weinberg for giving me the opportunity of this stimulating period at Columbia University. My heartfelt gratitude goes to the directors and to all the Academy staff.

*Gianmarco de Felice returns to his position as professor and head of the PhD School in Civil Engineering at Roma Tre University.*

## FRANCESCO GARDANI

Everybody who has written a report on their stay at the Italian Academy before me has used adjectives such as *extraordinary*, *precious*, and *stimulating* to describe their experience. In truth, you can't do otherwise. For me, too, it was a truly marvelous time, to which I think back often and which I've been missing a lot since I left.

At the Italian Academy, I worked on the effects that language contact might have on grammar. My focus was on the syntactic phenomenon known as "clitic climbing," whereby a clitic pronoun changes its position in a sentence without any occurring change in meaning. Given, for example, Italian *Marco vuole comprarlo* "Marco wants to buy it," the clitic *lo* "it," selected by the complement verb *comprar(e)* "buy," can move out of its local domain and climb to the matrix clause (*Marco vuole*), yielding *Marco lo vuole comprare*. The case of Italian spoken in New York City is particularly intriguing because Italian and English diverge structurally: clitic climbing is absent from English. As English is the first contact language for speakers of Italian in NYC, I pursued the hypothesis that the absence of object clitic climbing in the dominant language, English, would affect the syntactic rules of the non-dominant language, Italian, to an extent depending on sociolinguistic variables such as the degree of exposure to English. The test groups were to include heritage speakers who are not fluent in Italian, heritage speakers who are fluent in Italian, English-Italian co-dominant speakers, and Italian-dominant speakers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, as of 2017, out of more than 16 million American individuals who identify as Italian American, 527,123 live in the New York metropolitan area. In spite of very promising figures on paper, however, my quest for speakers turned out very difficult because in fact, most self-declared Italian Americans are linguistically fully assimilated to English and do not qualify as adequate linguistic informants. For these reasons, while I was able to conduct some tests, I would have needed much more time to get statistically significant data. I hope I will soon be able to return to New York and collect data focusing on more recent migrants. Besides, I worked fruitfully on several papers, which I was able to wrap up and submit successfully.

As I am writing this report, everything—on an almost global scale—seems to have

changed. I am so thankful I had the chance to stay in New York before the Covid-19 pandemic hit us. As I am writing, however, tons of vaccines are rolling out across several countries. I hope many other scholars will have the same chance and the privilege to experience—again—what I did, in 2019.

*Francesco Gardani took up a new position as Professor of Romance Linguistics at the University of Zurich.*

## JOSÉ ANTONIO GONZÁLEZ ZARANDONA

My original plan as a Fellow at the Italian Academy was to finalize two chapters of my current project on iconoclasm in the 21st century, by taking advantage of the extraordinary archives available in New York and Columbia University. Alas, Covid-19 truncated my plans and instead I used my time at Columbia to draft another chapter, part of the same project.

While at Columbia I was fortunate to meet several people who kindly welcomed me into their offices to have a chat, or into their classes to learn from them. I will always be grateful to Professor Zainab Bahrani, Professor Jorge-Otero Pailos and Professor Jonathan Crary. I also had the opportunity to meet Ruth Beraha who was awarded an artistic residency in New York by the Italian Academy to work on a project on iconoclasm. Interviewing her also helped shape my ideas to finish my chapter.

When Covid-19 hit New York, the overall atmosphere of anxiety was not easy to navigate. While the infection and death rates in New York were slowly rising, people in the city seemed to be celebrating a party before the world ended. Meanwhile Europe, especially Italy, where most of the fellows came from, was experiencing the worst of the pandemic. Every day we would hear a different story and we would be given different instructions. While all the shelves in the supermarkets became empty, the Metropolitan Museum closed its doors, and emails announcing the cancellation of cultural events, classes, and the closure of public and private archives flooded my inbox, I finished the chapter. Overall, I found those days difficult, as I had to quickly decide whether I would stay in New York or leave the city, before the situation got out of control. Sadly, I left New York in the middle of March.

Once most of the fellows relocated to different countries, we all reconvened over Zoom and I delivered my seminar paper which was commented on by Professor Bahrani and Professor Otero-Pailos. I found the weekly seminars challenging but rewarding. I will always be grateful to Professor David Freedberg, Dr. Barbara Faedda, and the rest of the Academy team for organizing the seminars, as well as the visits to places which were highly relevant for my research, such as the exhibition on recovered treasures by the Italian Carabinieri at the United Nations headquarters, and the Prints and Drawings department at the Metropolitan Museum. During both the

visits and the seminars, I learned so much about many topics, some of which I had no previous knowledge of. An invitation to lecture at Yale University also provided an opportunity to present my work to a very enthusiastic group of art historians, theologians, and archaeologists.

The Spring 2020 Italian Academy Fellows will always be known as the Covid-19 cohort, I am sure. While I will always regret that I could not finish my fellowship at the Italian Academy, I will always remember the time I spent at Columbia University and in New York City with joy.

*José Antonio González Zarandona returns to his position as a Research Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute (Deakin University, Australia).*

## HIRO HIRAI

Girolamo Cardano (1501–1576/7) of Milan was one of the most famous physicians of early modern Europe and a representative of the intellectual culture of the Italian Renaissance. A typical genius of the time, he wrote extensively in a wide range of fields, from medicine, natural philosophy and mathematics (via cosmology and astrology) to ethics. On some occasions, Cardano emerged as a rational scientist by criticizing the errors of medieval Scholastics and by arguing that the understanding of the natural world had to be established upon direct observations. On other occasions, he appeared totally irrational by declaring that he was gifted with the power to foretell the future. This striking coexistence of two opposing attitudes in an intellectual is a major reason Cardano continues to fascinate modern readers. One of the best ways to approach his world is to study his claims of future-telling ability based on the interpretation of dreams.

Indeed Cardano repeatedly spoke of his dreams and tried to capture their meanings. For him, dreams were also important for describing himself and reflecting on his life events. His interest revolved around the special type of dreams that he believed allowed him to predict the future. Dream interpretation was for Cardano something close to medical prognostication, which in turn had a common basis with divination and was intimately related to astrology and even prophecy. He firmly believed that a certain type of human being with the special capacity of premonition could exercise this art based on astral causality.

Upon his lifelong quest, Cardano published his work of dream interpretation, entitled *Four Books of Synesian Dreams* (*Somniorum Synesiorum libri Quatuor*) (Basel, 1562). Through an in-depth study of this treatise, I address the following questions: What was the historical and intellectual context that enabled Cardano to pursue the activity of dream interpretation? On which bases did Cardano devote his labor and energy to this activity? What was the real nature of his method? How firmly grounded was

his activity in the medicine and natural philosophy of his time? How far does the collection and analysis of dream interpretations resemble those of medical cases and astrological horoscopes? To what extent was Cardano concerned with religious and theological issues of the time? What was his ultimate goal?

For this research Cardano's posthumous autobiography, *On My Own Life* (*De propria vita*; Paris, 1643), serves as a precious instrument since it also contains the striking reports of dreams, most of which revolved around the theme of his immortal fame. To Cardano's eyes, dreams in sleep and mysterious events in daily life did not belong to different realms of illusion and reality. His life can be understood as a unified whole thanks to the interpretation of premonitory dreams. Thus a deeper analysis of Cardano's *Synesian Dreams* also provides further insight into one of the major autobiographies from early modern Europe.

*Hiro Hirai takes up a new position as a research associate at Columbia University's Center for Science and Society.*

## ANNA IPATA

When we press the brake pedal of the car at a red traffic light, we are making a visuomotor conditional association between a visual stimulus, red, and a movement, foot flexion. The ability to constantly learn new associations between two elements (stimulus and behavior) is fundamental in all life stages.

Visuomotor conditional associations occur when sensory instructions and behavioral responses are linked by arbitrary rules; they represent a higher-order cognitive



function because they require the ability to confer an abstract value, a rule, to a sensory stimulus.

In recent years, much progress has been made in trying to understand the neuronal mechanisms of learning new visuomotor associations. Lesions of the human prefrontal cortex, an area that is involved in a range of cognitive operations such as memory, attention, cognitive control and emotional state, result in an impairment of learning new visuomotor conditional associations.

The idea that the cerebellum plays a role in cognitive functions is relatively new. According to the classical view, the cerebellum had a key role only in the control of movement and in the acquisition of new motor skills. Recently, new clinical, imaging and anatomical studies have challenged this notion. An impairment to learning new visuomotor association has been found in patients with lesions of the cerebellum; reciprocal connections between the cerebellum and the prefrontal cortex have been established, suggesting that the cerebellum, like the prefrontal cortex, may play a role in arbitrary visuomotor association. The aim of my project is to investigate this hypothesis.

I recorded the activity of the Purkinje neurons of the cerebellar cortex in two Rhesus monkeys while they were learning a new visuomotor conditional association. The animals were presented with a visual stimulus of two possible colors; one color instructed the animals to lift one hand, the other color to lift the other hand. We recorded the neuron's activity during learning, until the performance reached at least 80% of correct trials. The results show a strong modulation of the Purkinje cells' firing rate during the learning of a new visuomotor association, similarly to the neurons of the prefrontal cortex and other regions that are involved in higher-order cognitive processing.

This is the first electrophysiological evidence in non-human primates of the participation of the cerebellum in higher-order cognitive processing and it thus provides a major departure from our current understanding of the role of cerebellar Purkinje neurons.

*Anna Ipata is an Associate Research Scientist of the department of Neuroscience at Columbia University, where she is continuing her research aimed at the study of the neurophysiology of the cerebellar circuits in non-motor domains.*

## **DARIO MAESTRIPIERI**

I had the honor and the privilege to be a Fellow of the Italian Academy in early 2020. For approximately 3 months, I had the opportunity to spend time with the staff of the Academy and with the other Fellows as well as to participate in the weekly seminars, attend many cultural events, engage in countless intellectual conversations in the



Library of the Academy, and work on my book project in my beautiful office. The Academy's building, with all of its resources and amenities, including the magnificent espresso machine in the Library, is a wonderful working environment that is conducive to thinking, learning, and writing.

My book project is a monograph entitled "Knowledge is Power, but Ignorance is Bliss: The costs and benefits of knowing and not knowing the truth about ourselves and the world we live in." Philosophers have debated the value of knowledge and truth for centuries. In my book, I tackle this question from a new perspective and focus on how the human mind deals with issues of knowledge and truth. I address questions such as: Under what conditions are human minds predisposed to seek and value knowledge versus maintain and promote ignorance? Under what conditions are human minds predisposed to be committed to the truth versus to accept beliefs and facts that are obviously false? Integrating perspectives from cognitive science, behavioral economics, and evolutionary biology, I use cost-benefit analyses to explore and understand when, how, and why knowledge can be power and ignorance can be bliss.

Some of the topics covered in my book include: historical perspectives on the topic of the book (From the Enlightenment to Post-Modernism: the rise and fall of knowledge and truth); individual differences in propensities toward knowledge and truth; inaccurate perceptions, weird beliefs, and false memories; the costs and benefits of self-knowledge (Know thyself. Or not?); the notion that feelings and desires, not knowledge and truth, guide our lives; the use and misuse of knowledge and truth for persuasion, manipulation, and power; what psychopathologies such as depression and narcissism tell us about knowledge and truth; faith, religion, and irrationality; knowledge and truth in academia, government, business, entertainment, and in the news. I also address these questions: Is knowledge power? Is ignorance bliss? Does the truth matter? Is it better to invest in knowledge or in skills?

During my stay at the Italian Academy I was able to work out the table of contents of my book, write a book proposal for a potential publisher, write the entire first chapter, and begin drafts of several other chapters. Presenting my project at one of the weekly seminars was greatly beneficial, as I received valuable feedback from the other Fellows and the Academy staff. I was very fortunate to find myself in a cohort of amazing Fellows: all interesting people doing incredible work. I am very grateful to the Academy Directors, Prof. David Freedberg and Dr. Barbara Faedda, and to the other staff members for their hospitality and support.

*Dario Maestriperi returns to his position as a Full Professor at The University of Chicago.*

## ALESSIA MASTRODONATO

I had the great pleasure of being a fellow at the Italian Academy at Columbia University in the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. The time I spent in the vibrant scientific atmosphere of the Italian Academy, in which scholars from all around the world work together to fill the gap between science and humanities, was unforgettable and unique.

Particularly, I most appreciated having the opportunity of being involved in many interdisciplinary projects launched by the Academy, such as public conferences promoting academic, cultural, and scientific exchange. Moreover, I enjoyed engaging in discussion with experts in a variety of subjects from around the globe about the connection between humanities and neuroscience.

During my tenure, I was humbled to be awarded the Alexander Bodini fellowship in adolescent psychiatry by the Italian Academy. My research project made use of a transgenic mouse line to quantify and manipulate the neural populations that represent memory (engrams) which mediate fear generalization as a function of age. I used behavioral, genetic, and whole-brain imaging methods to directly investigate the circuit underlying fear generalization during adolescence. This work is extremely important because adolescence is a sensitive period with a high onset of anxiety disorders. My work was conducted at Columbia University Irving Medical Center (CUIMC) in the laboratory of Dr. Christine Denny. Being a part of Dr. Denny's group was a fruitful experience in vigorous academic learning and research in this field. In this lab, I was mentored on fundamental and technical aspects of fear generalization, design and execution of behavioral experiments, transgenic mouse strategies, translational implications of my work, and the latest scientific literature. This opportunity allowed me to build the foundation for my independent research program and enable me to be highly competitive for subsequent grant funding.

In addition to performing experiments in laboratory, during my stay at the Italian Academy, I have built strong interpersonal and working relationships, most of which are potential future collaborations. Our weekly coffee break meetings in the beautiful library of the Italian Academy and outside were a productive chance for interdisciplinary exchange of ideas. These conversations opened my horizons of research, which previously focused on very narrow aspects of science. Indeed, the Italian Academy, by bringing together humanists and neuroscientists, is at the center of a cross-disciplinary approach which can only benefit research. I was especially impacted by the discussions on engrams with the Director, Prof. David Freedberg, which resulted in a productive exchange of perspectives and approaches.

The Academy's prolific environment was also made possible by the excellent work of the Executive Director Prof. Barbara Faedda and the whole Italian Academy staff. Their support allows the creation of a stimulating, collaborative and superb

atmosphere, and will continue to do so for a long time. In summary, I could not think of a better time in my scientific career than the past 8 intense months spent at the Italian Academy. They were a precious opportunity for my career path and for my intellectual development.

*Alessia Mastrodonato takes up a new position as Janssen Fellow in Translational Neuroscience 2020–2021 at Columbia University.*

## ÖZDEN MERCAN

During my fellowship at the Italian Academy, I worked on a project that explored the Ottoman communities who were present in Tuscany during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this period, the Medici rulers devoted a considerable effort to encourage merchants and artisans from the Ottoman Empire to settle in the grand ducal free port of Livorno and Pisa, which, then, was a center of textile production. Drawing on a variety of archival sources, my project has examined the Ottoman presence in these Tuscan port cities, placing a particular emphasis on the first group of settlers who migrated from the Ottoman Empire, their motives for moving, their adaptation into their new environment and their mediating role between Tuscany and the Ottoman Empire. In this context, my project has also explored the role that these migrants played in the flow of trade, the diffusion of information, and their specialist technical knowledge of clothing fashions and new technologies in textile production between the east and west.

My research has immensely benefited from the resources offered by the libraries of Columbia University as well as the highly supportive community of the Italian Academy and its various facilities. I would like to express my gratitude to David Freedberg, Barbara Faedda and to all the staff: Abigail Asher, Allison Jeffrey, Adelle Parsons, Karen DeGraffenreid and Barron Preston. The vibrant intellectual atmosphere of the Academy and lively academic discussions with Prof. Freedberg and other Fellows during weekly seminars were both stimulating and inspiring as I was able to re-evaluate my thoughts and arguments as well as learn more about other fields.

During my stay at the Academy, I had the opportunity to engage in stimulating conversations with various scholars at Columbia University and other universities, who provided invaluable feedback on my project and working papers. I would like to thank Professors Neslihan Senocak, Pier Mattia Tommasino and Gerhard Wolf for their important insights on the papers I presented at the Academy's seminars. I also gave talks at the Medieval Studies Seminar and at the European History & Politics Workshop organized by the European Institute, and I was invited to be a respondent in one of the talks at the Italian and Mediterranean Colloquium.

While at the Academy, I prepared and submitted an article to the Mediterranean

Historical Review and I started working on a monograph for publication. I also worked intensively and completed another book project as associate editor (which will soon be out for publication with Edinburgh University Press). During the Spring semester, the outbreak of Covid-19 certainly had a dramatic impact on our academic activities as well as our personal lives and brought an unwelcome end to this unique experience. Still, I feel privileged to have stayed the whole year and experienced an enriching and inspiring life in New York as well as to have fostered so many valuable friendships.

*Özden Mercan continues her work as an independent scholar.*

## JAMES NORRIE

My year at the Academy, and in New York City, forged and remade ideas which now direct my research on the medieval world. With a room of my own and the comradeship of fellows and staff, I was able to begin a new research project. By investigating how monetization transformed religious life and gender in eleventh-century Italy, it asks how changes to value remake wider human history. I examine a moment when the use and social reach of silver coinage expanded. Connected anxieties about coin-use, female bodies, and the commodification of religious office drove crises in high politics and the birth of social movements on a scale then unprecedented in medieval Europe. The turbulence which ensued saw popular resistance in Italy's cities against clerical authority and women's occupation of public



and commercial space. Crowds tore priests from their altars and chased bishops from their seats.

The Academy provided a critical environment for me to test new approaches to the written and material evidence for these changes, informed by theoretical work in social anthropology and global historical comparison. Supported by Columbia's rich library holdings, I located eleventh-century anxieties about coinage in the long history of money-use and its cultural effects from the ancient Mediterranean onwards. At the same time, I compared the ways in which new regimes of money-use remade other pre-modern religious cultures, from early-modern West Africa to Song-dynasty China. Comparison helped uncover the particularities of the Italian experience, while anthropological research into the cultural dangers raised by the 'conveyance' and confusion of different forms of value offered new tools for approaching my subject. Finally, I drew on recent work on the changing demography of women in medieval Italy, to suggest how the gendering of space and economic activity was affected by monetization.

My arguments were greatly enriched by the discussions, collegial but always rigorous, hosted at the Academy. During weekly seminars, colleagues from anthropology to art history encouraged me to rethink approaches to material culture and disciplinary method, while our neuroscientists foregrounded the need for clarity of scholarly communication. As master of ceremonies, David Freedberg insisted on teasing out what was at stake beyond the parochial concerns of individual academic fields. Throughout we also engaged with problems of heritage and its colonial legacies, raising the importance of ethical and collective commitment in our scholarship. I had the opportunity too to build relations with and present my work to new and old friends at Columbia and at New York University.

The great museums, subway lines, and darkly lit rooms of New York were also essential spaces of education. The pandemic suspended many of the joyous and thrilling aspects of the first six months of the fellowship. The Academy staff provided kind support while I sheltered in place. I was fortunate to stay in New York long enough to hear the ambulance sirens grow quieter, and for life to return to the streets. This included the movement of peoples which came out to protest for racial justice and liberation in the Summer. As an urban historian, I was lucky enough to understand up close how great cities can be spaces of danger, but also of enduring creativity and human possibility.

*James Norrie takes up a new position as a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the University of Birmingham.*



## ENAJITE OJARUEGA

My semester as a Fellow of the Italian Academy at Columbia University was a remarkable experience and for a long time to come will call up great memories for me. It would also go down in my records of academic experiences as an exceptional springboard which I intend building upon to further improve my career as an African and international scholar. I was given a unique opportunity to devote time, space and other available resources to some of my immediate and long-term academic research projects. I had applied, and got accepted, for a fellowship under the Arts, Humanities and Neuroscience program through my proposal on representations of female madness and other nervous conditions in African literature. Having worked before on aspects of female trauma during civil war conflicts in African literature, and against the backdrop of an increasing prevalence of psychiatric disorders among African women, my intention was to explore further how African literary narratives have thematized female experiences of mental illness in their fictional writings.

Settling down to my study meant I had to consult many other related primary and secondary materials in addition to those I already know. The vast array of print and e-sources Columbia and other associated libraries offered me was indeed quite helpful and useful. While I discovered and acknowledge that a lot has been published on feminist studies in African literature, the psychological conditions of women from the intersections of literature, culture and neuroscience which my study adopts would ultimately be an enriching addition to the available corpus of critical works on this subject matter. I was able to complete, and presented during one of our weekly fellows' seminar, a draft copy of a new paper which examined how socio-cultural and environmental factors within the African context triggered and sustained some forms of mental disorders in female characters as depicted in African literature. I must confess that the weekly seminar was one of the high-points of robust interactions between fellows and principal staff of the Academy. I attended each curious to learn new things and left impressed by the intellectually stimulating and beneficial discourses that came up because of the multidisciplinary perspectives participants offered. I also attended some extracurricular activities within and outside the Academy that broadened and enriched my understanding of my host and other cultures.

My long-term goal from this fellowship experience is a book project on female mental illness in African literature. It would be a holistic approach to the subject matter that would critically engage sociological, theoretical, textual as well as other intellectual frameworks. The proposal I submitted in my application to the Academy served as a guide in developing an outline and I was able to work on the

first and part of the second chapters. I was also able to get some academic materials for single article projects that will definitely facilitate my writing and publishing when I return.

Indeed, the semester at the Academy was worth its weight in gold and some more!

*Enajite Ojaruega returns to her position as Associate Professor of African Literature at The Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.*

## MANUELA PIAZZA

During my time at the Italian Academy I mainly worked on an opinion piece that aims at illustrating how successful pedagogical practices have emerged from often informal intuitions on the conditions under which the brain best learns. I started by reviewing the main principles underlying learning and the main factors that facilitate it, referring to both behavioral and neurophysiological data. Then, I focused on one specific pedagogy, the Montessori pedagogy, and deepened my knowledge of it, by systematizing the principles underlying the practice and formalizing the specific practices into meaningful categories. I then started highlighting the cases where the intuitions and the practical indications on how to best teach can be currently supported by the neuroscientific evidence. The piece is still in preparation.

During my (unfortunately too short) stay in NY I have also established a novel collaboration with an estimated colleague at Dartmouth College, Jim Haxby, and attended several meetings and talks at the Zuckerman Institute, where I interacted with fellows interested in the neuronal mechanisms underlying spatial navigation, which I have been recently shown also support navigation in more abstract mental spaces. I also interacted with Liz Spelke at Harvard on a collaborative project on the neuronal changes supporting concept learning in children and adults.

To give a very specific description of my work and the activities that I did, here is a timeline:

January: Completed proofing my recent empirical paper where I used fMRI to show that the same brain structures and coding schemes that support physical navigation are also recruited during navigation of abstract spaces (published in *Journal of Neuroscience*).

January: Submit an empirical paper on the perceptual cues that infants use to establish the exact numerosity of small sets of objects (to *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, now published).

February: Initiated contact with Stefano Fusi at the Zuckerman Institute and planned a talk.

February: Presented my work at the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at Dartmouth College, and discussed with Brad Duchaine a recent study of mine (in preparation) on heritability of face processing skills.

February: Discussion with Jim Haxby during a visit at Dartmouth College on a collaborative project to apply hyperalignment to MEG data.

February: Finished a first draft of an empirical paper showing that human thinking exploits spatial codes in the brain (now under revision in Journal of Neuroscience)

February: Visited Professor Elizabeth Spelke at Harvard and discussed the implementation of the project of a Marie Curie European Fellowship to Marie Amalric where we are co-PIs.

March: Chaired the European Research Council Panel ERC-2019-StG for the SH4 ("The Human Mind and Its Complexity") in remote mode, due to imminent Covid-19 threats.

March: Flew back to Italy. Continuing working on the paper on Montessori teacher as Neuroscientist.

April: Submitted a paper using fMRI to show that the hippocampal-entorhinal system supports the emergence of nested hierarchical relations between words during concept learning (now, after the first round of revisions the paper is still under revision in Hippocampus).

*Manuela Piazza returns to her position where she was recently promoted to Full Professor at the Center for Mind/Brain Sciences, University of Trento, Italy.*

## CRISTINA RUGGERO

My time spent at the Academy during the Spring of 2020 was memorable. The Academy Directors Prof. David Freedberg and Dr. Barbara Faedda, the Staff, and the other Fellows made my stay unforgettable. The hospitality, familiar atmosphere, and thought-provoking impulses have been distinctive of this enriching experience. Although time passed in a flash, I worked very efficiently, benefiting from the incredible resources at Columbia, which allowed me to also explore future initiatives and establish fruitful contacts. During this period I was able to deepen important aspects of my research project on the reception of Hadrian's Villa (HV), which focuses on the photographic documentation of the imperial site and the surrounding area between 1850 and 1930. A couple of exhibitions in New York (MET and Hans Kraus Jr. Fine Photographs) provided me new insights in the field. I am extremely grateful to Sydney Weinberg, Prof. John Pinto, Prof. Francesco de Angelis, and all of my colleagues at the Academy for the lively discussion, comments, suggestions, and support given to me during the presentation of my project.

For centuries, Hadrian's Villa has been celebrated internationally for its extraordinary artistic and architectural riches, eliciting a constant and increasing fascination which has generated an immense production of visual and written records. But to date, its photographic documentation has never been examined systematically. My sub-project at the Academy began investigating the importance of the new visual medium as primary source of study by considering the historical, archaeological, artistic, environmental, and sociological implications of the cultural patrimony related to the villa. This approach is situated at the intersection between the well-established tradition of studies on the afterlife of the classical world, and the burgeoning field of investigation regarding the role of photography and photo-archives in the documentation of antiquity. I tried to retrace the development of photography and the different ways of perceiving and acknowledging the archaeological area under scrutiny. The new medium helped to multiply the number of images enriching the still existing graphic reproductions in use until that moment and fixing, with a new type of 'visual' documentation, the extent and importance of archaeological discoveries, but also cultural and pleasure trips, when used as illustrations for scholarly books and as illustrative material for the popularization of the site. Four main issues were connected to my work: 1) How the perception and representation of Hadrian's Villa has changed with the advent of photography compared to 'traditional' media; 2) The ways in which HV served as a backdrop for 'artistic' photos until their use and modification for postcards; 3) How was photography used—given that it had many fields of applicability—for scientific purposes by scholars; and finally, 4) What value 19th-century photography has for us today, while studying Hadrian's Villa.

The extraordinary opportunity to interact with the Advanced Program of Ancient History and Art (APAHA) at Columbia helped me to clarify and refine some aspects of my investigation. During my stay at the Academy I began to write the chapter dedicated to the historical and documentary photography which will integrate my book on the reception of Hadrian's Villa in 18th and 19th-century Europe.

*Cristina Ruggero returns to her position at the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte in Munich continuing her DFG-Research Project "Hadrian's Villa as a Microcosm. A Space of Artistic Interaction in 18th and 19th-Century Europe."*

## GERHARD WOLF

The fellowship at the Italian Academy allowed me to advance the planned research project "Art Histories, Ecologies, Catastrophes." It seeks to explore the potential of an eco-art history or the role art history should have within ecological discourses and debates. While intensely consulting the libraries and collections at Columbia

University, profiting from the respective research focus at the Italian Academy, and engaging in conversations with my co-fellows, my major concern was to study conceptual and empirical connections between the discourses (and practices) of heritage and ecology, and to locate them in the debates about the Anthropocene. At the Academy from late January to mid-March, most of the bibliographical research was done, while the writing of papers had to be postponed, because of the Corona pandemic, to the time after my return to Florence.

Another intent of my stay was to advance two sub-projects, more concretely regarding the Italian peninsula. The first concerns the role of natural/human-made catastrophes, not to be understood as exceptions or interruptions of history, but as continuous challenges and parts of its reality, in the form of plagues (from pestilence to malaria and the pandemic), earthquakes, fires, landslides (for example, the Vajont Dam disaster of 1963), chemical disasters (the Seveso accident of 1976), wars, etc. One could write a catastrophic history of Italy. At the Academy, I concentrated on an ongoing project on seismic Italy, realized together with Carmen Belmonte and Elisabetta Scirocco, in particular the analysis of materials collected in field work in the earthquake area of the Alto Apennino, with its natural and anthropogenic landscape, rural and pastoral sites, and now mostly destroyed cities and villages. The analysis questions notions of ecology and discusses sustainable forms of culture/nature entanglements, considering the geographic, geomorphological, and botanical as well as historical, monumental, socio-cultural and geopoetical dimensions of landscape in a collaborative effort. The multi-dimensional aesthetics of landscape are at the core of the second sub-project, concerning Liguria. The perception and realities of the fragile Ligurian landscape are rather ambivalent: on one hand, the rough, archaic landscape of slopes, falling down into a no-less rough sea. In large areas, the terracing with stone walls over the centuries has created and conserved architecturally articulated landscapes with small agri- or viticultural plateaus. On the other hand is the *villeggiatura*: chiefly from the nineteenth century onwards, this brought luxurious hotels, palaces, and gardens for Genovese and European nobility, industrialists, artists, and intellectuals. The major focus of this project, started during my stay at the Academy, is on the 19th to the 21st century, concerning trans/formations of landscape, the building and rebuilding of infrastructure (roads, railway, tunnels, bridges), touristification and its role in the Risorgimento, architecture and botanical gardens, photography and literature, and contemporary dynamics such as migration and ecological issues. A starting point, presented in a seminar contribution, was the discussion of Italo Calvino's Ligurian geopoetics with its ekphrastic dimension in combination with, or in relation to, film and photography.

*Gerhard Wolf returns to his role as Director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut (Italy)*



## FRANCESCO ZIMEI

The semester I spent at the Italian Academy was memorable, not only for the extremely favourable and challenging environment in which I have carried on my research, but also for the invaluable cultural opportunities that the city of New York can offer to a scholar lucky enough to live there for at least a few months.

First of all, I deeply benefited from the well-established cross-disciplinary tradition of Academy's programs—from the weekly Fellows' Seminars to the large number of meetings, conferences and concerts normally held at the Academy. Thanks to the wise and far-sighted leadership of David Freedberg, to the careful direction of Barbara Faedda, and to the precious assistance of the entire staff (I wish to remember them by name: Abigail, Adelle, Allison, Barron, Karen, Rick, and Simon), we fellows were immediately set to share our individual experiences and get quickly into an atmosphere of productive empathy. The extraordinary context of the Columbia campus, with its dynamic network of libraries and facilities, was no less crucial in allowing me to make considerable progress in my investigation.

The (continuing) project aims to reconstruct the complex social and musical scenario of Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749–1838), Mozart's famous librettist, who later became a worthy professor of Italian language and literature at Columbia College as well as the founder of the Italian studies in America—and chiefly to reconstruct the scenario in which he succeeded in introducing Italian opera in New York.

Despite the importance of this figure, whose cultural imprint is still very much felt at Columbia, his implications with music have so far aroused interest almost exclusively in reference to the Viennese period and his collaboration with Mozart.

The new prospect of studies substantially started in October 2018, when I had the opportunity to experience, right in Columbia's Rotunda, the successful impact of my reconstruction of the score linked to Da Ponte's last operatic libretto, *L'ape musicale*, a pastiche staged in New York on April 20, 1830, as well as the first Italian opera conceived in America and specifically intended for the local audience. Returning to New York on the occasion of the Italian Academy fellowship to look for historical sources, I had the unexpected joy to discover that, one year after the revival of that opera, the interest in my research was still alive at Columbia among both in faculty and students, to the point that I was soon invited to give a colloquium at the Department of Music.

In the meantime, the range of my interest had expanded to the entire decade (1825–1835) in which Da Ponte and his circle of friends, musicians and intellectuals, tried—not without difficulty—to instill in Americans the love of Italian opera, which the octogenarian poet from the Veneto also considered to be a tool to facilitate the learning of the Italian language.

Four months of staying in the city have fortunately allowed me to continue my

research in other important libraries such as the New York Public Library, the New-York Historical Society, and even the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia: the results were promising. Maybe I will have to come back again, but my work is now well underway and I hope to publish a book soon.

*Francesco Zimei returns to his position as scientific coordinator of the Istituto Abruzzese di Storia Musicale.*

## ALEN ŽUNIĆ

It is an honor for me and a source of profound satisfaction that I had the opportunity to spend the Fall term 2019/2020 as Associate Research Fellow at the Italian Academy at Columbia University and so to fulfill some of the academic objectives I had posed for myself. The purpose of coming to New York was to deepen my basic knowledge about one of the crucial problems of today's architecture, which is the repurposing of existing buildings (and of whole cities even) instead of building on and occupying new space, with a particular emphasis on the industrial heritage that in the 21st century is ever more rapidly and frequently falling into oblivion. The Italian cities built during the time of Mussolini between the wars on the Croatian coast were taken as a case study. The remarkable research infrastructure, the sources, references and numerous experts at Columbia enabled me to study the topic proposed in a most detailed and professional manner. It is planned that over the next year or two the process of research into the Italian industrial heritage should develop into a publication, as well as become a complete urban design / architectural research project capable of testing out the possibilities for industrial cities and zones to be transformed in a manner appropriate to today's time and needs. During the fellowship I made great progress, learning about the industrial towns that the Italians built not only in Croatia but also in the other occupied places of the then fascist empire—for instance, in Ethiopia, Libya and Greece.

As a Weinberg Fellow I had the opportunity to visit conferences and symposia, like the Yale University symposium marking the centenary of Bauhaus, or one organized by the renowned journal *Architectural Record*, at which the speakers were leaders of the profession like Norman Foster, Ma Yansong and Michel Rojkind. Inspiring lectures and speeches were supplemented to great effect during the whole term by regular guest appearances of leading names in the discipline—David Adjaye, Renzo Piano, Kengo Kuma, Atelier Bow-Wow, Francis Kéré—who gave presentations of their projects at the Columbia University campus and other cultural locations in Manhattan. Only in New York is it possible to be at the epicenter of such intensive architectural goings-on, and for this I am particularly grateful for the fellowship. Although I was free to work on my research topics, I was regularly a participant in

stimulating and intellectually fruitful discussions during weekly seminars. Through them I had the privilege of meeting other fellows of the Italian Academy—scholars, researchers and intellectuals in various fields such as history, anthropology and literature as well as musicology and neuroscience, all of which was a direct help to me in widening my horizons and observing the world from other perspectives. The stay at the Italian Academy enabled me to become acquainted with and collaborate with colleagues and faculty members at the art history department, like Professor Barry Bergdoll, and particularly at GSAPP, the Columbia University architecture school, like Professor Kenneth Frampton and Bernard Tschumi. I had the particular good luck to be able to interact with them, exchange knowledge and views, and naturally to learn from such outstanding names. Ultimately this led to the chance to give an invited lecture, during the fellowship, as part of the Collins / Kaufmann Forum, on the Yugoslav architectural heritage. And along with the many academic and research benefits of the fellowship, as an architect I was able at last to experience (at first hand) the unforgettable aesthetic of New York City, an outstanding living museum of the most contemporary and most advanced architecture of today. At the end, I am most grateful to the Italian Academy, which acknowledged my references and needs in research; and although the stay lasted only one term, I am particularly proud to have been the recipient of a Weinberg Fellowship meant precisely for architects, to be able to engage without hindrance with their own innovative topics.

*Alen Žunić is to return to his position of assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Zagreb.*

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*Front cover:* This wooden model of the Italian Academy building is housed inside the building. Photograph by Barron Preston.

*Back cover:* The October 2019 conference, "The Restitution Debate: African Art in a Global Society." Photograph by Barbara Alper.





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