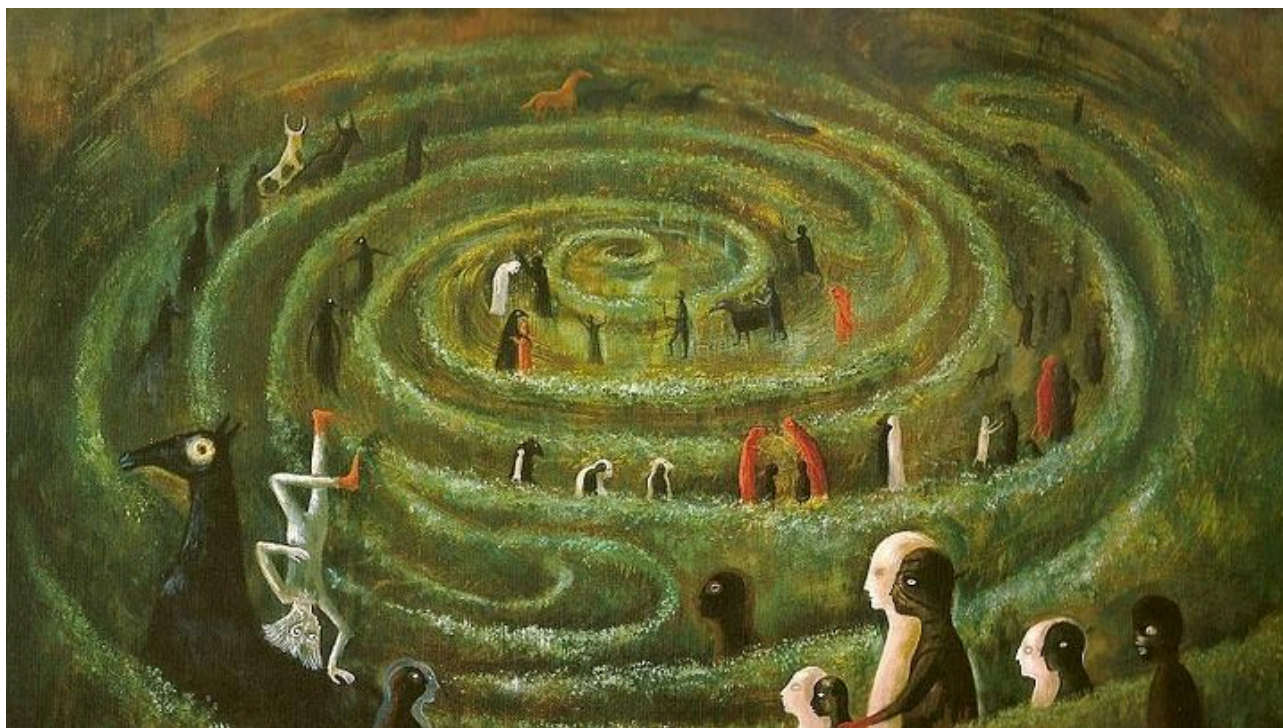


CALL FOR PAPERS

III INTERNATIONAL PhD STUDENT AND RESEARCHER CONFERENCE

**History and discontinuity: new paradigms, languages and values
from Prehistory to the Contemporary Age**

21 - 22 may 2026



L. Carrington, *Labyrinth*, 1991. Private collection.

The PhD programs in “Historical Studies” and “Archaeology and Art History” of the Department of Humanities of the University of Naples Federico II promote the III International PhD Student and Researcher Conference, entitled **History and discontinuity: new paradigms, languages and values from Prehistory to the Contemporary Age**.

The Conference aims to investigate discontinuity in the representation and interpretation of the historical process. The research fields range from history and art history to archeology and literature. The objective is to offer, in an interdisciplinary framework, an opportunity for comparison and discussion in order to develop new research perspectives on the topic.

Discontinuity appears both as a historically determined category, adopted to articulate narratives, redefine communities and disciplinary paradigms, and as an object of analysis in political, social, cultural, artistic,

settlement and cognitive transformations. From this perspective, it becomes a transversal element, capable of connecting different disciplinary approaches and opening spaces for critical reflection on the relationship between event, testimony, artefact and narrative. Discontinuities - historical, social, economic, political, material and conceptual - are recurring phenomena in the construction and representation of the past. In different contexts, they are interpreted and used in different ways, taking on plural meanings and functions. Discontinuity is, therefore, not only an object of investigation, but also a conceptual tool for questioning the ways in which the past is constructed, represented and transmitted.

In the 20th century, **History** was involved in the epistemological debate about truth, leading to the introduction of the category of discontinuity. Its application to historiography has led to the interpretation of history as a process marked by ruptures in an alternation of revolutionary moments and periods of normality (Kuhn, 1962). This gaze undermines the unitary and linear model of history, highlighting its moments of rupture as harbingers of new historical-scientific trajectories resulting in a reinterpretation of the past (Bachelard, 1938). These junctures thus represent moments of transition in which the « threshold » (Foucault, 1969), the difference in relation to what came before, endows the political and historiographical debate with new values and languages for defining the historical fact. This takes place in situations that are often different from those of historiography, placing previous and subsequent eras in a continuous paradigmatic comparison. The changes in perspectives in the narrative of the past thus reveal the relativistic and discontinuous nature of historical construction.

In **Archaeology**, discontinuity is relevant both on the level of material evidence - changes in technologies, spatial organization and settlement systems, ritual and burial practices, complex symbolic and representational codes - and on the epistemological one. Over the course of its development, archaeological scholarship has undergone profound theoretical ruptures that have progressively redefined its core principles, research methods, and interpretive tools. This transformative trajectory has unfolded through several key phases: from the overcoming of nineteenth-century antiquarianism to stratigraphic and classificatory method development, passing from the procedural revolution to post-procedural approaches up to the current theoretical landscape marked by methodological pluralism and increasing interdisciplinary engagement (Renfrew, Bahn 2016). Each of these changes has led to a new archaeological investigation, modifying the forms of knowledge produced and the methods of its public dissemination.

History of Art today deviates from the definition of its structure marked by a narrative based on the past as a continuum and governed by a dominant male point of view. Like all knowledge practices, it is situated within the ideological and political moment of its production and exists outside that moment (Zapperi, 2024). Discontinuity as a key to exploring historical-artistic studies means looking at the complex of formal phenomena in relation to cultural, social, political and economic variations, analyzing moments of fracture as possible revealers of a rich and productive diversity. This perspective introduces the study of phenomena and subjects considered by critics to be marginal, minority, outside the canon and, therefore, relegated to a secondary position which has favored their isolation and which today is at the center of a broad debate.

Literature has undergone perhaps the most evident transformations. If in the earliest phases performance and reception took place exclusively in oral form, they later moved on to aural and, in many cases, also to the written medium, with profound changes both in the composition and transmission of the texts. In writing in particular, we note that the change in the supports has not only revolutionized the *mise en page*, but space conception on which to write the letters, as well as the strength of the diffusion of ideas. In the Mediterranean context, the transition from the tablet and the scroll, first to the code and then to the IT medium, constitute fundamental watersheds. A further break is represented by the different context in which the use took place: whether it was private or semi-private (an elite or a restricted circle), whether public (theatrical performances and the like, public readings), whether mass (with contemporary means of diffusion). To all these strands are added the changes that are a mirror of social transformations (access to culture, the consideration of certain subjects in literary sources, etc.), political (the contestation or propaganda of the authority, the establishment

of an international or supranational power, the management of cultural hegemony) and economic (public spending on culture or the cost of it).

In light of these aspects, the Conference aims to highlight the relevance of a historical discussion on discontinuity, which, from Prehistory to the Contemporary Age, captures the multiple elements of disruption, be they collective and individual, natural and anthropological, historical, historical-artistic, archaeological, historiographical and literary, embracing the peculiarities of the historical-political path, cultural productions and socio-economic relations. Below are listed the non-exclusive lines of investigation that can be referred to:

1. Historiographical paradigms and categories

- Conceptual frame and traditional interpretative model redefinition
- Epistemological ruptures in historical, historical-artistic, archaeological, philological and literary disciplines
- Pioneering figures and their impact on research paradigms

2. Methodological and technological innovations

- The impact of new technologies on research (isotopic, gas chromatographic, ancient DNA, proteomics, mass spectrometry, precision dating, artificial intelligence)
- Digital humanities and transformation of disciplinary languages
- Interdisciplinarity: breakdowns of traditional boundaries between disciplines
- Evolution of excavation and documentation methodologies

3. Evidence of discontinuity

- Changes in settlement and funerary layout
- Technological and symbolic changes
- Transitions and transformations in material culture
- Fractures in representation practices (styles, materials, subjects, commissions)

4. Dissolution of order, transformation of powers

- Revolutions: political, social, legal and religious discontinuities
- “Silent” fractures: changes in mentality, ideas and innovations, institutional changes
- “Violent” fractures: wars, invasions, conquests
- “Natural” fractures: earthquakes, eruptions, epidemics (Disaster studies)

5. Culture and subculture: changes in models and values

- Center and suburbs: testimonies and narratives of the artistic and archaeological heritage of the “marginal” areas
- “Individual” fractures: marginality (madness, heresy, and ethnicity), generational conflicts, microhistory
- Source criticism and historical revisionism

6. Gender as an element of discontinuity: identities, bodies and non-canonical productions

- Public and private archives: construction of memory, organisation of identity and forms of preservation
- Representations and self-representations in the visual and performing arts

- Transmission of knowledge and new educational models: the role of institutions, academies of fine arts, ateliers and private schools
- Literary intersections: women writers, writing, critical review and verbo-visual arts
- The spaces of the sacred: laywomen, nuns and abbesses between artistic production and commissioning

The Call is addressed to PhD students in historical, archaeological, historical-artistic and philological-literary sciences and researchers in the same fields achieving the title no more than 5 years ago.

The Conference will be held on **21-22 May 2026** in the Sala Ligneana, Ex Cataloghi, University of Naples Federico II, via Porta di Massa, 1. To participate, it is required:

- an abstract in PDF of a maximum of 500 words (bibliography excluded), in english or in italian, accompanied by a title and 5 keywords;
- a short *curriculum vitae* of a maximum length of one page with the academic institution, the scientific-disciplinary sector and the qualifications.

The deadline for submitting applications is set for **12 September 2025**.

Paper proposals must be sent via email to: convegnodsunina@gmail.com.

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