

# **The Plural Artist**

**Digital Music as an Interdisciplinary  
Phenomenon**

**International Conference**

04.03.2026

Dipartimento di Musicologia e Beni Culturali  
Corso Garibaldi 178, Cremona  
Aula Magna

**The Plural Artist:  
Digital Music as an Interdisciplinary Phenomenon**  
International Conference

9.30 *Welcome Address and Introduction*

Ingrid Pustijanac, Giovanni Verrando, Maurizio Azzan, Alessandro Brutti

**The Aesthetics of the Digital:  
Multimedia and Transdisciplinary Approaches**

Chair Michela Garda

9.45-10.30 HARRY LEHMANN, *Widening the Compositional Space*

10.30-11.15 SIMON STEEN-ANDERSEN, *Post-Disciplinary Creation?*

11.45-12.30 SANNE KROGH GROTH, *Distributing Composition. AI, Collaboration and Futures from a Global South*

12.30-13.15 EVA REITER, *Transforming Instrumental Gestures – Avoiding binary logic in post-digital art*

Discussants: Marco Cosci, Luca Guidarini

**Digital Technology, Artificial Intelligence  
and the Multiple Forms of Composition**

Chair Giacomo Albert

14.30-15.15 DANIELE GHISI, *Things to Make and Do in the Winter of Notation*

15.15-16.00 HOLLY ROGERS, *A Plurality of Artists: Audiovisual Music and Networked Creativity*

16.30-17.15 ALESSANDRO PERINI, *Plurality Beyond Skills. Meshwork in the Age of DIY*

Discussants: Luca Befera, Fabio Machiavelli

17.15-18.30 *Final Discussion*

**Scientific Committee:**

Maurizio Azzan, Anna Leonardi, Ingrid Pustijanac, Giovanni Verrando

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In recent decades, the notion of the plural artist has increasingly taken hold across the arts, from the visual to the musical. Technology has demanded that composers and creators acquire a growing range of diverse and highly specialized skills. To the many disciplines inherited from musical tradition (such as orchestration, score analysis, the in-depth study of acoustic instruments, and theatrical imagination for those working in opera or music for dance) there has inevitably been added the need to master computer-based music in its various forms.

Today's composer is often required to handle computer-assisted composition, live electronics, and – since digital technology has accelerated the rise of multimedia musical practice – the technical knowledge needed to produce video and images, to manage real or virtual stage environments, and much more.

Whether the works created by the plural artist are co-creations (the result of several creative minds, each expert in their own discipline) or whether the composer personally takes on the technical realization of much of the final production, two key aspects emerge from this approach:

- a) the composer becomes, in a sense, the artistic director of their own work, overseeing the final result and ensuring the smooth functioning of the scenic mechanism;
- b) interdisciplinarity – or, more precisely, transdisciplinarity – becomes the method through which different skills are integrated, giving rise to a synthesis, a spark, an idea that is not necessarily foreseeable or contained within any single discipline when considered on its own.

Thus, the management of multimedia, the invention of new musical instruments, and the use of AI to enhance creativity all point explicitly to the breadth of knowledge required of the plural artist. They also raise new questions concerning aesthetics, artistic production, musical education, and the social role of artworks conceived in this way.

From a musicological perspective, these transformations call for new analytical tools and historiographical frameworks capable of addressing hybrid works that challenge traditional categories of authorship, medium, and form. At the same time, they demand a rethinking of aesthetic paradigms and methodological assumptions that have long shaped the discipline, positioning digital music as a decisive terrain for the renewal of contemporary musicological inquiry.

## **Widening the Compositional Space**

HARRY LEHMANN, Universität Luxemburg

Digitization does more than expand composers' technical options. They open new ways for art music to operate within other art forms – visual arts, spoken theater, and opera – that were far less accessible in the analog era. This paper argues that the “compositional space” of contemporary art music is widening, driven by a media shift from notation to sample-based composition and by a change in the criterion of innovation: from material progress to content generation.

The theoretical point of departure is an earlier diagnosis of deinstitutionalization in the New Music system. As production and distribution costs fall, barriers to entry drop not only for becoming a composer but also for getting works realized. In parallel, a new medium of composition emerges: the sample. Sample-based production enables a practice that composes not only with tones and notes but also with images, video, text, and speech. I term this practice relational music: instead of excluding “extra-musical” material, it constructs multiple relations to it and makes these relations compositional.

Relational music initially answers an innovation bottleneck within late twentieth-century New Music, where novelty was pursued primarily as material progress (new compositional and playing techniques, new “isms”) under the horizon of absolute music. Yet, by analogy with the visual arts, multimedia proves to be only a transitional solution. A more radical shift follows: novelty is increasingly produced by generating new aesthetic content, that is, new structures of meaning that matter in social discourse. Within this framework, I describe a content-aesthetic turn in art music and propose that its most adequate characterization is reflexive art music. The argument is developed through three case studies (2016–2020) that show how the sample medium allows art music to migrate into installation, theater, and a reinvented form of opera.

The first case is *Sun & Sea (Marina)*, staged in the Lithuanian pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. The audience looks down from a balcony onto a fabricated beach where performers lie in swimsuits, children play, and a dog occasionally barks. Musically, the piece combines pop idioms, minimalism, and musical theater into a deliberately “wellness”-like atmosphere. Over a longer period of time, an ecological dystopia shimmers through the relaxed vacation atmosphere. The work won the Biennale's Golden Lion and has toured widely. It exemplifies how an opera-performance installation can address audiences beyond the concert-hall public, while also revealing a structural trade-off: once text, image, and action enter the work, musical complexity may decline because other layers of complexity take over.

The second case comes from spoken theater: a 2020 Berlin production of Sarah Kane's *4.48 Psychosis* directed by Ulrich Rasche. Actors move on treadmills for hours, timing every spoken word to their steps; the staging creates a strong rhythmic pulse but risks monotony. Here, an additional musical layer is needed, yet theater rehearsal practice typically prevents the delivery of a finished score. The production becomes a test case for a new workflow: composer Nico van Wersch prepares a modular library

of instrumental samples and composes in real time during rehearsals. Instead of constraining staging through fixed musical instructions, he can offer variants on the spot and respond immediately to changes in the production. Shortly before the premiere, the sample-based pieces are transcribed into conventional notation, enabling four instrumentalists to join rehearsals. The case shows how sample-based composition can bridge the gap between theater's rehearsal logic and art music's demand for differentiated writing.

The third case is Trond Reinholdtsen's Norwegian Opra and its ongoing film production, including the Ø series. The films stage an expansive world myth – from creation narratives to the emergence of language, religion, art, and philosophy – and are reused across concerts, screenings, and music-theater formats. Reinholdtsen produces the music entirely with samples and supplies all vocal material himself, subsequently processing it into absurd registers, speeds, and rhythms. The protagonists are actors “performing” singing with exaggerated gestures; the instruments are crude imitations; and the work embraces radical stylistic pluralism without postmodern irony. Styles are not quoted to mock them but selected for expressive fit. The primitivist art-brut surface enables what I call de-deconstruction: a naive presentation can make philosophical hypotheses such as Hegel's “The true is the whole” seem convincing again. Taken together, the three cases specify what it means to widen the compositional space: art music increasingly relocates from the concert form toward opera-like formats that integrate image, text, and action and that depend on sample-based, rehearsal-adaptive workflows.

**Harry Lehmann** is a German philosopher and music theorist known for his work on aesthetics and contemporary music. He is best known for developing the concept of “The Digital Revolution in Music” and for his writings on post-aesthetic theory and the transformation of art in the digital age.

## Post-Disciplinary Creation?

SIMON STEEN-ANDERSEN, University of the Arts, Bern

I find it increasingly hard to label or put precise words to what I do – not only in terms of genre or format, but also in terms of how I work, or even what I'm working toward. I deliberately avoid resolving these questions before and during a project, but even in retrospect, I'm often still unsure. I hope it's a sign of a certain kind of complexity, ambiguity, in-between-ness or productive instability rather than intellectual decline ...

For a long time I have been working toward an ideal that might be labelled post-disciplinary creation. I quite like the term, but I feel it quickly runs into contradictions with parts of my practice, and anyway needs re-compartmentalization when confronted with certain real-world practicalities – not least in the form of large, tradition-bound institutions.

With *Don Giovanni's Inferno* (Opéra National du Rhin 2023; Danish National Opera 2024), I made my debut as a stage director in a large-scale institutional production. The resulting work – based almost exclusively on historic repertoire – was, in my view, neither a (re)composition nor a staging. And even if it mostly sounded and looked like opera, I'm still not sure it was one.

In this talk, I will outline my evolution up to this point as well as my thoughts and approaches to an open field where the lines between media, roles, and genres dissolve – with and without institutional resistance, which I – paradoxically – absolutely enjoy! Besides *Don Giovanni's Inferno*, I will be referencing my two latest shows, *As you were! As you are!* (about and with a retiring opera singer, Bernhard Theater / Opernhaus Zürich 2025) and *Run Time Anomaly* (about and with 14 teenage dancers, Berlin Academy of the Arts / Voices Festival 2025/2026).

**Simon Steen-Andersen** is a Danish composer and performer known for his experimental approach to music, combining acoustic instruments, electronics, video, and performance art. His work explores the boundaries between sound, image, and gesture, often challenging conventional concert formats and redefining the role of the performer. He is a professor at the University of the Arts Bern (HKB).

## **Distributing Composition AI, Collaboration and Futures from a Global South**

SANNE KROGH GROTH, Lund University

The iconic representation of the composer as a solitary author behind a desk has long been a subject of discussion. In a previous project, I studied contemporary classically trained composers performing their own pieces, and what this might indicate when viewed through the lens of a Western art music history (Groth 2016). Since then, other trends have added new agendas to the experimental and contemporary music scene. One of these is the rapid expansion of the musical repertoire by composers and performers from the Global South (Groth and Bubandt 2025). Another, more recent trend, is the inclusion of new technologies such as AI in the performance or in the compositional process (e.g. Bown 2021; Cotton and Tatar 2023). These latter tendencies, each in their own way, pose new, and challenging, questions to the role of the composer as a solitary author, a role that was consolidated in the Romantic era but that remains embedded in contemporary music and its institutional practices, education systems, concert organisations, and copyright regimes.

My presentation explores these new challenges through an analysis of *Xhabarabot Voice Machine* (XVM), a project developed by the Indonesian performer, singer, and composer Rully Shabara (b. 1982) (Shabara 2023). Over the past seven years, I have come to know Shabara's work intimately as part of the research project *Java-Futurism* (Groth and Bubandt 2020), which I conducted with the anthropologist Nils Bubandt from Aarhus University. We have followed Shabara's work with the internationally acknowledged duo *Senyawa*; the bands *Wusa* (formerly named *Zoo*) and *Setabuhan*; the utopian project *Khawagaka*; and the improvisation concert concept *Kombo*. During our project we also have attended Shabara's various concert constellations in Europe and Indonesia, hung out with him and other musicians, and conducted several targeted interviews.

*Xhabarabot* is one of Shabara's latest projects which he began during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, isolated in his home in Yogyakarta on the Indonesian island of Java, Shabara began training an early version of an AI chatbot that he later named *Xhabarabot*. Increasingly sophisticated versions of Shabara's experiments with his voice and the AI-bot were gradually launched via the artist's Instagram page from 2021, offering an actual download of XVM in March 2023. Over time, the chatbot had been trained to represent different personalities. The one we encountered when visiting Shabara in October 2023, spoke English in Shabara's characteristic voice, with a thick American accent generated by AI, and communicated in a quite impolite tone.

During the pandemic, Shabara and *Xhabarabot* jointly developed an algorithm that now forms the basis of the voice machine, XVM. XVM is open to everyone who, by digital signature, agrees to use only legal audio samples, to credit XVM in any work created, to submit a composition for Shabara for review, and to share loops for future and free inclusion in the project. Entering the project online today, one finds 34 different modules for creating samples, tracks and compositions. In all modules, one can either

upload their own voice or other sound samples, or experiment with samples of Shabara's voice.

In January 2026, we conducted a new interview with Shabara about the project. This interview serves as the guiding thread of my presentation, in which I address the following topics: First, I discuss composition and software development in the project as a distributed and decolonial practice. Second, I analyse voice and embodiment in the context of AI. Third, I discuss the term "post-AI", as proposed by Shabara, and position it in relation to related voice practices by Western artists such as Grimes (Cain 2023) and Holly Herndon (Clancy 2025).

**Sanne Krogh Groth** is a Danish musicologist and researcher specializing in sound art, experimental music, and contemporary performance practices. She is a senior researcher at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and Associate Professor of Musicology at the Lund University, Sweden.

# **Transforming Instrumental Gestures – Avoiding Binary Logic in Post-digital Art**

EVA REITER, Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna

Today's young composers are driven by an increasingly noticeable enthusiasm for multimedia intelligence and practice. Even at a young age they acquire the technical skills needed to produce live-electronic environments, extended instruments, digital audio (and video) interfaces, virtual stage environments etc. The full integration of technology as a presumable competence in contemporary compositional practice seems to have developed from a desire not only to "do-it-yourself", but to gain independency from institutional restrictions. One can today easily put the "hands on" and gain knowledge as composer as well as sound designer, (post-) digital luthier, performer, maybe even artistic director, curator or programmer etc. And indeed all these roles are important to finally understand what it means to make art today. In this context transdisciplinarity additionally emerges as a promise imbued with the immanent potential of the unexpected: A concrete practice in which the collaborative work of different actors lead to permeability and a movement that eventually cuts across disciplines while pushing boundaries. However, there is certainly a downside to the wonderland of technology which creates seemingly endless possibilities for compositional exploration. Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence as a result of self-optimization, finally may – as a side effect, so to speak – also undermine what is fundamentally fascinating about music and art in general. Art produces friction, stimulating tension and "shaking grounds" that remain effective only between the different various physicalities. At its best, art can reflect images of constructive friction, distortions, utopias and possible changes. However, what is noticeable today in numerous compositions making use of advanced digital technology is an increasing lack of direction, indecisiveness, meaningless repetitions of electronic crackling or complacency with simple gaming mentality. In a broader sense I belong to a group of contemporary thinkers and composers who act in refusal of binary thinking/reductive dualism, that prioritises relationality over hierarchy, that treats friction, irritation and misunderstanding as an obstacle and fertile artistic condition. We treat live-electronic environments as strangely textured fields of communication, unstable, sensorially plural. We bring to surface the problematic interdependencies created between human gestures and their digital transformation. Within the research project Transforming Instrumental Gestures, I investigate the potential of collective music-making as a transformative social practice. The focus lies on the interactive communication relations (1) between the musicians and their instruments, (2) within the individual members of the ensemble, and (3) between the performers and the audience. Traditional line-ups are questioned regarding their adequacy/appropriateness in contemporary music practice, whereas new instruments are developed as alternative contact surfaces in order to explore the following questions: How do the gestures of music and the physical logic of music-making change? To what extend can we transform the physical logic of music making? How

do social and communicative structures change when a newly designed instrument exemplifies new spaces of togetherness and new gestural material? The title “Transforming Instrumental Gestures” refers to the basic assumption that the form and nature of instruments play an active role in the production of musical material, among other things, because they determine the habitus of physical interaction. Performers and instruments thus form a unity and are equally involved in the creation of sound processes in the performance situation. The starting point and reference point for this research project are fundamental considerations of actor-network theory, whose key theoretical statements were developed in the 1980s by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law. Within the framework of this theory, every assemblage (consisting of a reciprocal connection between humans and material objects, technical artifacts, or even concepts, etc.) that is capable of bringing about change is referred to as an actor. On basis of this research the music theater THE RISE was born. In this experimental opera together with choreographer Michiel Vandavelde I focused on the coexistence and interchanges of various worlds as they unfold on stage. We both were working as stage director, scenographers next to our responsibilities as composers, electronic music designer, light designers and choreographer.

At the center of this play is the young deaf performer Ruben Grandits, who is the only person – although non hearing – that is able to convey the story to the audience. He speaks to us in international sign language, and his signs become the basic source for the world of sounds and movement. His hands convert movements directly into audible information. The music is translated back into visual signs so that the piece remains accessible to a deaf audience. Throughout the entire work we neither see nor hear any traditional musical instrument, but only newly constructed, self-developed ones that form the basis of the score and stage set. Accessibility and inclusivity have become keywords and important demands of critical disability research. It is not a purely technical process, but requires translation as a continuous process that is situated at the interface of cultural, social and economic ‚preconditions‘. It therefore needs no hyper-code: it blossoms most fiercely in the spaces between languages.

**Eva Reiter** is an Austrian composer known for her experimental and electroacoustic music. Her work often explores the relationship between sound, space, and technology, combining acoustic instruments with electronic media to create immersive soundscapes. She is based in Vienna and collaborates with various contemporary music ensembles and institutions.

## **Things to Make and Do in the Winter of Notation**

DANIELE GHISI, Conservatory of Torino

While post-Guidonian notation has long stood as one of the cosmogonic tools upon which Western musical history has flourished, it now finds itself under fire from multiple directions.

In short: it has been accused of alienating musicians from the very music they make; it is increasingly perceived as elitist and inaccessible; it is often bypassed in performative and improvisatory practices; it fails to provide a common language for the interdisciplinary collaborations that define much of contemporary composition; it is no longer essential for conceiving or producing music in the digital age; and it struggles to represent timbre expressively, so much so that even classically trained composers are turning to think and work in terms of sounds rather than notes.

In this contribution, I will examine the reasons behind these shortcomings and argue that their convergence is ushering in a ‘Winter of Notation’.

To temper its chill, I will also share a number of creative detours – examples of artists embracing interdisciplinarity as exploration – in the hope that they might help nurture the early buds of a notational spring to come.

**Daniele Ghisi** is an Italian composer and sound artist known for his innovative work in electroacoustic music and sound installations. His compositions often explore the interaction between acoustic instruments and electronic processing, focusing on spatial sound and immersive audio experiences. He is a faculty member at the Conservatorio di Musica “Giuseppe Verdi” in Turin.

# **A Plurality of Artists: Audiovisual Music and Networked Creativity**

HOLLY ROGERS, Goldsmiths, University of London

This paper begins from a simple but increasingly unavoidable observation: that much of what we now encounter as music online no longer arrives to us primarily as sound. In many cases, digital music now circulates together with fragments of video, as visual gesture, as short interchangeable loops and re-edits, embedded within platforms whose logics shape not only how music is distributed, but also how it is made, heard and remembered. Within these now normalised processes of circulation in certain music practices, the idea of the musician as a singular creative agent—albeit one who contains an infinite web of cultural, creative, historic and transmedial influences and who produces work that is received differently across listeners and histories—becomes increasingly difficult to sustain. Here I explore the idea that the plural artist has, with the emergence of networked culture, extended into a plurality of creative agencies that shape how digital music moves and develops after its original creative act. This does not describe collaboration in any conventional sense, but a structural shift in which creative agency can be distributed across users, interfaces, metrics and algorithmic systems. Creativity no longer resides solely in a person or a work, in other words, but in a networked process of circulation and co-creation.

I refer to this extension into a creative and iterative musical hive mind as a meta-mercurial process, a concept that extends my earlier writing on mercurial music, which explored sonic instability, remix and iterative reworking as central features of digital musical culture. What becomes clear in the current media environment, however, is that this condition is no longer confined to sound. Music now moves with and through images, gestures and platform infrastructures that actively reorganise how it is encountered and how it accrues meaning. The meta-mercurial refers to this networked situation in which circulation does not have to only follow a completed work, but can fold back into it, reshaping a work's sonic and audiovisual identity as it moves across platforms and through multiple creative hands.

This framing departs from existing approaches that continue to stabilise digital creativity around bounded objects or coherent authorial centres. Remix theory has tended to privilege sonic reuse; meme theory has focused on visual replication; virality studies have foregrounded network spread; and transmedia theory has emphasised narrative extension across platforms. The meta-mercurial attends to something more unstable, treating music as a shifting field of audiovisual relations sustained through repetition, drift and re-alignment. Rather than a work travelling across media, it acknowledges that musical creativity can also take place within media movement itself and embraces radical and iterative volatility.

My argument unfolds through two contrasting case studies: Lady Gaga's "Bloody Mary" and FKA twigs' "Cellophane", two tracks that acquire their cultural significance not at the point of release, but through their afterlives. "Bloody Mary", released in 2011 without an official music video, returns to prominence more than a decade later

through the viral re-scoring of Jenna Ortega's choreography in Tim Burton's Netflix series *Wednesday*. Here, sound and gesture lock together into a recognisable audiovisual form that is collectively produced and endlessly re-staged across social media. Despite constant variation, meaning repeatedly returns to a shared anchor. "Cellophane" moves differently. Released in 2019 with a tightly controlled and highly authored music video, its afterlife is marked by dispersal rather than consolidation. Fragments of the video circulate independently across platforms, frequently detached from the original soundtrack and recontextualised through ambient resoundings, memes and AI-generated transformations. Sound and image split rather than stabilise, and the work persists as a loose constellation of extractable gestures and microsongs, with no privileged version and no return to a centre.

These contrasting trajectories point toward a broader reconfiguration of how musical creativity can now operate. Here I explore how music takes form through collective processes of imitation, selection and redistribution, shaped by human labour and platform infrastructures alike, and how, as a result, creativity can accrue through repetition rather than fixity, emerging less through invention than through the ongoing reorganisation of existing material across distributed systems of attention. Songwriting and music video production have become increasingly shaped by the expectation of fragmentation and extraction, leading to a creative environment in which artists, rather than composing stable works that later circulate, design modular structures capable of surviving recontextualisation: hooks written to be isolated, gestures designed to be repeated, affects oriented toward immediate recognition. I suggest that the meta-mercurial offers a way of thinking beyond remix, virality and transmedia, moving away from stable texts and toward relational processes, distributed authorship and circulation.

**Holly Rogers** is a British scholar and Professor of Music at Goldsmiths, University of London, where she also serves as Director of Research and leads the MA in Audiovisual Cultures. Her research focuses on the intersection of music with the visual arts, including film, video art, new media, and architecture, exploring themes such as intermediality, transmedia, and participatory culture.

## **Plurality Beyond Skills Meshwork in the Age of DIY**

ALESSANDRO PERINI, Conservatory of Bergamo

We all know that the Romantic figure of the artist-as-demiurge has largely lost its authority as a guiding myth of artistic creation. The hylomorphic notion of the author who simply imposes form on matter according to a preconceived idea of the artwork fails to capture the realities of contemporary creation. Although a resistance still persists in some contexts against acknowledging that the artwork cannot be a perfect, finished object, we must recognize that the artwork is instead in a state of continuous transformation: it constantly calls for updating, being intrinsically and structurally (though not necessarily aesthetically) imperfect and unstable.

As we can elaborate by drawing on the theories articulated by Tim Ingold (who draws on Simondon's critique of classical hylomorphism; Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, 2013), if we agree that the creative act is a situated process, then the artwork necessarily emerges from a meshwork of relations – from the resistances, inertias, and directions intrinsic to the materials used, from technical mediations, and from the contexts in which it is produced and reproduced, among other forces. Accordingly, the plural artist is not merely a collaborator with other specialists, but an agent working with – or sometimes against – a field of heterogeneous forces: human, material, and technical. To borrow Ingold's formulation, the artwork is a knot that emerges where multiple forces converge and entangle in a meshwork of relations.

This perspective on the plural artist requires a rethinking of the relations of dependency among the various forces at play. The creative process always involves a certain degree of mediation, and the artist – beyond their own creative labour – must engage in a continuous struggle of adaptation between idea and matter, taking into account the resistances inherent in the material itself. At times, such resistance can even feed back into creative thinking and open pathways toward new solutions; nonetheless, even after what we might perceive as the “end” of the creative process, the artwork remains in constant becoming and in continual semantic drift depending on the temporal, spatial, social, and cultural contexts in which it is immersed, as well as on the means through which it is reproduced. In particular, in its manifestation, digital art is never purely digital and therefore never reducible to a mere stream of numbers: it requires analog conversion to be experienced, and thus always depends on its means of reproduction. The artwork continues, in a sense, to undergo creation even after its coming into the world, within the unfolding meshwork of its presentation and reception.

In recent years we have witnessed a democratization of creation through a range of phenomena. One is the wider and wider accessibility of DIY tools and culture, thanks to the diffusion of makerspaces, the affordability of 3D printers, the availability of free prototyping software, and the like. Along the same lines, we have seen the diffusion of accessible ways to design and build electronic circuits. Notably in this area, we can mention Arduino, created with an educational purpose: to make microprocessors,

traditionally devoted to industrial applications, easier to use, more connectable, and less fragile, even eliminating the need for soldering or specialized tools. At the same time, platforms for content creation and distribution (“on YouTube everyone can become a filmmaker”, “on Instagram everyone is a photographer”) have changed the way people consume content and have blurred the distinction between “serious” and “popular”. Open-source culture and the circulation of shared knowledge, resources, and tutorials have been fostering horizontal forms of learning and have highlighted the need to rethink the function of publishers in the age of digital platforms. Additionally, AI models are emerging as educational tools that guide self-directed learning and assist in navigating complex technical processes. These phenomena do not merely provide new tools; they constitute the very meshwork in which the plural artist operates and where authorship is inherently negotiated.

Consequently, we must reconceive the artist as the result of a shift from a vertical model of dependency (commissioner → artist/demiurge → manufacture → audience) toward a horizontally distributed creative meshwork. In this view, the artist’s plurality is not just a matter of collaboration or of acquiring interdisciplinary skills beyond their primary field. Rather, it stems from the fact that their creative process is embedded within this reticular field of forces inhabiting the meshwork – becoming part of a community in which technical know-how is distributed. If we accept that the artist increasingly takes on the role of the “artistic director of their own work,” orchestrating the forces at play, we must also recognize that, consciously or unconsciously, they are constantly negotiating with materials, technologies, and contexts. The artist is plural because artistic authorship is – and not only in very recent times – distributed across materials, technologies, environments, and relations. At the same time, the creative process is not simply linear (idea → process → work) but reticular and distributed; and consequently, the artwork is less an object than a trace and trajectory of becoming.

**Alessandro Perini** is an Italian composer and performer specializing in contemporary and electroacoustic music. His work often explores the integration of live electronics with acoustic instruments, focusing on sound transformation and innovative performance techniques. He is a founding member of Hertzbreakerz, a Malmö-based curatorial collective devoted to the diffusion of new art music.

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### **International Conference**

#### **With the support of:**

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