



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO  
DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE, LETTERATURE,  
CULTURE E MEDIAZIONI

*Dottorato di ricerca in Studi linguistici, letterari e interculturali in ambito  
europeo ed extraeuropeo*

# SCREENS

## RHETORICS OF (DIS)CONNECTION

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GRADUATE CONFERENCE  
30TH NOVEMBER – 2ND DECEMBER 2022

"LO SPAZIO È UN VETRO,  
L'INTERNO È NELL'ESTERNO.  
IO RACCOLGO IL FIUME FREDDO,  
TU LO ESPANDI IN OLOGRAMMA.

"SPACE IS A GLASS,  
THE INSIDE IS ON THE OUTSIDE.  
I GATHER THE COLD RIVER,  
YOU EXPAND IT IN HOLOGRAM.

TU SONO IO NELLO SCHERMO, IO E TUTTI".

YOU AM I IN THE SCREEN, I AND EVERYONE".

**MARIA BORIO, TRASPARENZA 2018**

[TRANSLATION BY IRENE ORLANDAZZI]

Given their increased presence in everyday life, screens have sparked new interest and lead to new considerations inside the academia (see M. Carbone, *Schermi/Screens* 2014). Because of this, media archaeologist Erkki Huhtamo suggested the creation of a new area of study called *screenology*, focused on screens as "information surfaces" (2006). The history of screens, as Huhtamo himself argues, has always lingered between reality and imagination, the physical and the intangible, the concrete and the theoretical. Therefore, these objects may, after careful examination, be considered intermedial bridges that favour the exchange between cultures, words, voices, faces and images (see *ibid.*).

*Screens* as objects have a complex nature as the semantic evolution of the word suggests and, as a matter of fact, the term presents itself as polysemic in a variety of languages. In Italian, for example, the Treccani dictionary lists several meanings: the first, mainly literary, is that of "shield", to be understood literally and figuratively; a one is that of "device" which prevents something from expanding through space (for example, radiations); and the third is "surface", on which pictures and words are shown.

Francesco Casetti, a semiologist, has centred his most recent studies around screens and reassures us about the overlap of meanings, arguing that "the idea of a shielding and covering surface adds to that of another surface which allows to sense what is behind it. The latter then embraces representations of new worlds, and can finally contain figures reflecting our personality" (Casetti 2014, our translation). At this point Casetti wonders whether or not all of this may still be called communication (see *ibid.*). This is, of course, a provocation and it gives birth to our desire to investigate the mechanisms behind these complex (concrete and abstract) objects in various interactional contexts, also linguistic, translational, didactic, literary, and cultural. Screens create and implicate the presence of a space between all the parties involved, a space that can be enlarged or restricted through the use of different types of rhetoric. While on the one hand, they create protection, impediments, and blockage, on the other, screens also allow the creation of new relations and, at times unprecedented, connections.

*SCREENS*, therefore, will focus on the analysis of this rhetoric of (dis)connection created by interactions mediated by screens (to be intended as literal or figurative) and/or their role in the creation of the abovementioned rhetorics. The aim is to encourage an interdisciplinary debate able to conciliate current events with voices from the past through the use of a variety of methodologies as well as diverse linguistic and cultural traditions. Contributions may concern but are not limited to, the following topics, here divided according to disciplinary fields, which could be interpreted in a cross-disciplinary perspective.

## LITERARY AND MEDIA STUDIES

- The rhetoric of (dis)connection and its relationship with audiences (metanarrative, (dis)honesty, irony, allegory, symbolism, *mise en abyme*...).
- Screens between authors and their work: *ghostwriting*, anonymity, the use of pseudonyms...
- *Non-fiction* and autobiographies: beyond the screens created by fiction?
- Distortion as means by which to overcome censorship (Aesopian language...)
- Screening extra-textual realities: transposition of speeches and events of the past (historical novels, dystopia...)
- Species as screens: the rhetoric of (dis)connection and the non-human.
- Literary and cultural currents focused on technology and the internet (cyberpunk, cyberfeminism, digital realism, digital humanities/distant readings...).
- Artistic and/or theatrical performances: identification and estrangement. Performance poetry...
- The fourth wall: an element of (dis)connection, as barrier and point of contact in theatre and cinema.



## LANGUAGE, TEACHING AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

- The use of registers or languages for specific purposes, at distinct levels of analysis, as means by which to generate connections or disconnections.
- Language as a screen in the representation of identity or minority groups (migrants' language, linguistic minorities...), also in the field of lexicography.
- Linguistic strategies used to generate connections and disconnections in (social) media from the point of view of pragmatics, (critical) discourse analysis, politolinguistics, etc., also in the language-image relationship (e.g. *Bildlinguistik*).
- The use of quotations and intertextuality as means to create (dis)connections.
- Analysis of rhetorics of connection and disconnection using specific language software.
- (Dis)connection strategies in the analysis of the linguistic landscape.
- Strategies for online teaching and the presence of the screen as an element of connection and/or disconnection.
- Translation strategies for approaching or moving away from the prototext and the reader.
- The creation of parallel corpora for the analysis of such phenomena as sincerity/insincerity, irony etc.

## CULTURAL STUDIES

- Screens as artifacts: their intermedial relationships with other cultural forms.
- The screen as a means of information exchange, halfway between the material and the immaterial.
- Walls as double screens (Berlin Wall, Mexican border, Israeli barrier...) that can collect and, where possible, project desires, messages, invocations of freedom.
- Urban resignifications as screens that can interrupt or, vice versa, enhance the relationship with the history of the place in question.
- The ethnic boundary as an ambivalent element, both porous and working as a form of separation at the same time.
- Social impositions and their distortive effects on reality. Le distorsioni culturali presenti nei media.
- Cultural distortions in the media.
- The translated text as a product of (dis)connections between different cultures.

## CONTRIBUTION PROPOSALS

The conference is aimed (though not exclusively) at people who are regularly enrolled in a doctoral course or who have obtained the title in the last five years. Those who are interested are invited to submit a proposal of about 300 words (essential bibliography excluded) to the address [convegno.schermi@unimi.it](mailto:convegno.schermi@unimi.it) within 15th June 2022. The document, necessarily in .pdf format, must include the following information: title of the contribution; 5 keywords; name, surname, e-mail address of the author(s); brief biographical note with affiliation and research interests (about 100 words). The file must be named as follows: `surname_name_screens2022` and the email must have as its object "Screens abstract proposal". Proposals concerning any language, literature, and culture will be accepted in Italian or English (exceptions will be evaluated singularly). Each contribution will last a maximum of 20 minutes.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 15th June 2022

Notification of acceptance: 25th July 2022

Last day to confirm participation: 5th August 2022

Conference: from 30th November to 2nd December 2022

## CONFERENCE VENUE

University of Milan

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Maria Grazia Bartolini, Marina Marzia Brambilla, Cristina Brancaglion, Clara Bulfoni, Maria Vittoria Calvi, Marco Castellari, Rosalba Maletta, Letizia Osti, Emilia Perassi, Laura Pinnavaia, Virginia Sica, Camilla Carita Storskog, Raffaella Vassena, Alessandro Vescovi.

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## CONTACT

For further information, please contact [convegno.schermi@unimi.it](mailto:convegno.schermi@unimi.it) or visit <https://sites.unimi.it/schermi>.

## CITED WORKS

Borio, Maria. *Trasparenza*. Novara: Interlinea Edizioni (2018).

Carbone, Mauro. *Schermi/Screens* (monographic journal edited by M. Carbone and A. Dalmasso, n. 55, 2014) <https://journals.openedition.org/estetica/912> (last accessed: 25.02.2022).

Casetti, Francesco. "Che cosa è uno schermo, oggi?" *Rivista di estetica* 55 (2014): 103-121.

Huhtamo, Erkki. "Elements of screenology: Toward an archaeology of the screen." *Navigationen-Zeitschrift für Medien-und Kulturwissenschaften* 6.2 (2006): 31-64.

Treccani Dictionary – *schermo* (screen): Cfr. <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/schermo/> (last accessed: 11.02.2022).