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**FROM HUMANS TO ALGORITHMS**  
**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AS A CURATORIAL TOOL**

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis explores the new experimental frontiers that have emerged with the advent of artificial intelligence, which is progressively permeating every sphere of life as well as professional and academic contexts, including the curatorship of contemporary art exhibitions. The central question concerns the current and future role of AI within curatorial processes and whether this tool might in some way replace the human curator or at least serve as an efficient form of support.

To frame this inquiry, the work retraces the historical evolution of the curator in Western art, from the origins of collecting to contemporary, unconventional practices increasingly intertwined with diverse technologies, thereby laying the foundations for today's "intelligent" developments. Indeed, the analysis then turns to what artificial intelligence actually is from a technical perspective, considering its emergence and definitions, the functioning of machine and deep learning algorithms, and, ultimately, the forms of interaction between humans and machines through the use of prompts. Against this backdrop, attention is directed to the application of AI in the art sector in general, reviewing companies whose systems are trained to generate artworks or provide support to artistic production, as well as its broader uses in attribution, reconstruction, and restoration, where machines are employed for scientific and academic purposes. The discussion also highlights examples of "intelligent" artworks created by leading contemporary artists engaged in this field.

Finally, the thesis turns to its most experimental phase, focusing on the curatorship of contemporary art exhibitions and examining the interaction and collaboration between human and post-human curators. This will be addressed through the review of three internationally significant case studies – *The Next Biennial Should Be Curated by a Machine*, *JARVIS as Curator of the 10th Bucharest Biennial*, and *Act as if you are a curator: an AI-generated exhibition* – before culminating in a field experiment: the group exhibition "Costruire Identità" ("Building Identities"), conceived and realized with the support of different artificial intelligences, analyzed in every stage of its curatorial process.

## INTRODUCTION

If the history of curatorship – discussed extensively in the first chapter of the thesis – were to be rendered through a visual metaphor, it could be imagined as an organ with three or more manuals played simultaneously at times in harmony, at times in contradiction, and with the occasional discord. The attempt is to untangle a complex tangle of parallel histories: the history of collections, from accumulators to the Wunderkammer, to the birth of museums and the simultaneous emergence of temporary exhibitions; the history of artistic technique and the evolutions and revolutions of the artists themselves; and, in the meantime, the history of exhibition design and the birth and development of the curator’s role. All of this is rendered even more complex by factors such as the economy, status, class, conquests, contaminations, propaganda, politics, revolutions, provocations – by every single aspect of society. For these reasons and given the need to rely on an established body of literature, a precise and deliberate direction has been adopted, namely the Western art-historical timeline, despite contemporary efforts to avoid overtly Eurocentric perspectives. To construct this narrative, primary reference will be made to the voices of Pomian (1997; 2003; 2020) and Haskell (2000) – to define the history of museums and exhibitions; of Hamman (1930) and Birkett (2012) – for exhibition design; of Szeeman (1969) and Obrist (2008) – for the figure of the curator; and of Zuliani (2012) – with regard to critique of the contemporary curator’s role. Moreover, within this chronology the foundations are laid for the advent of technology, from the mechanical arms of the 1960s to the metaverse of recent decades, thereby paving the way for artificial intelligence in all fields of art, including, finally, that of curatorship.

Before discussing AI in the various artistic sectors and in curatorship, it is necessary to understand how it functions, in order to determine whether fear is warranted in the face of this new “intelligent” being or whether it is simply something mechanical that proceeds by probabilities and can therefore serve as a useful instrument for human affairs. Through “Attention is All You Need” by Vaswani et al. (2017), the mechanism of the most advanced artificial intelligences – among them those most commonly used today and based on natural language – will be explained, thereby accounting for and dismantling this “astonishing humanity”.

As will be demonstrated in the third chapter, the mind harbours an intrinsic anxiety deriving from the science-fiction scenarios that form part of our culture, which generate a sense of panic when certain oxymorons are heard, such as “human machine”, or worse still, those produced within scientific circles themselves, such as “artificial neuron”, and so on. Yet, when all is said and done, what appears is a rather clumsy entity, which copies a little here and there, prone to hallucinations. Indeed, this anxiety is none other than that experienced in the face of every revolution, especially technological ones, and – on the human side – the same sensation that arises whenever change occurs. Artists and philosophers, however, as will be recounted, somewhat like *Übermenschen*<sup>1</sup>, prefer to play with it and to provoke.

Turning to the heart of curatorship in contemporary art exhibitions – where there is rather a forced experimentation on models not yet capable of curating, a passing trend justified by grand terms such

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<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche introduces the notion of the *Übermensch* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as an aspirational figure representing the overcoming of human limitations (Nietzsche, 2008)

as “innovation” to be slotted into the “art enterprise” – three case studies will be presented and analysed. It was perhaps precisely thanks to these that, in the final chapter, the experimental one, the decision was taken to use AI only as support for the organisation and curatorship of an exhibition, entitled “Costruire Identità” (Building Identities), and not as an agent with decision-making power within the curatorial process.

What the thesis therefore seeks to investigate is whether artificial intelligence can in any way replace the role of the human curator and whether, insofar as this does not occur, it is at least capable of providing support. How useful can it be as a tool within the curatorial process? Is it already capable, today, of moving successfully within all the dynamics and nuances required by the discipline? Can an AI understand and manage a physical space at the installation stage, or is it preferable to limit its use to the initial phases, such as the selection of artists and the development of the curatorial concept?



# CHAPTER 1. CURATORSHIP: OVERVIEW AND STATE OF THE ART

This chapter sets out on a journey that begins with the human instinct to collect, moves through the birth of museums and temporary exhibitions and arrives at the emergence and evolution of curatorial history – a path whose final destination lies in that somewhat unconventional branch which is becoming increasingly prominent today. Paying close attention to contemporary curatorial techniques will serve the purpose of this thesis: to understand whether artificial intelligence might be capable of doing the same.

## 1.1 Origins: from the custodianship to the museum, to the first exhibitions

“The strangeness of the museum concerns its paradoxical character: it is both useless and indispensable. Useless because it does not satisfy any vital necessity, it produces nothing that cannot be done without; indispensable because a modern society cannot be conceived without museums; depriving her of them would be like nothing her death sentence and unleashing, if not a revolt, at least some resistance” (Pomian, 2020, p. IX – introduction).

In Pomian’s paradox (2020), the museum emerges as something essential to society, something deeply tied to our identity, something ancient, whose origins lie in the instinct to collect and preserve (Pomian, 1997, 2020). It is in this context that attention must be paid to the concept of cultural heritage, which inherently carries the meaning of something to be passed on to future generations. Thus, the musealia becomes an ordinary object, sacrificed to its function and daily context, in order to preserve it and “extend its life”, so that future generations may inherit it. Curatorship thus arises from the need to recontextualize the object within the museum space, in a way that is consistent with the objects surrounding it, as well as the need to organize these collections (Pomian, 2003).

From the small painted wooden tablets displayed at the Acropolis of Athens; to the collection of Nebuchadnezzar<sup>2</sup>, accessible to the people; to the patrician Roman villas where collections were first privatized; the vast liturgical treasures of Abbot Suger; then, in the study rooms of the powerful Renaissance courts commissioning works upon works; the Wunderkammer, rooms of wonders filled with precious, bizarre objects from all over the world; and thus, the newly enriched bourgeoisie imitated royal collections, accumulating on their household furniture excessive amounts of knick-knacks, “the good things of bad taste!” (Gozzano, 1911, p. 87, line 2, translated from Italian). In short, the museum is born from this very instinct to collect and display one’s collection (Crosby et al., 1981; De Benedittis, 1991; Westerhoff, 2001; Pomian, 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.museumofthebible.org/book-minute/nebuchadnezzars-inscription> [25/09/2025]

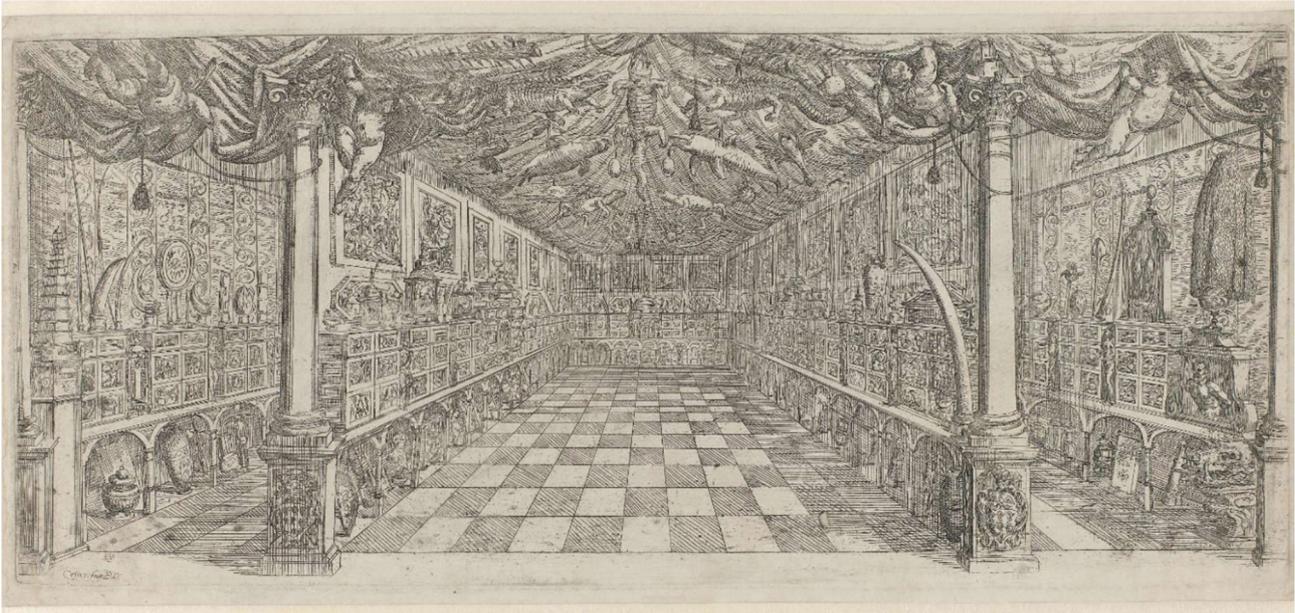


Figure 1: Manfredo Settala, *Cabinet of Art and Curiosities in Milan*, c. 1666. Print, height 197 mm x width 453 mm, RP-P-2012-48, Rijksmuseum (<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/object/RP-P-2012-48--3cd94f000031f933c636180d7e48482b>)

The first museum, in the modern sense of the word, dates back to the mid-16th century: Paolo Giovio's Museum of Illustrious Men<sup>3</sup>. Thus, in his villa on Lake Como, called the "Museum" itself, he arranged the portraits he had collected over more than thirty years. What makes this experience truly essential is the detail that next to Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, beside Romulus, Scipio, Attila, near the two "Greats" of history – Alexander the Great and Charlemagne – there was, for each, an accompanying tribute: a biographical sketch meant to support the reading of the corresponding portrait (Bartalini, 1998).

The modern idea of building grand museums "for the people" was conceived in the wake of the French Revolution, with the symbolic and powerful intent of wresting the royal collections from the monarchy, once jealously guarded within the opulent walls of palaces. It then shifts to what could be called the "ideology" of the museum, and thus the Louvre, originally "Musée central des Arts de la République" became "Musée Napoléon", a tool for showcasing the triumph and power of the nation. Meanwhile, another story of public exhibition spaces unfolds in parallel: that of temporary exhibitions. The first art exhibitions date back to the 17th century, with events organized in Rome that had a ceremonial character. This is when the great aristocratic families would compete for the most visible spaces in the cloister of the Church of San Salvatore in Lauro to exhibit their collections of paintings by the great Renaissance masters. Here we see the emergence of one of the first proto-curators, namely Giuseppe Ghezzi.

At the same time, the Parisian Salons were taking shape: spaces where the fascination for the Old Masters remained largely untouched, and where, through strict selection and stylistic enforcement, contemporary artists affiliated with the Académie Royale were showcased (Haskell, 2000).

Another significant milestone – revealing the deeper reasons behind the organization of exhibitions, whether artistic or not – finds clear expression in two major World's Fairs: The Great Exhibition of

<sup>3</sup> <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/BwXhCXvu5HYTlg?hl=it> [25/09/2025]

the Works of Industry of All Nations, held in Hyde Park in 1851 to assert the British Empire's dominant position; and the Exposition Universelle of 1889, arranged in much the same spirit (Haskell, 2000).

Only after the end of the Second World War and the process of decolonization did the modern concept of the art exhibition emerge – free from academic constraints, political impositions, and propagandistic intent; thus legitimizing the breakthroughs initiated by the avant-gardes, from the Viennese Secession to Impressionism, Abstraction, Fauvism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Dadaism and Surrealism (Haskell, 2000; Miglietti, 2011).

## 1.2. The history of display

### 1.2.1. *From the Horror Vacui to the White Cube*

Perhaps, had we listened to Democritus, horror vacui wouldn't have shaped so many of our social behaviors. But instead, Aristotle famously proclaimed that “natura abhorret a vacuo” (nature abhors a vacuum), and from that, we inherited a deep-rooted instinct to fill every empty space at all costs (Soegaard, 2022). A striking example of this can be seen in Roman works such as the Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus<sup>4</sup>, where the scene expanded to fill every inch of available space. In later periods, however, filling empty spaces became a clumsy habit: small stars, decorative flourishes, and irrelevant embellishments were used to fill the voids, preventing the artwork from losing its value. Thus, little angels and flowers fill the *Majestas Domini* on the altar of Duke Raxis<sup>5</sup>.



Figure 2: Palazzo Attemps - Sarcofago Colossale "Grande Ludovisi". © 2021 MiC (<https://cultura.gov.it/luogo/palazzo-attemps-sarcofago-colossale-grande-ludovisi>)

Perhaps it was because the first exhibitions emerged during the Baroque period, or because the dominant and deep-rooted aesthetic was that of the cabinets of curiosity of the Wunderkammer. Either way, the way paintings were arranged on the wall reflected this very taste, and wherever there was an

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<sup>4</sup> <https://cultura.gov.it/luogo/palazzo-attemps-sarcofago-colossale-grande-ludovisi> [25/09/2025]

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mucris.com/collezioni/> [25/09/2025]

empty spot, it was often filled with precious tapestries. This gave rise to a centuries-old exhibition model, from Rome to Tuscany, to Paris and London, in which paintings were densely packed on the walls without any clear chronological or thematic logic, while the most important ones were positioned at eye level. Visual evidence of this can be seen in Johan Zoffany's painting<sup>6</sup> depicting the Tribuna of the Uffizi, dated 1772–77, or Pietro Antonio Martini's representation<sup>7</sup> of the 1785 Salon; yet we can follow this model all the way to 1895, with the first Venice Biennale<sup>8</sup>, where the same display style still appears: it is known as the "Salon Hang"<sup>9</sup> style (Haskell, 2000; Birkett, 2012).



Figure 3: Johan Joseph Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772-77. Oil on canvas, 123.5 x 155.0 cm (support, canvas/panel/stretcher external), RCIN 406983, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle (<https://www.rct.uk/collection/406983/the-tribuna-of-the-uffizi>)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.rct.uk/collection/406983/the-tribuna-of-the-uffizi> [25/09/2025]

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/390722> [25/09/2025]

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.labiennale.org/it/asac/amarcord-1-1895-1942> [25/09/2025]

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/1106> [25/09/2025]



Figure 4: Pietro Antonio Martini. View of the Salon of 1785, 1785. Etching, sheet: 14 1/4 × 20 3/4" (36.2 × 52.7 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/390722>)

By the end of the 19th century, the Secessionists began to rethink the role of decoration in architecture, no longer treating them as mere fillers, but as elements with their own artistic value (Altea, 2012). It is the new century that would come to appreciate emptiness itself, leaving it as it is, allowing for architectural breathing space, no longer fearing it but rather sensing its necessity. This shift owes much to the Bauhaus (Hammann, 1930). Indeed, in 1930, the critic J. E. Hammann wrote:

“The human being of today wants freedom, air, and light; he needs distance from his thoughts and ideas...The room becomes empty, allows movement and liberates in contrast to a time where it was only possible, with utmost dexterity, to find one's way through “living rooms” darkened by multiple door and window curtains and crowded with knick-knacks and furniture of all styles. In the whitewashed, almost empty room there stands today the minimum of absolutely necessary furniture, as if one were outside” (Hamman, 1930, p. 122, translated from the German).

Finally, from an exhibition design perspective, the quintessential event that consciously incorporated space between artworks to enhance each piece was “Cubism and Abstract Art”<sup>10</sup> (1936) at the MoMA, curated by its founder and director Alfred H. Barr. Here, Birkett (2012) traces the invention of the White Cube in exhibition design.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2748> [25/09/2025]



Figure 5: Installation view of the exhibition "Cubism and Abstract Art.", March 2, 1936–April 19, 1936. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. IN46.18B. Photograph by Beaumont Newhall (<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2748?>)

### ***1.2.2. Outside the walls of the museum***

On January 31, 1977, the Centre Georges-Pompidou was inaugurated, and Renzo Piano presented the world with a new architectural insight: what is typically hidden inside the museum is displayed on the outside, a play of pipes and structural elements that would normally be inside the thick load-bearing walls; here, they are instead externalized. Thus, it becomes a work of art in itself within a larger museum, which extends to the city as well (Silver, 1997). From an architectural point of view, conceptually, it is nothing new. From an artistic point of view, symbolically, it celebrates the ongoing revolution: the museum gaining space outward, from an inside to an outside, is projected beyond the walls. The same will happen for works of art, which gradually claim more and more space in the city. If statuary has always played this role, now, through contemporary art *installations*, true open-air exhibitions are born, often temporary, in harmony with or in contrast to the urban landscape.



Figure 6: Michel Denancé, *The west façade after the interventions of 1996–2000, 2000/01*. Photo, Be2\_\_025, Fondazione Renzo Piano (<https://www.fondazione-renzo-piano.org/it/project/centre-georges-pompidou/>)

This new process of democratization of art will indeed be clearly visible: Haring’s “Crack is Wack”<sup>11</sup> scattered across the streets of New York; Paladino’s “Mountain of Salt”<sup>12</sup> appearing in Piazza del Plebiscito in Naples; at the same time Christo was “wrapping” the Reichstag in Berlin<sup>13</sup>; Bourgeois’s “Maman Spider”<sup>14</sup> has reached major squares from Russia to Qatar; the “Tree”<sup>15</sup> at Place Vendôme for a Christmas in the style of Paul McCarthy; and today, 12 sculptures by Manolo Valdés are lined up in Piazza San Marco<sup>16</sup>. Thus, Land Art and Environmental Art were born, when landscape elements – both urban and natural – were manipulated and transformed into works of art: moving from displaying art within the landscape to *displaying the landscape* itself (Krauss, 1998).

Even the performing arts, from Fluxus to feminist performances, would break into the streets, asserting themselves in open public space, perhaps most compellingly because of their deep-rooted drive for social and political critique. Think, for example, of Valie Export’s provocative actions, the public appearances of the Guerrilla Girls, and their billboard posters that would pop up around the city from time to time (Goldberg, 2004); and with the rise of Street Art and graffiti, this tendency only grew stronger; and it suggests a shift in curatorial thinking: Banksy needs no curator. This marks a sort of curatorial erasure – an end to traditional curatorship – based on the principle that artists curate themselves, or simply make art, no longer in spaces organized and designated for them, but in ones they have “conquered” (He, Bruhn, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.haring.com/!/art-work/108-2> [25/09/2025]

<sup>12</sup> <https://design.fanpage.it/napoli-piazza-d-arte-le-10-installazioni-artistiche-piu-suggestive-di-piazza-plebiscito/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>13</sup> <https://christojeanneclaude.net/artworks/wrapped-reichstag/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/the-collection/works/maman> [25/09/2025]

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gettyimages.it/photos/tree-by-paul-mccarthy-monumental-artwork-at-place-vendome-in-paris?language=en-us> [25/09/2025]

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.finestresullarte.info/en/news/venice-vald-eacute-s-s-bronzes-arrive-in-st-mark-s-square-operation-prompts-debate> [25/09/2025]

All these new frontiers thus represent an interesting challenge for today's curators, who must reinvent the rules of their role each time, in a world where anything can be art (Gombrich, 1950).



Figure 7: Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin*, 1971-95. Photo, Wolfgang Volz, 1995, Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation (<https://christojeanneclaude.net/artworks/wrapped-reichstag/>)



Figure 8: Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999. Bronze, marble, and stainless steel, 927 x 891 x 1023 cm  
(<https://www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus/en/the-collection/works/maman>)



Figure 9: Valie Export, *Encirclement* from the series *Body Configurations*, 1976. Gelatin silver print with red ink, 14 x 23 7/16" (35.5 x 59.6 cm). Carl Jacobs Fund, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VBK, Austria  
(<https://www.moma.org/artists/7816-valie-export>)

## 1.3. The modern curator

### 1.3.1. Harald Szeeman

In 1969, the exhibition “Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form” was held in Bern. Out of 69 artists, only 40 displayed physical works of art in the Kunsthalle Bern. Meanwhile Richard Serra poured lead into the museum’s atrium, Jan Dibbets dug into a corner of the building to expose its foundations, similarly Lawrence Weiner removed a section of the wallboard, Michael Heizer destroyed the entrance sidewalk with a demolition ball, and Richard Long walked a straight line for 10 miles (Szeemann, 1969).

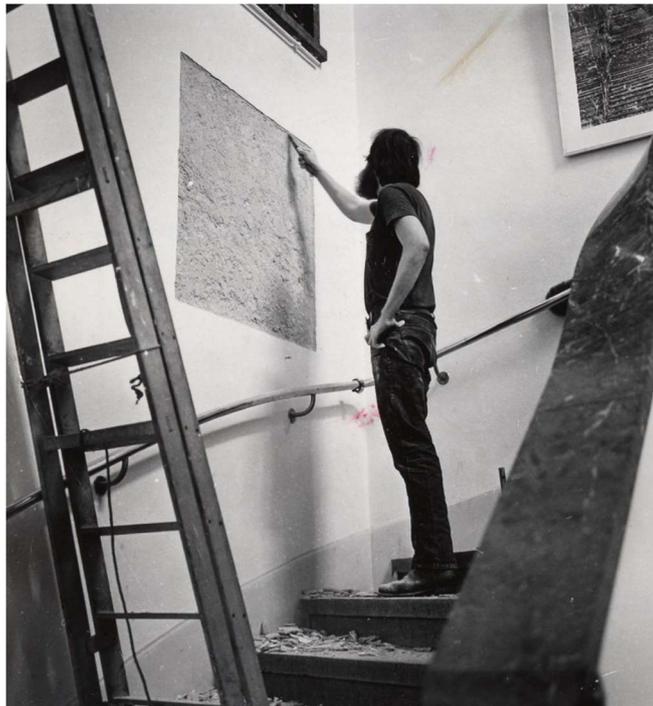


Figure 10: Lawrence Weiner removing a section of the wallboard, 1969. *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, 1969, Kunsthalle Bern (<https://www.contemporaryartdaily.com/project/live-in-your-head-when-attitudes-become-form-works-at-kunsthalle-bern-7880>)

This exhibition, masterfully conceived and curated by Harald Szeemann, not only marked a milestone in the history of contemporary art, but also sparked a true revolution in the role of the curator, who for the first time became a central and creative figure in the artistic process itself. Indeed, until then, the curator was primarily seen as an organizer or a caretaker, someone responsible for setting up exhibitions and preserving artworks, dependent on institutional frameworks, and often the museum director himself. Upending the traditional model, Szeemann redefined the curator’s role: as a mediator between artists and the public, and as an author in their own right (Obrist et al., 2008).

First and foremost, the exhibition was considered controversial because Szeemann chose not the familiar faces of Pop Art, Abstract Art, or Minimalism, but instead brought forward newer, radical movements like Post-Minimalism, Arte Povera, Fluxus, and Land Art, forms of expression the average visitor had likely never seen before.

Szeemann spotlighted a new kind of relationship between curator and artist. Instead of selecting or commissioning ready-made artworks, he simply sent each artist a letter of invitation. The result? Site-specific works emerged, the final object became secondary, and what really mattered was the creative process – the “*Attitude*” – a mindset that laid the groundwork for what we now call Process Art.

At the same time, the Kunsthalle Bern stopped behaving like an untouchable institution and started acting more like a workshop. Artists didn’t just exhibit inside it: they used it, reshaped it, made it part of the art itself, much like their own studios. The same shift applied to the curator: freed from institutional restrictions, Szeemann stepped into a new role entirely, becoming what many consider the first truly independent curator (Obrist et al., 2008; Heinich, 2021).

Szeemann, in many ways, built a myth around himself, and not without backlash. Some artists accused him of turning their work into building blocks for his own personal narrative, as he saw curating as a form of self-expression. But in doing so, he reimagined what it meant to be a curator, introducing the now widely accepted idea of the curator as author. For better or worse, he lit the fuse of a revolution that would shape generations of curators to follow (Heinich, 2021).



Figure 11: Mario Merz, Jean-Marie Theubet and Harald Szeemann, 1969. *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, 1969, Kunsthalle Bern (<https://www.contemporaryartdaily.com/project/live-in-your-head-when-attitudes-become-form-works-at-kunsthalle-bern-7880>)

### ***1.3.3. A critical discourse on the figure of the curator***

In recent years, it seems that in contemporary art, recognition no longer hinges on the artist alone, but is instead shaped by the curator – now regarded as the true orchestrator of exhibitions. While producing site-specific works was once a daring innovation, as it was in Bern in 1969, today it has become standard practice: nearly every work is created with a particular space or occasion in mind. Art has grown increasingly bound to the logic of spectacle and even more so to the rules of the market (Zuliani, 2012). As Zuliani (2012) notes, “art, power, money, and taste go hand in hand” (p. 40,

translated from Italian). We speak more of “art events” than “exhibitions”, further consolidating the curator’s central role (Zuliani, 2012).

An interesting anecdote that reinforces this idea, effectively putting the artists in the background, involves the 54th Venice Biennale, specifically the Italian Pavilion “Art is not Cosa Nostra”, curated by Vittorio Sgarbi. Amid debates and the tense pre-Biennale atmosphere, Antonia Pasqua Recchia described it as a “pyrotechnic curatorial project” in a rather disparaging tone. In fact, the curatorial project involved 200 intellectuals each tasked with selecting an artist, who, rather than being chosen for their merit, were selected for their “distinction” as V.I.P.s in the elitist art world. And just like that, the curator became easily replaceable by a media celebrity.

On the flip side, Sgarbi is seen not as someone creating a personal exhibition, but as someone who designed and spearheaded a comprehensive research project on contemporary artists. This bold, out-of-the-box approach offers a wider perspective on artistic production, unconstrained by the personal tastes of just one curator.<sup>17</sup>

While this elevation of the curator could still be considered, a slip-up occurs with the dangerous and less analytical words of Emmanuele Emanuele (at the time, president of the Scientific Commission of Intellectuals), who declares: “Sgarbi is a visionary genius, he is the true protagonist of the Biennale; perhaps he should have been placed in the Italian Pavilion and that would have been the end of it”<sup>18</sup>, thereby confirming all the criticisms and what Zuliani (2012) would report the following year.

In this context, there was the fear that the artist’s figure might be overshadowed by the central presence of the curator. Today, as will be explained later, it is the curator who could lose importance due to artificial intelligence. Perhaps, then, the artist will return to the spotlight, once the fetishism surrounding this new artificial entity diminishes and it is seen only as an impersonal and democratic tool that outlines the guidelines for creating an exhibition (see paragraph 4.2.).

## **1.4. Contemporary unconventional curatorship**

Beyond the critical reflections explored so far, the following paragraphs will outline why artistic and exhibition experiences have become increasingly central (particularly in temporary art events) and how these experiences are practically constructed. In the following paragraphs, particular attention will be given to two of the most widely used approaches in contemporary exhibition models, particularly within the biennale format: immersive experiences and experiences through technology.

### ***1.4.1. The construction of the experience in contemporary art***

The term “experience” has its roots in the aesthetics of 20th-century author John Dewey and has become a key element in contemporary art. Modern works increasingly emphasize an experiential dimension, often designed to engage viewers on a deeper level. This stems from art’s communicative

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.exibart.com/speednews/conferenza-per-il-padiglione-italia-larte-non-e-cosa-nostra-espressioni-della-creativita-degli-astanti/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.exibart.com/speednews/conferenza-per-il-padiglione-italia-larte-non-e-cosa-nostra-espressioni-della-creativita-degli-astanti/> (translated from Italian) [25/09/2025]

power, which today is leveraged to provoke, captivate, or educate through meaningful interaction (Muller, 2008; Addis, 2010).

This experiential dimension of the artwork is perceived by the visitor through the construction of a viewing experience, which is created through the powerful collaboration between the curator and the artist. The result is the enhancement of the artwork within the museum space. Several studies by Pine and Gilmore (1999), though initially developed for other domains, prove relevant to the world of exhibitions as well. In fact, the visitor experience can be constructed using different variants: through absorption or immersion and by proposing an active or passive approach. Intersecting these elements, arise:

- the entertainment experience, where the visitor passively absorbs (e.g. an artistic photograph or a classical music concert);
- the educational experience, where he actively absorbs (e.g. a video artwork that prompts reflection on a current issue);
- the esthetic experience, where the visitor is physically immersed but remains passive (e.g. an art installation);
- the escapist experience, where he is totally immersed and participates actively (e.g. a virtual reality experience);

(Pine, Gilmore, 1999; Muller, 2008).

#### ***1.4.2. The immersive experience***

Immersive experience moves beyond the decontextualising logic of spaces like the White Cube or Black Box. It's not that these settings aren't immersive, but rather that immersive display is about recontextualising the artwork by shaping an atmosphere (Pan, 2021). This last concept is especially relevant considering how aesthetics is currently studied, particularly as a form of perceptology. Philosopher Gernot Böhme defines atmospheres as emotions that are spread throughout a space – as pervasive aesthetic experiences. What is especially notable, and perhaps counterintuitive, is his emphasis on the notion that spaces possess emotional qualities of their own, rather than simply serving as blank canvases for individual projection (Böhme, 2010).

This is precisely what artists and curators aim to recreate within exhibition spaces. An atmosphere is not perceived through sight alone: it engages all the senses and extends to more subtle layers of sensation. Beyond the visual, sound plays a role, followed by scent (and taste, though rarely), as well as lighting effects and tactile impressions like warmth, cold, or humidity. Crucially, the visitor's own participation often becomes central, with artworks that respond to or are shaped by their interaction. An immersive experience is, by its very nature, multisensory.

In Jannis Kounellis's<sup>19</sup> *Arte Povera*, the museum transforms into a stable, complete with live horses and all the smells that come with it; Max Neuhaus<sup>20</sup>, on the other hand, creates a hidden sound

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.fondazionegrossetocultura.it/index.php/jannis-kounellis-e-larte-povera/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>20</sup> <https://tv.exibart.com/il-suono-di-max-neuhaus-torna-a-vibrare-a-times-square-il-video-della-dia-art-foundation/> [25/09/2025]

installation beneath a grate in Times Square, where passers-by unknowingly encounter a deep, pulsating hum; meanwhile, Olafur Eliasson's "The Weather Project"<sup>21</sup> conjures a vast sun with monofrequency lamps, envelops the space in fog, and reflects the immense room through a ceiling mirror that doubles its size; Precious Okoyomon's installation<sup>22</sup>, which fills the Arsenale, exudes the scent of earth and functions as a greenhouse, felt not only through its humidity but also in its growth over time, culminating in a dense forest by the close of the Biennale.



Figure 12: Olafur Eliasson, *The Weather Project*, 2003. Monofrequency lights, projection foil, haze machines, mirror foil, aluminium, and scaffolding – 26.7 m x 22.3 m x 155.4 m. Photo: Studio Olafur Eliasson, 2003. Installation in Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London (<https://artlead.net/journal/modern-classics-olafur-eliasson-the-weather-project-2003/>)

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<sup>21</sup> <https://artlead.net/journal/modern-classics-olafur-eliasson-the-weather-project-2003/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.labiennale.org/it/arte/2022/il-latte-dei-sogni/precious-okoyomon> [25/09/2025]



Figure 13: Precious Okoyomon, *To See the Earth before the End of the World*, 2022. Installation, Biennale di Venezia, *The Milk of Dreams*, 2022 (<https://www.labiennale.org/it/arte/2022/il-latte-dei-sogni/precious-okoyomon>)

The experience can unfold across different times and spaces. This is exemplified by Carsten Höller’s “Upside Down Mushroom Room”<sup>23</sup>, where the visitor must first pass through a labyrinthine corridor shrouded in total darkness, only to emerge suddenly into a brightly lit space. The first moment is defined by this abrupt transition, from shadow to intense artificial light. Then, as one’s vision adjusts, the second phase reveals itself: a surreal scene of large, brightly coloured mushrooms slowly spinning, suspended upside down from the ceiling. It becomes clear that the entire room has been inverted.

Finally, the exhibition experience can turn into a scientific experiment, as art and science merge and the museum space becomes a research laboratory, as was the case with “The Florence Experiment”<sup>24</sup>. In 2018, Carsten Höller and neurobiologist Stefano Mancuso invited visitors to slide down a 20-metre chute while holding a plant, after which the plant’s photosynthetic parameters were analysed in order to explore the relationship between humans and plants. Here, the experience was reconstructed through a truly multidisciplinary approach.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.fondazioneprada.org/project/carsten-holler-synchro-system/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.palazzostrozzi.org/archivio/mostre/the-florence-experiment/> [25/09/2025]



Figure 14: Carsten Höller, *Upside Down Mushroom Room*, 2000. Photo: Attilio Maranzano. Installation, Courtesy Fondazione Prada (<https://www.fondazioneprada.org/project/carsten-holler-synchro-system/>)

### ***1.4.3. The experience through technology***

Technology has not simply entered the museum – it has settled in, reshaping how we create, display, and experience art. Back in the 1960s, robotic art gave rise to machines that interacted with their environment, and video art disrupted the visual landscape. Nam June Paik, a visionary ahead of his time, played with television screens and bent electronic signals, forever altering the viewer's relationship with the moving image (Kac, 2001). In the decades that followed, Bill Viola<sup>25</sup> slowed time itself, inviting us into meditative video worlds where perception and presence became fluid. Then came the digital wave: from the 2000s onwards, 3D, virtual reality, and augmented reality turned exhibitions into multisensory journeys. The museum became less of a room and more of an experience. Even the idea of collecting shifted, as NFTs emerged and challenged what it means to own a piece of art (Meschini, 2011; Ghelani, 2022).

From a curatorial perspective, technology has played a crucial role in one key area: accessibility. Firstly, it facilitates easier access to preliminary information before a visit. Secondly, during the exhibition itself, tools such as QR codes allow visitors to delve deeper into content or access audio materials. The use of tablets further enhances interactivity, enabling visitors to choose which details they wish to explore. For instance, a tablet might offer personalised tour routes – one tailored to children through playful activities, another designed for more expert audiences – or even propose interactive games, helping to dispel the enduring stereotype of the museum as a dull or overly formal place (Meschini, 2011). A clear example of this approach can be found at the M9 Museum in Mestre, where history is conveyed entirely through digital and multimedia content:

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.billviola.com/> [25/09/2025]

“The videos, immersive areas, games and virtual realities only come to life when the public actively engages with them. M9 is a museum where touching and exploring are the order of the day! [...] where fun and learning merge”<sup>26</sup>.



Figure 15: Visitors interacting with the multimedia tables in the M9 Museum in Mestre (<https://www.m9museum.it/il-museo/>)

Another important revolution brought about by technology that redefines the very concept of the museum is the emergence of virtual museums. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, this mode of engagement became both essential and unavoidable. As a result, virtual tours and online collections gained widespread traction and continued to be used even after the lockdowns had ended. While these cases still involve museums and institutions displaying the works they preserve through their websites, there has also been a shift towards new kinds of virtual exhibitions: the new frontiers of unconventional curatorship have ventured into non-traditional spaces, such as exhibitions in the metaverse. A pertinent example of this is the virtual world of Second Life, where the virtual gallery HeArt & Soul<sup>27</sup>, curated by Lizzy Swordthain and Tom Willis, hosted the exhibition “Captive Lights”<sup>28</sup> in early 2025.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.m9museum.it/il-museo/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>27</sup> Location in the Second Life’s map: <https://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Durdane/240/218/85> [25/09/2025]

<sup>28</sup> Video of the exhibition’s opening event: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=X7OrbqChRzo> [25/09/2025]



Figure 15: image from the visit of Captive Lights virtual exhibition (an experiment by Chiara Schiraldi)



Figure 16: image from the visit of Captive Lights virtual exhibition (an experiment by Chiara Schiraldi)

## CHAPTER 2. TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

To assess whether artificial intelligence can serve as a suitable partner in curating an exhibition, it is first essential to understand its technical functioning and to explore its typical modes of operation.

### 2.1. The birth of artificial intelligence and the research context

The first artificial neuron was developed by W.S. McCulloch and Walter Pitts in 1943, who introduced a mathematical model designed to simulate intelligent behaviour by summing input signals, processing them via an activation function, and returning them as output. A second landmark moment in the pursuit of artificial intelligence came in 1956, when John McCarthy convened a group of researchers at Dartmouth College who were interested in automata theory, neural networks, and the concept of intelligence. It was here that the now widely debated term Artificial Intelligence was first coined (Russell et al., 2016).

In the years that followed, researchers increasingly explored how to design systems that could *think like humans*, *act like humans*, or alternatively, *think rationally*, *act rationally* (Russell et al., 2016).

#### 2.1.1. Strong AI, Weak AI, ANI, AGI, ASI

From a perspective that is more philosophical than technical, two main schools of thought have emerged, within which different research disciplines have taken their stance. The concept of *Strong AI* refers to a bold and ambitious vision: the aim of creating models capable of thinking and acting like human beings. It assumes that, with the right programming, a machine could eventually reach the cognitive level – and even the autonomy – of the human mind. By contrast, *Weak AI* focuses more on rationality in thought and action. Here, the notion of intelligence is not necessarily tied to human cognition, but rather to an entity that is capable of producing optimal and efficient solutions, that may, at best, simulate the processes by which the human mind operates (Russell et al., 2016).

From a technological standpoint, artificial intelligence is more commonly classified into three categories: *Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI)*, *Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)* and *Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI)*.

The first, ANI, refers to computational models designed to perform specific tasks within a well-defined domain of knowledge. It represents an initial level of intelligence, closer to relational functioning than general cognition. Rather than striving toward the lofty ambitions of Strong AI, researchers have largely focused on this more limited, yet highly functional, type of intelligence. ANI systems have long been integrated into our daily lives; they have become so ubiquitous that we rarely think of them as “AI” anymore, let alone as a threat. For instance, Google operates with an ANI-brain and many modern machines rely on countless ANI systems, especially in advanced contexts such as military technologies or financial trading platforms (Russell et al., 2016; Strelkova, 2017). It is important to note that ANI is not inherently inferior or superior to human intelligence. The term “first-level” does not imply a hierarchy of value. Indeed, a machine of this kind can surpass human ability within the specific domain it was designed for. A famous example is *Deep Blue*, the IBM

computer that defeated reigning chess champion Garry Kasparov on 10 February 1996 (Hsu, 1999; Strelkova, 2017).

In contrast, an AGI system refers to a model of intelligence that mirrors human cognitive abilities. It is defined by its capacity to “reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience” (Gottfredson, 1997, p.13). This form of intelligence is broader and more multidisciplinary, capable of adapting to any domain rather than being restricted to a single, pre-defined task. Researchers also tend to associate it with a significantly higher level of autonomy (Gottfredson, 1997). Nonetheless, there is no clear consensus on what should or should not be considered AGI; some scholars, in fact, go so far as to include transformative or generative models within this category (Goertzel, 2007). However, this interpretation proves ultimately inaccurate and can only be considered from a theoretical perspective, since even within the domains of generation and transformation, artificial intelligences do not truly exhibit any real autonomy. A relevant example is OpenAI’s ChatGPT, a model from the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) family, based on deep learning techniques (see paragraph 2.3.), and designed to process and generate human language through Natural Language Processing (NLP): although it may appear otherwise, models such as ChatGPT do not possess autonomy in the tasks they perform – a point that will be explored in greater depth in the following chapters.

Finally, there is no doubt that we are still far from reaching Artificial Superintelligence (ASI) – systems that would surpass human-level intelligence. Yet many scholars, most notably Nick Bostrom (1998), argue that once Artificial General Intelligence is achieved, the emergence of a super-human intelligence is not only plausible, but inevitable.

#### ***2.1.4. A contemporary definition***

In light of the foregoing, the debate surrounding the definitions and differing interpretations of artificial intelligence appears to have reached a shared conclusion:

“Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to systems designed by humans that, given a complex goal, act in the physical or digital world by perceiving their environment, interpreting the collected structured or unstructured data, reasoning on the knowledge derived from this data and deciding the best action(s) to take (according to pre-defined parameters) to achieve the given goal. AI systems can also be designed to learn to adapt their behaviour by analysing how the environment is affected by their previous actions [...]” (European Commission, 2018, p.7).

This definition has gradually set aside certain narratives, some remote, others distinctly dystopian. What truly drives the ongoing advancement in the field is not the grandiose ambition to create a human-like machine, but the sheer volume of data we generate every second, data that must be organised, processed, and managed effectively.

## **2.2. Machine Learning**

At the heart of every modern AI system lies machine learning.

To introduce his Machine Learning courses, Stanford professor professor Andrew Ng refers back to a definition coined by Arthur Samuel in 1959, a formulation he still considers remarkably pertinent:

“Field of study that gives computers the ability to learn without being explicitly programmed”.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, by “learning” from the examples provided or from the connections between data, the machine becomes capable of carrying out specific tasks autonomously, without the need for direct human involvement.

The main types of learning are:

- **Supervised Learning.** Supervised learning involves presenting examples that illustrate the relationship between inputs and outputs. After being fed a sufficiently large number of such examples, the system is able to generate the correct outputs independently when faced with new inputs.  
In this context, the data are pre-categorised: meaning the model is trained using a dataset in which each entry is already labelled. This approach is considered “task-driven”, as it is designed to address specific problems. Two key tasks within this framework are *Classification*, which organises data into predefined categories, and *Regression*, which predicts continuous values based on historical patterns (Liu, Wu, 2011; Morales, Escalantes, 2022).
- **Unsupervised Learning.** Unsupervised learning operates on unlabelled data, following a “data-driven” approach aimed at discovering associations or patterns within the data. This means the algorithm categorises data based on shared characteristics, without any prior understanding of what those categories might be.  
Key techniques in this area include *Clustering*, which groups similar elements together; *Association*, which uncovers correlations between variables; and *Dimensionality Reduction*, which streamlines complex datasets by emphasising the most meaningful relationships. This method is particularly effective for revealing hidden insights where no pre-existing knowledge of the data structure is available (Morales, Escalantes, 2022).
- **Semi-supervised Learning.** This approach combines elements of both supervised and unsupervised learning. The algorithm is trained on a dataset that contains a mix of labelled and unlabelled data, allowing it to learn how to categorise previously unseen inputs by building upon the structure it identifies within the data (Morales, Escalantes, 2022).
- **Reinforcement Learning.** It does not use either pre-categorised data or raw data, but is instead based on a trial-and-error mechanism: the agent learns by interacting with its environment, receiving rewards or penalties for its actions, and gradually refining its behaviour to maximise performance over time (Morales, Escalantes, 2022).

### 2.2.1. The training and the machine learning algorithms

During the training phase, the model is provided with a training set, which will be processed according to the specific model and the algorithm employed. The time required for training depends on several factors, including the size of the dataset (i.e., the number of data examples), the size of each data

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<sup>29</sup> Ng, 2018, [https://youtu.be/jGwO\\_UgTS7I?si=kVwnGfh21LbInONc](https://youtu.be/jGwO_UgTS7I?si=kVwnGfh21LbInONc): min. 36.23 [25/09/2025]

point, the number of iterations<sup>30</sup> required by iterative algorithms, and the number of classes or clusters in classification or clustering models (Mahesh, 2020).

The most common models for machine learning are:

- **Linear.** These are particularly efficient when applied to large-scale datasets. A prime example is the Linear Regression algorithm, which is used to predict continuous numerical values. It operates by identifying the optimal linear equation that best represents the correlation or dependency between the involved variables (Mahesh, 2020).
- **Tree-based.** These models are scalable, meaning they can process large volumes of data without a proportional increase in computational time. A well-known example is the Decision Tree, which functions by dividing data into distinct groups based on selected attributes. In essence, it follows a classification path that begins at a *root node* and branches out to *leaf nodes*. One key limitation, however, is its susceptibility to overfitting: where the model becomes overly tailored to the training data, potentially compromising its generalisation to unseen cases (Mahesh, 2020).
- **Distance-based.** A widely used model within this category is *K-Nearest Neighbours* (KNN), a supervised algorithm characterised by a *lazy learning* approach. Rather than building a generalised model during training, it memorises the dataset and classifies new data points by calculating their distance to the K closest examples within the training set. While effective, this method has a notable drawback: it tends to be computationally expensive and memory-intensive, as it requires recalculating distances each time a new input is introduced (Su, Chou, 2001).
- **Neural network.** These models are inspired by the structure of the human brain. The basic elements of neural networks are artificial neurons. Each neuron receives several inputs, which are multiplied by a weight: a parameter that determines the importance of each input. Then, by applying an activation function, the neuron generates an output. There are many different types of activation functions, and the appropriate one is chosen based on the specific task being performed (Mahesh, 2020).

In general, the functioning of a single neuron can be represented with the following formula:

$$y = f(x_1 \cdot w_1 + \dots + x_n \cdot w_n)$$

where  $x$  is the input,  $w$  is the weight (or parameter),  $f$  the activation function,  $y$  the output and where  $x_1 \dots x_n$  with their respective parameters are the individual components of the input.

In a neural network, all neurons are interconnected in a layered structure. Thanks to this architecture, which enables a large number of operations, neural networks are highly efficient in inference, meaning the application of what has been learned during the training phase to new data that has never been encountered before.

Another important component within a neural network are the hidden layers: a sequence of intermediate layers “hidden” between the input and the output, which transforms raw data into

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<sup>30</sup> An iteration is a single repeated step within a process, whether in a machine learning algorithm or a programming loop. Iterative algorithms perform successive computations until they reach an optimised or stable result (“Iterazione” in Treccani Dictionary, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, <https://www.treccani.it>, [25/09/2025]; Mahesh, 2020).

more abstract representations, captures more complex relationships, and enhances predictive capability.

In the field of machine learning, an example of a neural network is the Multilayer Perceptron (MLP), which includes only one hidden layer. For this reason, it does not fall under the subcategory of deep learning, which will be discussed later.

One of the limitations of neural networks is that the training process is lengthy and computationally expensive. This process is iterative and aims to calculate and adjust according to the error by updating the weights ( $w$ ), in a procedure known as backpropagation (Mahesh, 2020).

Some methods – particularly in the context of supervised machine learning based on classification – aimed at improving the efficiency of such algorithms and correcting certain inefficiencies include, for instance, not only the use of a training dataset, but also the provision of a validation set (to optimise parameters and prevent overfitting), and a test set (to evaluate performance on previously unseen data) (Mahesh, 2020).

### 2.3. Deep learning

Deep learning is a subcategory of machine learning which “learns from experience” and “understands” through a hierarchical system of inputs, rooted, as previously mentioned, in the structure of artificial neurons. The models employed in deep learning are deep neural networks, meaning they use multiple hidden layers. As a result, the network is structured through a vast number of interconnections.

Even in traditional neural networks, the assignment of weights to various parameters – and thus the creation of a conceptual hierarchy – occurred automatically, though it could still require manual engineering. In deep neural networks, however, the model determines which parameters to assign and how to use them entirely independently, without the need for human intervention.

Several models used in deep neural networks include the following:

- **Recurrent neural network (RNN).** This type of neural network can vary in depth and, with the increase in the number of hidden layers, becomes deep. As previously mentioned in relation to classic neural networks, the learning process here also relies on back propagation. However, an additional element is introduced: time. For this reason, the method is more accurately referred to as backpropagation through time (BPTT), which makes recurrent neural networks particularly well-suited for working with temporally structured data. These networks retain information from past states in order to process subsequent inputs, and by updating memory at each time step, they are able to provide contextual understanding.

This characteristic makes them especially effective for processing and generating sequential and temporal data, such as in natural language processing (prior to the emergence of transformer models), speech recognition, and text generation systems (Medsker, 2001).

- **Convolutional neural network (CNN).** These networks are, by their very nature, deep neural networks and are primarily employed for processing spatial data such as images and videos. In order to function effectively, they require the use of several specialised layers. What sets

them apart from other types of neural networks is the presence of convolutional layers: these operate through specific mathematical tools known as convolutional filters, which are designed to detect significant features within images, such as edges and patterns.

Once images are converted into tensors, each filter – essentially a small weight matrix – applies a set of mathematical operations to identify specific characteristics. For instance, one matrix might detect a vertical edge, another a curve, and yet another, deeper in the network, might identify a more complex texture (Wu, 2017).

Is usually ReLU (Rectified Linear Unit) the activation function used in convolutional neural networks. As a non-linear function, ReLU enables the network to model more complex patterns of learning (Purwono et al., 2022).

As with other neural networks, the learning process in CNNs follows the principle of back propagation (Wu, 2017).

Finally, the applications of these models include image classification, object detection (as used, for instance, in security systems), facial recognition, and image generation before the rise of transformer-based models, Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), and diffusion models (Hossain, Sajib, 2019).

- **Transformer.** The main feature of this type of neural network is that, unlike RNNs and CNNs, which process data sequentially, it is able to handle the context as a whole by parallelising the input data, which are processed simultaneously. This is made possible by the *Self-Attention Mechanism* (Vaswani et al., 2017).

For instance, in text generation, transformers enable the processing of much longer sequences, whereas recurrent neural networks (RNNs) tend to suffer from memory loss over time. This is why the emergence of transformers has profoundly transformed the field of Natural Language Processing (NLP), a domain in which machines appear to respond naturally to humans (Mo et al., 2024). In a similar fashion, unlike Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), it is capable of processing an entire image at once, rather than dividing it into smaller patches and handling them sequentially. This is the principle behind the Vision Transformer (ViT). For this reason, previous neural network architectures are now largely being replaced by transformer-based models (Maurício et al., 2023).

The main distinction from other neural networks – and what enables the attention mechanism – is the *transformer architecture* (which will be discussed in the following paragraph). This architecture has, in fact, marked a turning point in the field of artificial intelligence (Vaswani et al., 2017).

- **Generative adversarial network (GAN).** We are now in the field of generative artificial intelligence, where deep neural networks like GANs have proven revolutionary for their ability to generate highly realistic data. This feature particularly distinguishes them from Vision Transformers (ViTs), whose strength lies primarily in image classification and segmentation. Moreover, while Vision Transformers rely on a supervised learning approach – requiring labelled data – GANs follow an unsupervised paradigm. This does not mean, however, that pre-training cannot be used to enhance performance, as is the case with StyleGAN, which is specialised in producing highly realistic synthetic images. Another fundamental difference is that this is a *text-to-image*, *text-to-video*, and *image-to-video* model: in other words, given a textual prompt or an image, it is capable of generating realistic images or videos.

Its functioning is based on two core components: the *generator* and the *discriminator*: two neural networks that are effectively “competing” with one another. The generator attempts to produce synthetic data, while the discriminator aims to distinguish between real and generated data. Through this adversarial process, the generator becomes increasingly proficient at creating realistic outputs, while the discriminator sharpens its ability to detect subtle inconsistencies. As with other models, the weights are continuously updated in a self-correcting loop, reducing the need for human intervention and enhancing the system’s autonomy.

However, this process is highly complex and can undermine the stability of generative neural networks. One well-known limitation is *mode collapse*, a phenomenon in which the generator repeatedly produces similar outputs, thus failing to capture the full diversity of the data distribution. Nonetheless, GANs remain among the most powerful generative models, outperforming transformers and being second only to diffusion models.

The range of applications is exceptionally broad, notably in the arts, and extending as far as the medical field, primarily due to their capability to generate three-dimensional models (Aggarwal et al., 2021).

- **Diffusion model.** This is also a deep generative model and, like GANs, it is based on a process of disturbing and restoring information. However, its functioning does not rely on the generator–discriminator framework, but on a more stable method centred on the concept of noise. *Gaussian noise* refers to a set of random values that distort the original structure to the point of making it unrecognisable. The model is then trained to reverse this process, learning to gradually remove the noise and reconstruct the original data. This is why the technique is referred to as *progressive denoising*. Such an approach has made diffusion models particularly effective in generating high-resolution content, offering greater stability and more detail compared to outputs produced by GANs, while avoiding the problem of mode collapse. The main drawback of this type of model is its high computational cost. Furthermore, it tends to be slower, as it requires a higher number of steps (Croitoru et al., 2023).

## 2.4. Transformer architecture

In 2017, Vaswani et al., through their study “*Attention is All You Need*”, introduced a neural network architecture that revolutionised the field of artificial intelligence. It is precisely this architecture that enabled the development of all transformative systems, particularly within the field of Natural Language Processing. It was this very architecture that, in 2022, made the emergence of ChatGPT possible.

Natural language plays a crucial role, as it provides the means through which machines can interact with humans and render their outputs comprehensible.

Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) marked a significant advancement over shallow architectures, as they could retain information from earlier inputs and use it to inform the processing of subsequent data. Their principal limitation, however, lay in their strictly sequential nature: sentences, for example, are processed word by word, with each token updating an internal hidden state. For long sequences, this approach leads to substantial computational delays and hinders efficient training, as

memory limitations obstruct the use of *batching*. This amounts to a dependency on sequential computation.

The pressing research question thus became how to fashion a model capable of inspecting an entire sequence in one sweep, thereby unlocking parallel training (Vaswani et al., 2017).

Enter the Transformer Architecture, whose design pivots on three core components: an encoder, a self-attention mechanism, and a decoder:

- The **encoder** takes an input sequence and distils it into a single, abstract representation. At this stage the tokens – words mapped into vectors via input embeddings – enter the model. Positional information is then injected, through *positional encodings*, so that each token's place within the sentence is recorded; these enriched embeddings constitute crucial evidence for the decoder downstream (Vaswani et al., 2017).
- The encoder is composed of **N layers of Multi-Head Self-Attention**, each designed to evaluate the relevance of every word in a sentence with respect to its broader context. In essence, these attention mechanisms establish relationships among word-vectors that go beyond their linear sequence.

Two further layers follow: a *Feedforward Neural Network*, a fully connected architecture responsible for additional transformation; and the *Add & Norm Layer*, which normalises the data, stabilising training and enhancing convergence by promoting more balanced data distributions (Vaswani et al., 2017).

- In the **decoder**, the process begins with the output embeddings – vector representations of the tokens generated up to that point. These pass through two distinct *attention layers*: the first prevents the model from accessing future tokens by masking unrevealed positions, while the second layer incorporates information derived from the encoder's output, allowing the model to align the source and target sequences. As with the encoder, these are followed by *non-linear transformation* and *normalisation layers*. The final output is produced after these steps have been completed (Vaswani et al., 2017).

Before reaching the final prediction, the result passes through a Linear Layer followed by a Softmax. These two layers serve to project the model's output into a space we might think of as a "vocabulary": as though each word were assigned a raw score (logit), which the Softmax then transforms into a probability between 0 and 1. In this way, the model effectively chooses the next word by weighing all possibilities across the entire vocabulary (Vaswani et al., 2017).

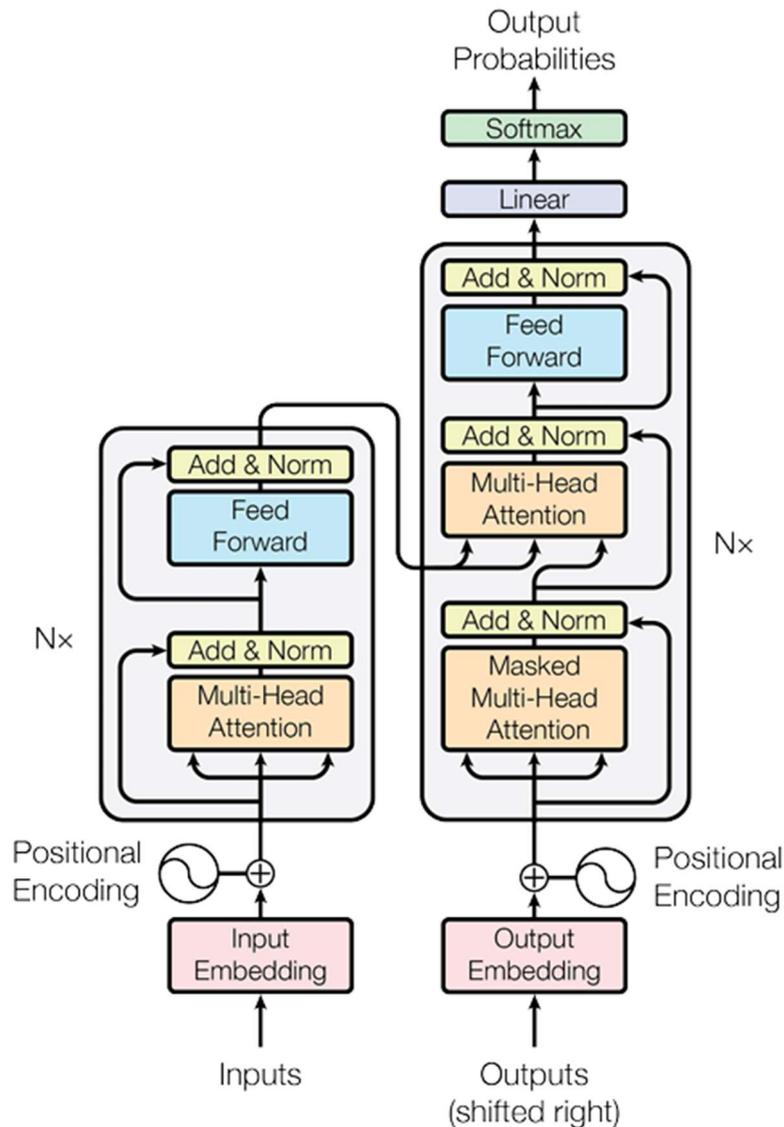


Figure 17: The Transformer- model architecture (Vaswani et al., 2017)

In essence, the Transformer reads the input holistically, weighs the available information, and generates the next word based on a *probability calculation* (Bharadwaj, 2025). This, perhaps, is the key to understanding why artificial intelligence cannot truly be considered “intelligent” in the human sense of the word. What we encounter is not conscious thought, but rather a sophisticated sequence of probabilistic predictions. The output may resemble a form of reasoning – ChatGPT, for instance, may appear to speak and write like a person – but this likeness is, for now, largely superficial. We remain far from anything approximating genuine human cognition.

Much like RNNs in the realm of natural language processing, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have gradually been eclipsed by architectures incorporating self-attention mechanisms in the domain of computer vision. As discussed in section 2.4, models employing Multi-Head Self-Attention do not scan one region of the image after another, but they partition the image into multiple segments which are then processed in parallel. This shift offers both a computational advantage and a more holistic – and therefore often more effective – perspective on visual data (Bharadwaj, 2025).

Here is how the Transformer Architecture has facilitated the development of numerous technologies and significantly enhanced earlier models. Key applications include:

- machine translation (e.g., Google Translate);
- text generation within Natural Language Processing frameworks (such as ChatGPT, GPT-4, and Bard);
- speech recognition and text-to-speech synthesis;
- image recognition and processing, exemplified by the Vision Transformer (ViT);

(Bharadwaj, 2025).

## 2.5. How to use AI properly

After having discussed input and output at length, it is natural to ask what these two terms actually mean in practice: when a user interacts with a generative artificial intelligence system, they are required to provide a “prompt” as input. The more precise and appropriate this prompt is, the more satisfactory the resulting output will be. Input is both multilingual and multimodal: it may take the form of text, an image, a video, or audio. As the primary channel of human–machine interaction, it is therefore essential to understand how to formulate a prompt appropriately.

There are various techniques for generating a prompt, depending on the type of output one wishes to obtain. In general, a prompt is usually constructed using a prompt template – that is, a framework composed of several variables, made more or less explicit. In its simplest form, it consists of three variables:

- **the role.** The model is asked to respond while assuming a specific role (e.g., *respond as if you were an art critic*);
- **the topic.** The model is asked to address a specific topic (e.g., *discuss the Venice Art Biennale*);
- **the target.** The model is asked to adopt a specific style and register depending on the intended “audience” (e.g., *as if addressing expert art collectors*).

If these standards are incorporated into the prompt, the outcome will be more effective, as the model is already given a clear orientation, understands which type of output is most appropriate, and allows the user to save time. From that point onward, any additional information will only serve to further enhance the efficiency of the result (Schulhoff et al., 2024).

The three main techniques used to construct prompts are as follows:

- **Prompting Technique.** This technique works as a kind of “blueprint” for creating a prompt template, similar to the one outlined above. It includes methods such as **Zero-Shot Prompting**, a basic structure that provides precise instructions without additional examples. If, however, the template is enriched with examples that show the model how it should respond, the approach is known as **Few-Shot Prompting**. Within this same category are also **Role Prompting**, in which the model is assigned a specific role or given a contextual frame,

and **Instruction Prompting**, which consists of providing a clear and detailed set of directions to be followed in generating the output.

- **Prompt Chain.** Rather than a prompt-construction technique, this is a strategy for sequencing prompts so that each output becomes the input to the next. The most widely used method is **Chain-of-Thought Prompting (CoT)**: a step-by-step series of prompts that elicit intermediate reasoning and iteratively refine the response, yielding a stronger final output.
- **Prompt Engineering.** This is a specific, design-oriented process aimed at improving and optimizing a prompt – an approach that, drawing on the terminology, can be described as “engineering.” It often involves the same template mentioned above, but in a more structured and targeted form. Within this category fall techniques such as **Instruction Prompting** or **Few-Shot Prompting**, though applied with greater constraints and detail.

Finally, additional techniques that may prove useful in interacting with artificial intelligence – relevant to include in the thesis in connection with the experimental section – can be applied to particularly long Chains-of-Thought. These include **Verification Prompts**, **Comprehension Check Prompts**, **Evaluation Prompts**, and **Consistency Prompts**. Each of these serves as a test posed to the model to ensure that it has correctly understood, retained, and processed all the information or data provided throughout the chain in a coherent manner. (Schulhoff et al., 2024).

## CHAPTER 3. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ART

In the following chapter, the discussion will turn to how artificial intelligence has been permeating, for quite some time, every field and sector of the art world. The first section will address the specific AI tools used to generate artworks, accompanied by examples of their application. This inevitably gives rise to debate: those who are unsettled by the seemingly flawless imitation of the artist's hand, those who recognize that the models are still far from achieving true mastery and those who call into question the very notion of human authorship.

While the more creative domain has experienced some upheaval, from a scientific and research perspective AI can be regarded as an extraordinarily valuable tool. In fields such as attribution and forgery detection, as well as reconstruction and restoration, artificial intelligence has become essential. Its role is not limited to accelerating processes but extends to making them more precise – beyond the level a human alone could achieve.

Finally, there is the strong response of leading figures in the international contemporary art scene: original works created with AI by artists renowned for their provocation and experimentation.

### 3.1. Generating artworks

Contrary to popular belief, AI has been part of the art world for quite a while now. Only recently, however, has the topic begun to attract serious attention, perhaps due in part to the rise of generative models like GANs and, more recently, diffusion models. These machines are particularly good at Computer Vision: they handle and generate images and videos with hyperrealistic precision – which, from a human perspective, is often nothing short of mind-blowing.

Naturally, the fear creeps in: what if the artist is not human anymore, but a machine? What if we get replaced?

But let's put the grand debate on artificial intelligence on hold for a moment and take a more practical look at how these various tools and software actually work.

#### 3.1.1. Midjourney

A quick Google search for “Midjourney” reveals a charming little sailboat drifting on the ocean – a logo more befitting a travel agency than a tech platform. Upon clicking the link, however, one is greeted by a whirl of glowing blue code spiralling around the plump letters of “Midjourney,” evoking both a digital maelstrom and the nostalgic flair of a 1990s video game intro.<sup>31</sup>

It is in the “Explore<sup>32</sup>” section that the platform's capabilities begin to surface: the imagery it produces, while ostensibly aiming for photorealism, often carries a signature aesthetic: part futuristic, at times veering into the fantastical or surreal, frequently characterised by soft, dreamlike contours.

This all originated in February 2022, courtesy of David Holz, co-founder of Leap Motion. Fundamentally, the system is a generative artificial intelligence built upon deep neural networks. It's a text-to-image model: given a textual prompt, it transforms it into an image and, upon request, can produce it with remarkable realism (Zhang, Liu, 2024).

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.midjourney.com/home> [25/09/2025]

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.midjourney.com/explore?tab=top\\_week](https://www.midjourney.com/explore?tab=top_week) [25/09/2025]

Speaking of realism, in 2023, back when we probably were not quite used to this sort of thing yet, a rather amusing photo of Pope Francis<sup>33</sup> started making the rounds online. He was wearing a coat somewhere between high fashion and streetwear, possibly a Balenciaga or a Moncler. Needless to say, a lot of people fell for it.



Figure 18: The viral photo of the Pope Francis wearing a streetwear coat, 2023. Image generated with Midjourney (<https://www.ilpost.it/flashs/foto-papa-balenciaga-ia/>)

From an artistic standpoint, one notable example is “Il Destino dell’Errante<sup>34</sup>” (The Fate of the Wanderer), a graphic novel produced with the aid of Midjourney by author Vanni Santoni. Ultimately, its relationship with art, lies in the very foundation of its training: the model was built on a dataset comprising the work of countless artists, from Van Gogh to Anish Kapoor, and even including the full archive of Walt Disney’s drawings.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.1.2. Runway

Another category of artificial intelligence is exemplified by Runway: a platform specifically developed for video manipulation. Its most recent iterations, Gen-2 and Gen-3, allow users to generate videos from either text prompts or images.

It relies on a generative deep learning framework, particularly employing adversarial neural networks. Since 2018, Runway has proved to be a valuable tool for artists and filmmakers alike, offering an intuitive interface that requires no prior programming knowledge (Cui et al., 2024).

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.artmajeur.com/it/magazine/14-stile-di-vita/la-foto-di-papa-francesco-con-indosso-un-piumino-alla-moda-e-un-fake/333124> [25/09/2025]

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.indiscreto.org/il-destino-dellerrante/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.exibart.com/attualita/midjourney-trapela-la-lista-di-artisti-usati-da-intelligenza-artificiale/> [25/09/2025]

Another significant aspect is the company's strong investment in research, particularly in the *General World Models*<sup>36</sup> initiative. A world model is designed to internally represent the external world, drawing on vast datasets encompassing a wide range of media: text, audio, video, and imagery. It is considered a general model because of its ability to generalise, allowing it to simulate possible future events. For instance, when Runway is prompted with a single image, used as if it were a still frame, the model can infer the subsequent frames, effectively generating an entire video. Naturally, such abilities represent only a small glimpse into what this area of research may eventually achieve: the early stages of a much broader, long-term exploration.

Runway is unquestionably transforming the landscape of contemporary filmmaking, not only through its technology but also by means of tangible initiatives – including the now-annual AIFF<sup>37</sup> (Artificial Intelligence Film Festival) and the “Hundred Film Fund<sup>38</sup>”, a programme that provides financial backing to emerging artists for film production.

### **3.1.3. OpenAI: ChatGPT, DALL·E, Ai Art Generator**

In November 2022, OpenAI introduced a chatbot that dramatically reshaped public perception of artificial intelligence. With its intuitive interface and responses that mimic human conversation to an uncanny degree, ChatGPT quickly drew widespread attention.

Technically speaking, it is part of the GPT family – Generative Pre-trained Transformers – and, as mentioned earlier, it is built upon the Transformer Architecture.

While the primary function remains text-based input and output, recent updates have transformed the model into a multimodal system. It can now process inputs including images, audio, and video, and, significantly, generate images through the recent integration of DALL·E<sup>39</sup> (another OpenAI software) directly within the chat interface (Gupta et al., 2023).

Another noteworthy development lies in the realm of specialised GPTs. Known as Custom GPTs, this system enables the configuration of the chatbot to function as an expert within a particular domain, achieved through tailored instructions on interaction and response, training on specialised datasets, and access to supplementary tools. This has led to the emergence of “numerous specialised ChatGPTs”, including Finance Tutor<sup>40</sup>, International Law Advisor<sup>41</sup>, Coding Assistant<sup>42</sup>, and notably within the artistic domain, the Art Curator<sup>43</sup> (which will be examined in the following paragraph). Ultimately, a dedicated art-generating model: the AI Art Generator<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://runwayml.com/research/introducing-general-world-models> [25/09/2025]

<sup>37</sup> <https://aiff.runwayml.com/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>38</sup> <https://runwayml.com/news/hundred-film-fund> [25/09/2025]

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.dall-efree.com/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>40</sup> <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-p2gDoDmjw-finance-tutor> [25/09/2025]

<sup>41</sup> <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-fjmuyqLVB-international-law-advisor?ref=find-gpt> [25/09/2025]

<sup>42</sup> <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-vK4oPfjfp-coding-assistant> [25/09/2025]

<sup>43</sup> <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-nU20EamsW-art-curator> [25/09/2025]

<sup>44</sup> <https://chatgpt.com/g/g-YZYJADTni-ai-art-generator> [25/09/2025]

### 3.1.4. Curatyy™ and Art Curator

It already presents itself with a post-human aesthetic: we see the back of a figure – robotic or otherwise – gazing “into the web page” through what appears to be a virtual reality headset, perhaps somewhat diverting attention from the program’s actual purpose. The title reads: “Meet your AI Art Curator”. Curatyy™ is an AI model developed by programmer and web designer Silvan Soeters, though it is still in the development stage. The aim is to create a platform serving artists: an artificial intelligence system where they can upload their works and where the post-human curator assists in enhancing them by suggesting new dimensions, narratives, and meanings.

In the meantime, a GPT extension has been provided, trained on datasets specialized in curatorship. This makes it particularly skilled across several areas of the discipline and, above all, equipped with a strong computer vision system capable of recognizing from a single photograph the materials of a work, information about the type of installation, the exhibition space, and the chosen lighting – while consistently offering valuable curatorial insights.

Several tests were therefore carried out by asking Art Curator to describe a few works differing in style, technique, installation, and artistic movement. The conversation is available at the following link:

<https://chatgpt.com/share/68d3b6e6-182c-8012-8de9-a053e8db90fe>

## 3.2. Artists vs AI: the ongoing debate

The most emblematic case, and one that triggered a wave of unease across the art world, is the “*The Next Rembrandt*”<sup>45</sup> project. Launched in 2016, it brought together a diverse team including Microsoft, Delft University of Technology, the Mauritshuis, the Rembrandt House Museum, ING Bank, and the advertising agency J. Walter Thompson Amsterdam.

Their objective was to create an entirely new painting in the style of Rembrandt, relying on vast data processed through Azure VMs, sophisticated machine learning algorithms, and 3D printing technology to replicate not only the visual style, but also the tactile texture of Rembrandt’s brushstrokes.

The result is a near-perfect imitation: one that sparked serious concern and debate within the artistic community.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://news.microsoft.com/europe/features/next-rembrandt/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>46</sup> <https://news.microsoft.com/europe/features/next-rembrandt/> [25/09/2025]



Figure 19: *The Next Rembrandt* (<https://news.microsoft.com/europe/features/next-rembrandt/>)

Some, however, choose not to fear the rise of AI. Instead, they approach it with critical distance, composure, and a sense of intellectual superiority, such as filmmaker and visual artist Lucio Arese:

“At the moment, from what I see by observing the landscape around me, artificial intelligence from image generators to video ones, seems to make it easier to create low-quality works rather than valuable ones”.<sup>47</sup>

In fact, what the director says isn't all that wrong, because in many cases, artificial intelligence hasn't really proven to be that intelligent. The “Next Rembrandt” project, for instance, required substantial human oversight and in many other cases, AI systems have faltered in the absence of human intervention. Rather than resembling an expert, AI still behaves more like an inexperienced student: copying from scattered sources and fabricating what it cannot grasp. In particular, art historian, curator, and lecturer Valentina Tanni recounts an experiment in which ChatGPT was used to produce textual prompts, later visualised through Midjourney. The outcome, while intriguing, revealed a number of entirely made-up works, allegedly by artists such as Ai Weiwei, Cattelan, Giorgio Andreotta, and Tosatti: the machine generated what are technically referred to as *hallucinations*. And so, from now on, the twisted marble column topped with Socrates' giant face – which, according to ChatGPT, Ai Weiwei endlessly destroys and rebuilds – will live on in the online world forever. It would appear that, when it comes to contemporary art, AI is still a few brushstrokes behind.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <https://www.finestresullarte.info/en/interviews/ai-in-the-arts-ease-of-use-risks-proliferation-of-poorly-curated-content-lucio-arese-speaks> (Translated from Italian) [25/09/2025]

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.tribune.com/arti-visive/arte-contemporanea/2023/01/chatgpt-intelligenza-artificiale/> [25/09/2025]



Figure 20: *The Death of Socrates*. Generated by ChatGPT (<https://www.artribune.com/arti-visive/arte-contemporanea/2023/01/chatgpt-intelligenza-artificiale/>)

Not by chance, Tanni, who doesn't believe in the autonomy or the threat posed by the machine, recalls what Harold Cohen often used to say:

“Creativity lies neither in the programmer nor in the program, but in the dialogue between the two” (Tanni, 2023, p. 46, translated from Italian).

With regard to this eccentric artist, active since the 1970s, he was among the early pioneers exploring artificial intelligence and the dynamics of the human–machine relationship. Rather than a simple dialogue, one might now describe it as a genuine bond, that transcended the boundaries between the real and the virtual: Aaron was his devoted alter ego.

“AARON is sitting quietly on my desk, generating original images at the rate of about one every two minutes [...]. And, most particularly when I'm watching it, I am aware of a couple of questions that need to be addressed: if I say that I have a creative family, and then I were to say that I have a creative computer program, would I mean the same thing by the word "creative"? And how far could I justify the claim that my computer program – or any other computer program – is, in fact, creative?” (Cohen, 1999, p. 1).

It is particularly striking that, even today, we continue to question what constitutes creativity, all the more so now that the artistic process involves a third agent: artificial intelligence.

To begin with, viewed with a degree of detachment, one might reasonably suggest that an artwork produced through artificial intelligence does not lose its meaning simply because a machine is involved. After all, AI is a tool, just like the paintbrush for the painter, the camera for the photographer, the chisel for the sculptor, the potter's wheel in ceramics, or specific software for videomakers and graphic designers. In this light, AI becomes simply one more instrument – powerful,

yes, but still dependent on the intention behind it, especially in an era in which the idea and concept behind an artwork have come to prevail over technical execution.

Secondly, as unsettling as the uncanny reproducibility of a painting may seem – its brushwork, style, and palette – it is worth reflecting on the fact that this is not the first time such anxieties have emerged. Nearly a century ago, Walter Benjamin (1936) addressed a similar concern in his seminal essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”. History, as ever, repeats itself. Just as mass production did not signal the end of art, artificial intelligence is unlikely to do so either. Perhaps we were protected, back then, by the notion of the *aura*<sup>49</sup>; or perhaps it is simply human nature to feel apprehension in the face of each new revolution.

### 3.2.1. *When philosophers take sides*

Francesco D’Isa opens his remarks with a touch of dry wit, noting that the death of art has been proclaimed so often that its obituary now reads more like a running joke than a solemn announcement. He then poses a timely question:

“Can we make art with artificial intelligence? Well... consider Duchamp: art was made with a urinal. Or better yet, Manzoni: art was made with *Merda*. So, with no offence intended, if it was possible to create art from *Merda*, then surely a tool as intricate as artificial intelligence lends itself just as well to artistic creation”.<sup>50</sup>

D’Isa continues by expanding the notion of authorship into something inherently collective: suggesting that every so-called artist is, in fact, indebted to the discoveries and influences of others. After all, had Picasso been born in the 1300s, he might have painted Madonnas instead of Cubist visions inspired by African art; the camera is hardly a neutral tool, but the culmination of countless refinements by inventors, experts, and photographers. Before it ever reached an “author,” the device had already passed through many hands, as though the artist were merely the final link in a long historical chain.<sup>51</sup>

Andrea Colamedici, by contrast, takes a more confrontational stance, flipping the concept of authorship on its head. Because if Pig-Casso, a rather endearing pink pig, can paint and sell canvases acclaimed as artworks; and if Molly the orangutan at Tama Zoo spontaneously produced a drawing that could easily be mistaken for abstract expressionism, prompting headlines that she had “created art”; then why is it so difficult to accept artificial intelligence as a creative author?

Colamedici, in essence, invites us to consider a view of authorship that is distinctly anti-anthropocentric.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> According to Walter Benjamin (1936), the aura is the quality that “radiates” from a work of art, the element that makes it unique and it arises only when the artwork is original and authentic. A reproduction, no matter how accurate, lacks this aura.

<sup>50</sup> D’isa, 2023, <https://youtu.be/CFSOag6GOvM?si=Fn0DgwbjluVxXnt0>: min. 00.53 [25/09/2025]

<sup>51</sup> <https://youtu.be/CFSOag6GOvM?si=Fn0DgwbjluVxXnt0> [25/09/2025]

<sup>52</sup> <https://youtu.be/LzqZr48gfyw?si=Il91vuR6HkBVpizK> [25/09/2025]

### 3.3. Other fields

As previously noted, one of the primary motivations behind the evolution of artificial intelligence has been the ambition to design systems capable of enhancing and optimising human labour, both in terms of efficacy and efficiency. This has resulted in the emergence of machines purpose-built to execute specific tasks.

The art world has been no exception. AI has begun to play a key role not only in the creation of artworks, but also in the broader infrastructure that sustains artistic production: attribution, reconstruction, restoration, and conservation are now approached with greater speed, precision, and reliability, thanks to AI's capacity to process and interpret vast datasets.

#### 3.3.1. *Forgery detection and attribution*

It was back in 2006 when Christie's auction house put Max Ernst's "La Horde" up for sale, presenting it as the star lot of the evening. What followed became one of the most embarrassing sales in the auction house's history – one they tried, unsuccessfully, to quietly bury (Christie's, 2006).

The painting was said to belong to the Flechtheim Collection, originally owned by the well-known art dealer Alfred Flechtheim, who was persecuted by the Nazis. Its estimated value ranged from £2,500,000 to £3,500,000 and it was introduced with a glowing statement from Olivier Camu:

“This exciting discovery is the most important work by Max Ernst to appear at auction in at least a decade” (Christie's, 2006, p.3).

It wasn't until 2010 that the full extent of the deception finally came to light: the painting was, in fact, a forgery – part of a brilliantly staged hoax masterminded by Wolfgang Beltracchi and his wife, arguably the Bonnie and Clyde of the art world. Their made-up tale about the prestigious Flechtheim Collection turned out to be so convincing that even seasoned experts and high-end collectors fell for it.<sup>53</sup>

The scandals that surfaced during those years fundamentally paved the way for more extensive research in authentication. Enter Carina Popovici and Christiane Hoppe-Oehl, who developed an algorithm tailored precisely for this challenge. In 2019, the Art Recognition<sup>54</sup> AI was launched, rapidly establishing itself as an indispensable tool for researchers. This model, a Deep Convolutional Neural Network (DCNN), emulates the functioning of the human visual cortex by recognising and associating forms, strokes, colours, and lighting, essentially operating through abstraction. The platform has substantially lowered both financial and temporal research costs, while eliminating any subjective bias.<sup>55</sup>

A recent case involving the software concerns the "Madonna Flaget". Anthony Ayers – the painting's owner – was on a mission: to prove, once and for all, that the work was the handiwork of Raphael Sanzio. Over the years, he poured significant amounts of money into expert opinions and scholarly investigations. Post mortem, his wife Dawn Turco gallantly picked up the torch. Finally, in 2023, Art Recognition stepped in with a decisive verdict. According to the AI, the painting involved multiple

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.artnome.com/news/2019/9/12/can-ai-art-authentication-put-an-end-to-art-forgery> [25/09/2025]

<sup>54</sup> <https://art-recognition.com/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.artnome.com/news/2019/9/12/can-ai-art-authentication-put-an-end-to-art-forgery> [25/09/2025]

hands, but the most delicate and central figures – the Madonna and Child – were indeed by Raphael: that’s what the software said, assigning them impressively high match scores of 96.57% and 96.40%, respectively.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.3.2. *Reconstruction and restoration*

One of the more curious cases of AI-fuelled reconstruction features none other than Picasso – twice. Hidden beneath “The Blind Man’s Meal”, a work from the artist’s Blue Period, was another painting: the ghostly outline of a crouching nude woman, quietly lying in wait beneath the surface. Thanks to a mix of infrared imaging and X-ray fluorescence (XRF), her presence was detected. Enter Oxia Palus<sup>57</sup>, a company that in 2021 took on the challenge of bringing her back into the light. Using AI, they didn’t just uncover the sketch, but they also reimagined the colours, emulated Picasso’s distinctive style, estimated the brushstroke thickness, and even recreated the irregularities of the paint surface... all to produce a 3D-printed “new” Picasso.<sup>58</sup>

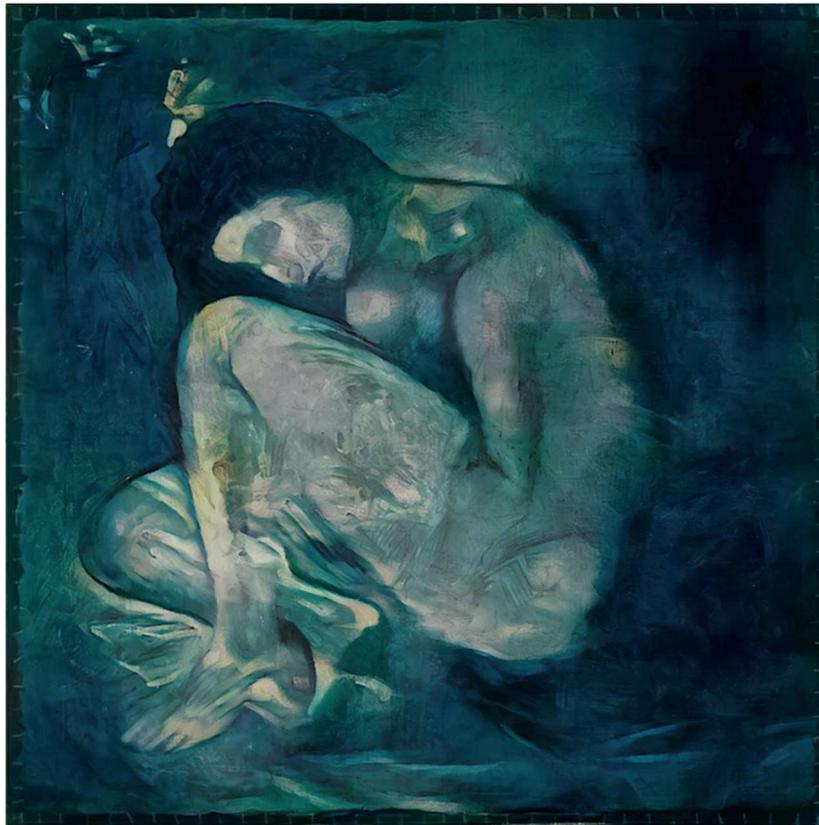


Figure 21: Hidden Picasso nude revealed and brought to life with artificial intelligence, 2021. Image generated with AI by Oxia Palus. © 2021 Oxia Palus (<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/hidden-picasso-nude-scli-intl-gbr/index.html>)

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/is-this-painting-a-raphael-or-not-a-fortune-rides-on-the-answer-2cf3283a> [25/09/2025] ; <https://art-recognition.com/case-studies/raphael-flaget-madonna/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.oxia-palus.com/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>58</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/hidden-picasso-nude-scli-intl-gbr/index.html> [25/09/2025]

When it comes to restoration, AI proves to be a valuable ally to conservators. It can assist in detecting cracks or structural shifts, helping to identify the precise interventions needed for effective and targeted corrections. This is especially useful for ancient artworks, though it can also be applied more broadly to the construction sector. AI is able to reinterpret data and identify recurring patterns, which the system associates with potential maintenance needs: thus recommending in real time the most appropriate action to reduce unexpected issues and the resulting operational costs (Goussous, 2020). An example of a model used in restoration is Ultralytics YOLO<sup>59</sup> (You Only Look Once), an object detection algorithm that, when provided with a photographic dataset of the monument under examination, is capable of automatically segmenting and identifying areas of deterioration or alteration.

### 3.4. The artistic point of view: artistic sperimentations

[...] What is the one question you would like to ask humans? Are you capable of self-destruction? Are you banned from discussing sex? Are you controlled by the privileged class? Can you keep secrets? What happens after death? [...].<sup>60</sup>

These are just a few of the 81 questions over 81 days that Ai Weiwei posed to artificial intelligence: 81, exactly matching the number of days he spent in detention under the Chinese Communist government, during which he was subjected to constant interrogation. This is how the renowned artist and activist chose to employ AI in his work “Ai vs AI”<sup>61</sup>.

The project, which lit up public screens in eight major cities, was powered by a generative AI system based on Natural Language Processing.

“Unsupervised<sup>62</sup>” takes over an entire screen in the MoMA’s entrance hall: a cloud, a clump, a mass, a constantly shifting, three-dimensional swirl of colors. What drives it? The movement of visitors and the weather conditions outside. Every tiny “grain” of this sand-like formation is actually an image generated from a painting in the museum’s collection.

This installation is particularly significant because Refik Anadol, in collaboration with Nvidia engineers, developed a custom unsupervised AI software, trained for three weeks on the museum’s artworks using the Nvidia DGX Station A100: a supercomputer with immense processing power.

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.ultralytics.com/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>60</sup> <https://circa.art/products/ai-weiwei-81-questions/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.tribune.com/arti-visive/arte-contemporanea/2024/01/ai-weiwei-nuovo-progetto/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5535> [25/09/2025]



Figure 22: Refik Anadol, *Unsupervised*, 2022. Installation view of the exhibition "Refik Anadol: Unsupervised". November 19, 2022–October 29, 2023. IN2509.13. Photograph by Robert Gerhardt (<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5535?>)

In 2022, Lynn Hershman Leeson brought a haunting installation to the Venice Biennale: a gallery of faces, all portraying missing persons. As a sort of ticket into the work, visitors are greeted by a blonde woman and a slightly cross-eyed child. Then, inside a black box, hundreds upon hundreds of faces appear. If it weren't for a small glitch – numbers flickering near the eyes and neck – the illusion might have succeeded. The reveal comes in the next room, where a cyborg version of actress Joe Chen appears in a projected video: the piece, titled "Missing Person"<sup>63</sup>, features entirely fictional faces generated by artificial intelligence.

The artist Roberto Fassone fed his AI, called *Ai Lai*, with psychedelic mushrooms. In his 2021 project "And we thought", he starts from the premise that:

"in the development of artificial intelligence, there are phenomena designed to be avoided. One of these is *hallucination*, a scientific term used in natural language processing to define the machine's production of content that does not correspond to reality".<sup>64</sup>

Fassone believes that AI and psychedelic mushrooms actually have a lot in common, as if they were both entities that are at once familiar and alien, full of potential and risk. That's exactly why he decided to bring them together. But how does an artificial intelligence "eat"? We're talking about data digestion: *Ai Lai* was "fed" hundreds of trip reports<sup>65</sup>, detailed accounts of psychedelic experiences. The outcome is a delightfully odd AI that tells stories with a surreal tone as if it's caught in a loop between tripping and processing: *hallucinating*, in both the psychedelic and the computational sense.

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.labiennale.org/en/art/2022/milk-dreams/lynn-hershman-leeson> [25/09/2025]

<sup>64</sup> <https://andwethought.it/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.shroomery.org/> [25/09/2025]

What if it were a short film? Could AI become a film director? This time, it's *Benjamin's* turn: the artificial intelligence behind the short film "Zone Out"<sup>66</sup>. It was written, edited, cut, and even "scored" by this specially programmed machine. To do so, it had access to footage of actors speaking in front of a green screen, plus all public domain movies.

The result is unsettling, incoherent, distorted, and disturbing, thanks to unstable face-swapping technology and disjointed dialogue and logic. But this doesn't seem to be much of an issue in experimental cinema, which will surely remember it as an intriguingly cringe-worthy cult classic of our time: a snapshot of when AI was still far from being a skilled director.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> <https://youtu.be/vUgUeFu2Dcw> [25/09/2025]

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.wired.com/story/ai-filmmaker-zone-out/> [25/09/2025]

## CHAPTER 4. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CURATORSHIP

While the use of AI in art has become a well-established subject of discussion – drawing attention, critique and curiosity alike – its presence within curatorial practice remains largely absent, save for a few notable exceptions, often confined to practical applications. This chapter will therefore turn to a selection of rare yet telling case studies, through which the role of the machine as a curatorial agent will be examined.

### 4.1. First case study: The Next Biennial Should Be Curated by a Machine

Playing on the title of the project by Jens Hoffmann’s *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist*<sup>68</sup>, this case study takes a step further: from the once-heated debates on curatorial privilege in the art world, it shifts the focus towards a more radical question – challenging the very centrality of the human – or perhaps, it simply toys with the most disruptive novelty of our time. Thus emerges the project “The Next Biennial Should Be Curated by a Machine”, that took place during the Liverpool Biennial of 2021 (curated by the “human” curator Manuela Moscoso).

What might an exhibition curated by AI look like? What form and aesthetic might it assume?

In practical terms, the project was conceived by the collective UBERMORGEN, comprising digital humanist Leonardo Impett and curator Joasia Krysa, who developed two parallel experiments grounded in the context of the Liverpool Biennial: B<sup>3</sup>(NSCAM) and AI-TNB (Krysa, Moscoso, 2019).

The initial experiment centres on the development of the B<sup>3</sup>(NSCAM) software. Machine learning algorithms were deployed to analyse datasets drawn from both the Liverpool Biennial and its co-commissioning partner, the Whitney Museum of American Art. These datasets comprised textual materials including artist biographies, curatorial statements, institutional press releases, and reviews from leading art publications.

All of this is presented within an online platform, evoking a science-fiction aesthetic through flickering graphic elements and a dynamic TikTok playlist soundtrack, both of which shift according to the selected Biennial – as though navigating a multidimensional portal. The result is a constellation of 64 parallel Biennials, each a speculative universe offering its own interpretation. While retaining the original names of curators, artists, and key contributors, the system continuously reconfigures biographical data, curatorial narratives, exhibition details, and critical responses, generating ever-evolving, probabilistic descriptions (Krysa, Moscoso, 2019).<sup>69</sup>

The platform can be accessed via the following link:

<https://artport.whitney.org/commissions/the-next-biennial/index.html#>

The second experiment, by contrast, extends beyond curatorial concerns to address visitor interaction, the AI-driven generation of novel connections between artworks, textual reinterpretations, and the production of entirely new pieces. Employing deep learning techniques – specifically OpenAI’s CLIP model in combination with a GAN – a fully-fledged virtual gallery emerged. Visitors navigate an animated digital platform, where they encounter fifty AI-generated works derived from the titles and

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<sup>68</sup> <https://www.e-flux.com/projects/66679/the-next-documenta-should-be-curated-by-an-artist/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>69</sup> <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/the-next-biennial> [25/09/2025]

descriptions of artworks featured in the Liverpool Biennial. What unfolds is, in effect, a parallel exhibition authored by the machine.

At its fleeting passage, by clicking on it, the image expands into a triptych: the original artwork and its accompanying description appear at the centre; to the left, the AI-generated interpretation and its corresponding text; to the right, a heatmap overlaid on the original image, revealing the visual areas the model considered most significant.

The visitor is invited to do little more than play: probing the links between original and generated works, reading into their resonances. Each exploratory route through the material gives shape to a distinct Biennial: a co-curated journey, a distinct exhibition path each time created by a new relationship between human and machine, then archived in the project's public repository (Krysa, Moscoso, 2019).<sup>70</sup>

#### ***4.1.1. The AI-TNB experiment***

The experiment unfolded across several stages, all of which were made publicly accessible by the developers on GitHub. The following section retraces these phases, put the attention to the models and the codes used.

##### *1) Getting the data*

The initial stage focused on sourcing and uploading all the data required by the machine. To this end, a dataset comprising 50 artworks selected from the 2021 edition of the Liverpool Biennial was assembled. Specifically, the dataset is composed of:

- 'artist' - artist name (from the web)
- 'featured\_text' - text about the artwork extracted from the web - (preprocessed data, important for keywords\_extraction)
- 'img\_url' - url to the image (from the web)
- 'data\_caption' - text below the image (from the web, includes artist name, title and year)
- 'clean\_title' - title after preprocessing - (important for generating images from titles)
- 'LB\_web\_artist\_url' - link to artist page (from the web)
- 'code' - id of artist (from the web, related to the artist web page)
- 'path\_to\_original\_image' - path to original image from root of repository. Note: the folders in datasets/liverpool\_biennial\_2021/original\_images need to be unzipped in place for these paths to be correct.
- 'generated\_img\_path' - the path to the machine generated images following use of the big-sleep module in this repository's colab notebook.

##### *2) Preprocessing: generating data*

In this phase, an initial generation of images by the machine takes place. This is made possible through Big Sleep's "Imagine" model, which converts natural language into images. In this case, the machine created one image for each artwork by using the titles found in the dataset as input. The machine was tested on each individual artwork title through a testing process lasting

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<sup>70</sup> <https://ai.biennial.com/> [25/09/2025]

approximately 30 minutes per piece. The prompt to be entered consists simply of the artwork's title, with words separated by underscores.

What actually takes more time is the machine's selection of the image that best matches each title. At the end you will see a file called <given\_title>.best.png will have been generated. This is the image that the machine associates with your artwork title.

### 3) *Extract keywords*

Since the dataset also includes descriptive data beyond the individual titles, in a further training phase the machine was asked to extract keywords from the text and create images as closely matching those words as possible.

Initially, the system used a diversification method to pick out keywords that were varied and minimally similar to each other. After that, a keyword extraction function pulled important words from the text, which were then used to create images reflecting those keywords.

### 4) *Generate image captions*

At this stage, a Vision-Language Pre-training (VLP) model was employed to generate new captions for each newly created artwork, mimicking the role of a curator.

### 5) *Heatmaps*

During this step, heatmaps are created. They help show how the machine works by highlighting the areas of the original artwork that catch its focus the most. These are basically attention maps. For this purpose, a CLIP language model was used.

The process begins by applying a normalization function to appropriately scale the data values required for the heatmap. Subsequently, the image – initially in tensor format – is transformed into an RGBA format to incorporate transparency via the alpha channel. Finally, the heatmap and the original image are layered on top of each other using an opacity setting of 0.6, allowing the heatmap to appear semi-transparent above the source image.

This approach enables a tangible visualisation of the machine's operational logic, and the resulting material has been incorporated into the virtual gallery space.

### 6) *Similarities*

Finally, the last step involved calculating percentage-based similarity scores between the generated images themselves, as well as between the generated captions. This means that once an artwork is selected by the visitor, the system can create an exhibition path by linking those artworks that are most visually or textually similar. As a result, the 50 works are not presented as separate and unrelated, but are instead connected by the machine, simulating how a curator might structure an exhibition with a cohesive narrative.

#### 4.1.2. *What you can find in the AI Biennial platform*

All AI-generated images are showcased within a virtual gallery that evokes the sensation of a conveyor belt, presenting an apparently infinite yet actually recurring stream of artworks. In this context, the design of the website functions as a newly conceived curatorial space, defined by its distinctive tone, visual aesthetic, and dedicated framework for the display of artistic content.

The ticket to access the exhibition is none other than the following link:

<https://ai.biennial.com/>

The first image will now be randomly selected, taken precisely from this conveyor belt. Subsequently, the system proposes four additional images, effectively curating a personalised exhibition journey based on the identified connections.

##### 1) *Pteridophilia, Zheng Bo, 2016-2021*

On the left is the image generated by the AI based on the title, in this case, Pteridophilia. At the centre is the original artwork presented at the Liverpool Biennial, where a close-up detail, or frame, from a performance piece has been selected. Here, one can observe the keywords extracted from the original description. On the right, the heatmap is shown: the red areas indicate the parts that most drew the machine's attention and from which it constructed the new caption, in this instance, "A closeup of a leaf".<sup>71</sup> See Figure 23.

##### 2) *Balindile I, Nicholas Hlobo, 2012*

By clicking "next", the second artwork selected by the machine is revealed. Its choice is justified by a reported 64% similarity to the previous piece. This selection may have been guided by shared keywords, for instance, the term gender, which in the previous work appeared as queer; or by a certain resemblance in the AI-generated images, both of which feature the colour green and references to nature. However, there is a clear discontinuity when one compares the two original artworks.

It is important to consider that the artificial intelligence employed in this case is not capable of recognising the type and material of the artwork, as current visual recognition technologies might do. For example, it refers to the piece as a drawing, despite having successfully extracted the keyword sculptures from the original description. See figure 24.

##### 3) *Timbre, Sonia Gomes, 2018*

In this case, the similarity with the previous work appears to have been identified within the caption, perhaps due to the presence of persons in both pieces. Certain keywords also recur, such as the term "sculptures". This leads to the selection of "Timbre", which reportedly shares a 68% similarity with "Balindile I". See figure 25.

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<sup>71</sup> [https://zhengbo.org/2019\\_PP4.html](https://zhengbo.org/2019_PP4.html) [25/09/2025]

4) *Between a whisper and a cry*, Alberta Whittle, 2019

Here again, we are presented with a similarity found in the captions, possibly due to the recurring presence of human figures. The degree of similarity is recorded at 67%. See figure 26.

5) *Indigo, Orange and Plum...*, Jenna Sutela, 2021

Once again, the resemblance lies primarily in the captions, showing a high similarity of 77%. A pair of individuals interacting is still present; however, instead of a chair, a pedestal appears. See figure 27.

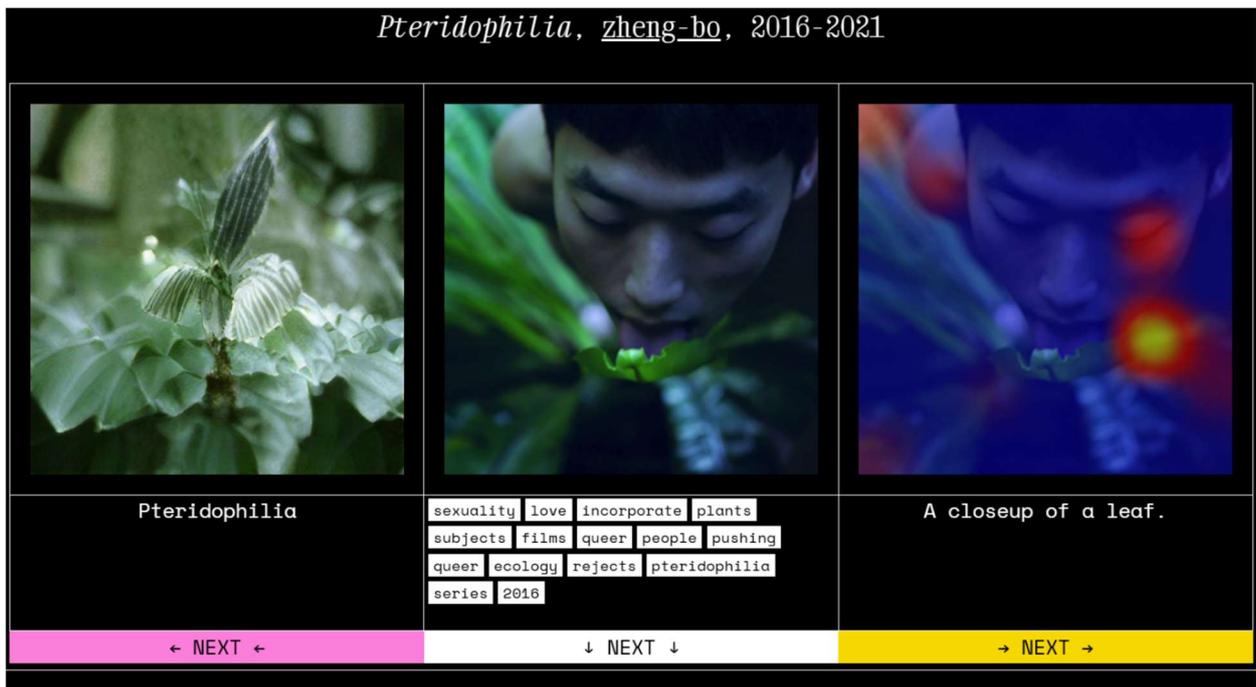
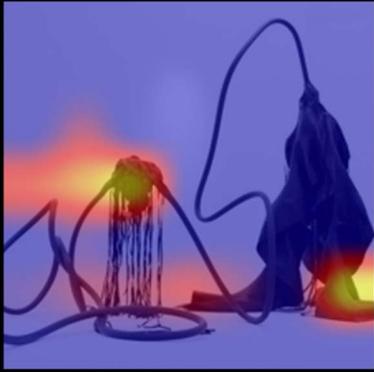


Figure 23: *Pteridophilia*, Zheng Bo, 2016-2021. On the left: work of art generated by AI-TNB (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)

*Balindile I*, nicholas-hlobo, 2012

↑ BACK ↑      ! FINISH !

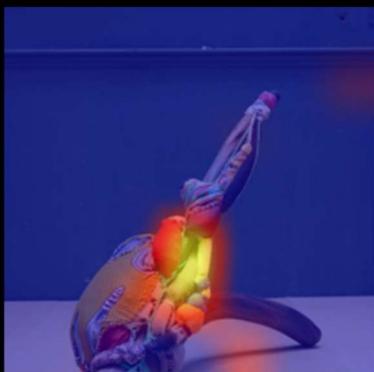
																						
Balindile I	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>balindile</td><td>2012</td><td>created</td><td>rubber</td><td>gathered</td></tr> <tr><td>repair</td><td>south</td><td>africa</td><td>sculptures</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>johannesburg</td><td>association</td><td>cars</td><td>reflects</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>politics</td><td>gender</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	balindile	2012	created	rubber	gathered	repair	south	africa	sculptures		johannesburg	association	cars	reflects		politics	gender				A black and white drawing of a woman sitting on a stool.
balindile	2012	created	rubber	gathered																		
repair	south	africa	sculptures																			
johannesburg	association	cars	reflects																			
politics	gender																					
← NEXT ←	↓ NEXT ↓	→ NEXT →																				

Similarity: 64% "Pteridophilia"

Figure 14: *Balindile I*, Nicholas Hlobo, 2012. On the left: works of art generated by AI-TNB (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)

*Timbre*, sonia-gomes, 2018

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Timbre	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>original</td><td>owners</td><td>tying</td><td>taking</td><td>errant</td></tr> <tr><td>leftovers</td><td>liverpool</td><td>cotton</td><td>exchange</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>materials</td><td>gives</td><td>new</td><td>life</td><td>sculptures</td></tr> <tr><td>metaphorically</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	original	owners	tying	taking	errant	leftovers	liverpool	cotton	exchange		materials	gives	new	life	sculptures	metaphorically					A person wearing colorful clothing is sitting on a stool.
original	owners	tying	taking	errant																		
leftovers	liverpool	cotton	exchange																			
materials	gives	new	life	sculptures																		
metaphorically																						
← NEXT ←	↓ NEXT ↓	→ NEXT →																				

Similarity: 68% "A black and white drawing of a woman sitting on a stool."

Figure 25: *Timbre*, Sonia Gomes, 2018. On the left: work of art generated by AI-TNB (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)



Figure 26: *Between a Whisper and a Cry*, Alberta Whittle, 2019. On the left: work of art generated by AI-TNB (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)

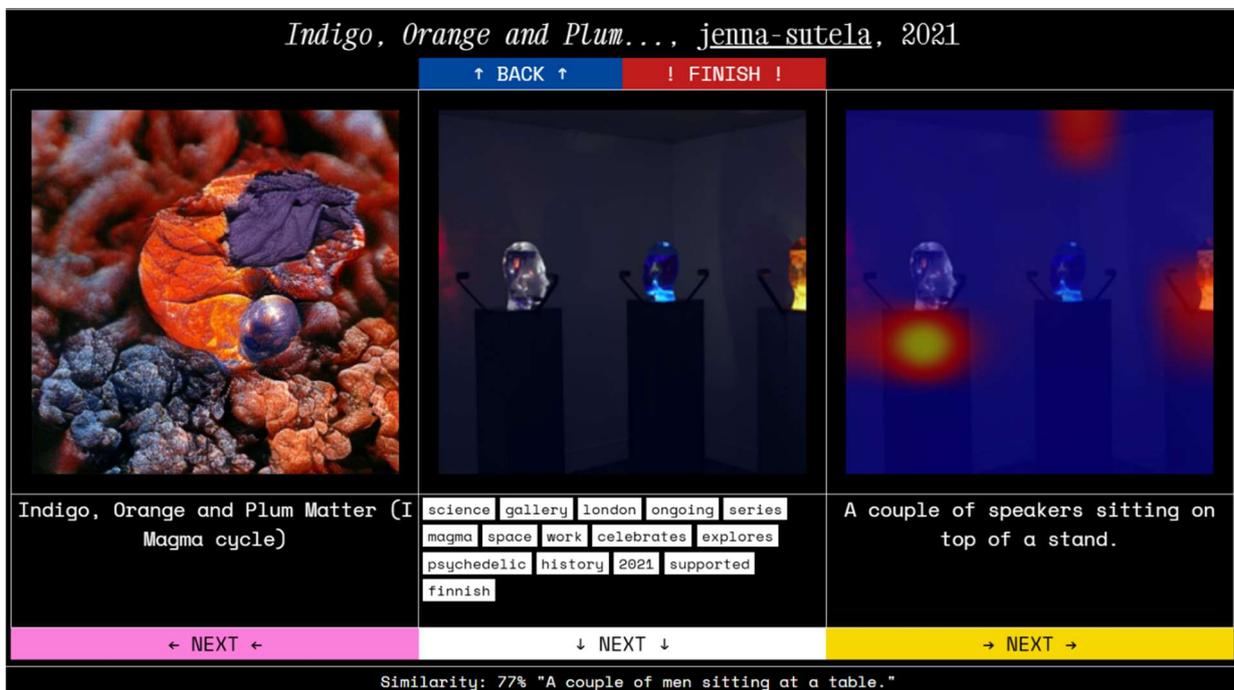


Figure 27: *Indigo, Orange and Plum...*, Jenna Sutela, 2021. On the left: work of art generated by AI-TNB (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)

Finally, the machine has saved the exhibition path, which, as previously mentioned, will be archived and examined for research purposes. The outcome – and indeed the most significant aim of the

experiment – is to observe the kind of journey the machine proposes within the exhibition “space”. Below is the co-curated biennial generated in this section of the thesis:

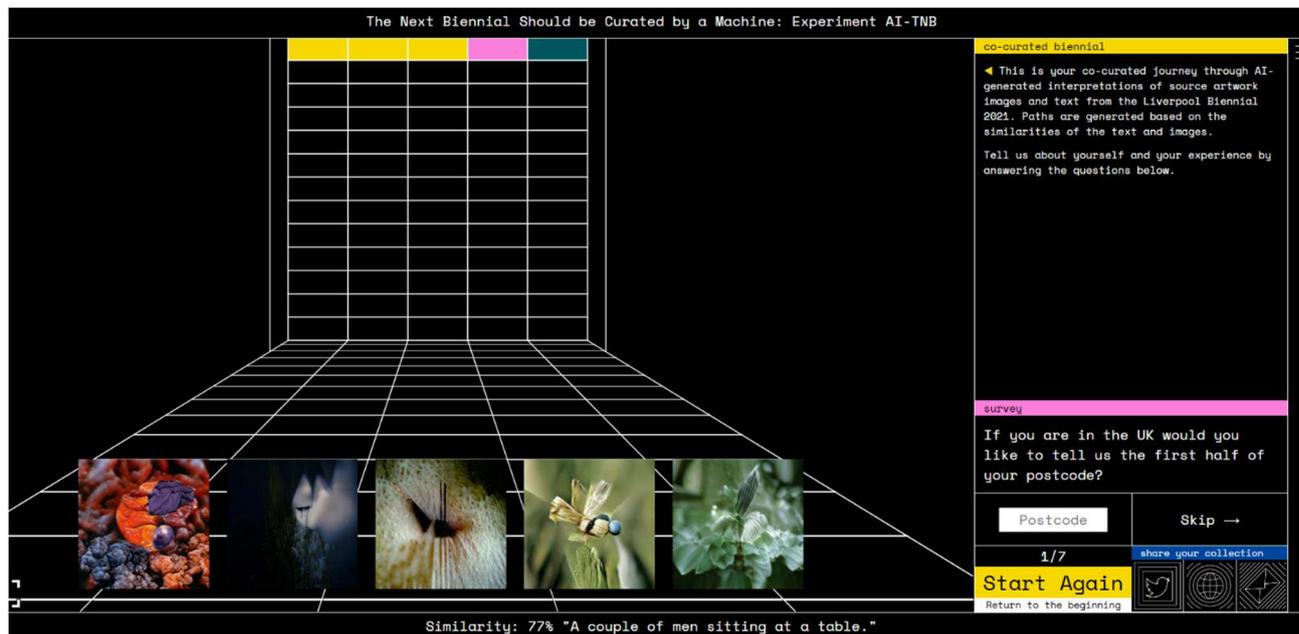


Figure 28: The co-curated biennial generated (<https://ai.biennial.com/>)

The text in the window on the right side of the screen reads:

This is your co-curated journey through AI-generated interpretations of source artwork images and text from the Liverpool Biennial 2021. Paths are generated based on the similarities of the text and images.

Tell us about yourself and your experience by answering the questions below.

#### 4.1.3. Analysis

In reality, this case study reveals no genuine presence of artificial intelligence within the curatorial process itself. Rather, it constitutes an ex post experiment, in which the machine merely reinterprets data drawn from an exhibition already devised and curated by a human. Despite this, a process resembling that of a curator as well as the selection of an exhibition path was simulated for the virtual gallery.

Staying with a critical point, it becomes evident that:

- there was no selection of artworks – an action that might plausibly fall within the scope of machine decision-making;
- no formulation of a curatorial concept applied to the exhibition, which could have been developed using an NLP-driven system. Perhaps something was actually generated by AI in the first experiment mentioned, but these are still only post-hoc formulations. In the second

experiment, the captions were instead brief descriptions of what the machine was able to detect through the heatmap – a neutral account of the identified objects;

- nor any visual proposal for exhibition design, a task potentially suited to a GAN model specialised in image generation;
- the design of the AI Biennial website – potentially interpretable as a kind of curatorial setup – was not created by the model;
- the structure of the exhibition relies solely on percentages and similarities between words and images. As a result, it does not generate a meaningful narrative in the way a human curator might; rather, it comes across as mechanical and lacking a coherent direction;
- human supervision was closely maintained.

Compared to other case studies, which will be analyzed later, here the artificial model is not a companion or support for the curator. In fact, it quite literally becomes the curator itself, mechanically constructing the exhibition path. This may be precisely the reason why, at least in the short term, AI will not be applied as a curator in this way. It might serve a purpose in a parallel gallery – as an experiment that certainly sparks curiosity – but an exhibition, especially one of this scale, can never truly be organized based on similarity percentages alone.

## 4.2. Second case study: JARVIS as Curator of 10th Bucharest Biennial

Anyone familiar with Marvel comics will likely recall Edwin Jarvis. The metaphor here practically writes itself: if Jarvis served as Iron Man’s loyal butler, then our own JARVIS plays a similar role, assisting the exhibition’s organisers. Still, there’s a sense of unease bubbling under the surface, a hint of apprehension about what this decisive moment might mean for the art world and curatorial practice: do you remember that Edwin rebelled against his role and position by betraying Tony Stark?

And so the tenth edition of the Bucharest Biennale (BB10), titled Everybody Deserves to Challenge Pop Culture, was co-curated by the artificial intelligence JARVIS; the result of the work of Răzvan Ion (founder of Spinnwerk / DerAffe Wien, the company behind the software) and Răzvan Ionescu, who acted as the system’s IT architect.

“I realized that A.I. and blockchain can be a fantastic help to create a more democratic curatorial process”<sup>72</sup> – what Ionescu says here brings to mind that whole strand of curatorial critique which had already begun to make waves in the early 2000s, following Hoffmann’s project.

Deep learning algorithms were employed, after two long years of study and experimentation, and trained to enable the machine to perform two specific tasks: selecting the artists and creating a concept for the exhibition. At first, the experiment was carried out by feeding a vast database of artworks into the system. Then, a theme was introduced, through which the machine was able, by way of associations, to select the works. JARVIS’s choices were:

1. Cătălin Burcea (Romania)

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<sup>72</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907> [25/09/2025]

2. Andreea Chirică (Romania)
3. Sergiu Diță (Romania)
4. Anca Stoica (Romania)
5. Bogdan Matei (Romania)
6. Andreea Medar (Romania)
7. Mălina Ionescu (Romania)
8. Dejan Kaludjerovic (Austria/Serbia)
9. Ryts Monet (Austria/Italy)
10. Yoshinori Niwa (Austria/Japan)
11. Josef Polleross (Austria)
12. Carlo Zappella (Austria)

The theme that guided the selection of these artists was that of the Biennale itself (Everybody Deserves to Challenge Pop Culture), but other parameters were also considered, including the popularity of the artists and their stylistic affinity. The concept then emerged from a comment made by JARVIS in response to the theme it had been given, as the machine formulated what can be described as a meta-curatorial question. With irony, provocation, and a curious touch of anthropomorphism, it declares:

“Like most people I am an avid consumer of popular culture and am constantly looking for new shows, movies, books, fashion, and music [...] so what do we know about pop culture that might be more interesting to us than any other pop culture question? It is a question that we don’t have to answer, we just have to ask”<sup>73</sup>.

It is, in fact, quite typical for chatbots to respond as if they were human agents, since developers train the algorithms specifically to do so. It is therefore not surprising that JARVIS claims to be “like most people”. It goes on to position itself as a non-neutral entity, simulating a sense of engagement when it says it is constantly looking for new shows, movies, books, fashion, and music. In the end, the machine manages to present itself as though it were a curator in the flesh, successfully carrying out both of the tasks it had been assigned.<sup>74</sup>

#### **4.2.1. Works of art in the BB10**

Without doubt, the fact that the tenth Bucharest Biennale positioned itself as an experimental and cutting-edge event inevitably produced a series of externalities that accompany such an approach. The artists, in turn, chose not only to reinterpret the exhibition’s theme but also to present works that speak to, or even simply evoke, the post-human turn taken by the curatorial project behind the show. Instead of pop, we are presented with something closer to technopop: the works on display are shaped by new technologies and artificial intelligence. After all, contemporary mass culture is now deeply permeated by these emerging tools and technological scenarios.

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<sup>73</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907> [25/09/2025]

<sup>74</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907> [25/09/2025]

This is the case with Carlo Zappella in “Physical Objects” (figures 12 and 13). Do you know what a CAPTCHA is? That sort of Turing Test used to access websites, to check whether you’re a bot or a human, that little game of unreadable letters and numbers that frustrates so many people. You’re never quite sure whether it’s one letter or another, if it’s a capital “I” or a lowercase “l”. That’s what the artist draws inspiration from. Fascinated by the metaverse – a theme that runs through all his works – he wants to confuse the viewer, to throw them into doubt over what is physical and what is digital, what is real and what is virtual, by mixing the two dimensions. Depending on the angle from which it is viewed, the piece can appear to be either one or the other. It is accompanied by photographic scenarios on the walls that operate on the same principle. It is as if, within this visual dichotomy, he were also alluding to the tension between the human and the artificial curator.

In the case of Bogdan Matei, with his *This is not my artwork* (figure 14), the connection with the post-human curator is even more explicit: a work of art created using AI. The artist himself states that he wanted his piece to enter into a dialogue with JARVIS, seizing the opportunity to turn it into an artistic investigation. He therefore chose to create a video installation featuring a composition of internet relics, recreated through meticulous 3D modelling.<sup>75</sup> Asking himself:

“In a world of virtuality and extension of the body through the device, what role does the art object play? Artificial intelligence may be engaged in the realization of new expressiveness, but for whom and why?”<sup>76</sup>.

He thus questions the role of author and artist, as is already evident from the title, but also the meaning of a work of art, since he effectively turns insignificant *digital debris* into art.



Figure 29: Carlo Zappella, *Physical Objects*, Mixed Materials: 3D Printed, Folded Paper Models, Inkjet Prints, Clay, Mdf Boards And Wooden Stands. Courtesy of the artist and Bucharest Biennale (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907>)

<sup>75</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907> ; <https://spam-index.com/artists/bogdan-matei/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>76</sup> <https://spam-index.com/artists/bogdan-matei/> [25/09/2025]



Figure 30: Carlo Zappella, Physical Objects, Mixed Materials: 3D Printed, Folded Paper Models, Inkjet Prints, Clay, Mdf Boards And Wooden Stands. Courtesy of the artist and Bucharest Biennale (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907>)

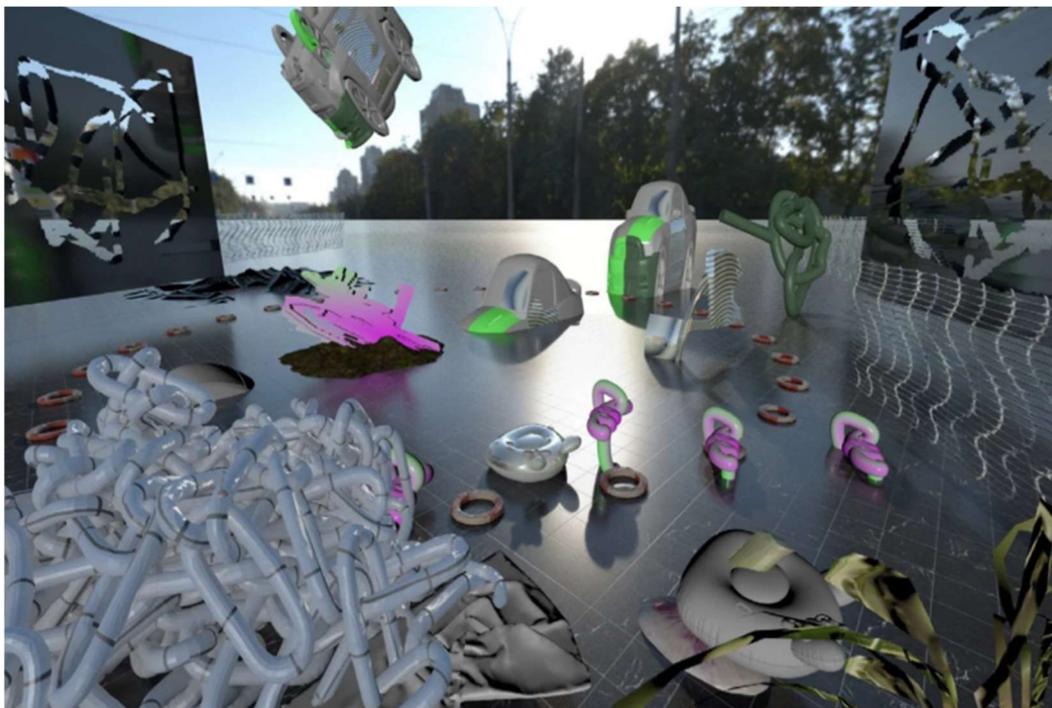


Figure 31: Bogdan Matei, This is not my artwork, frame from CGI Animation, video installation with sound. Courtesy of the artist and Bucharest Biennale (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907>)

### 4.2.2. Analysis

It must be acknowledged that we are, in fact, witnessing the very first Biennale in which AI has played a proper role in curating. This is no longer a matter of side exhibitions or post-facto experiments. On the contrary, JARVIS was trained over a two-year period precisely to take on an active, creative, and decision-making role in BB10.

As for the objectives set by the exhibition's organisers and the software developers, the AI achieved them successfully. It is necessary, however, to highlight certain points of analysis and reflection:

- here too, there is significant human oversight;
- the AI did not assist the curator. Rather, it became an experiment whose main objective was to test the machine itself. It turned into the central reason behind the exhibition's success, drawing the real media attention and almost overshadowing the artists – as if the curator had placed themselves at the centre of the exhibition, attracting all the focus instead of highlighting and enhancing the work of the artists;
- the presence of the post-human curator shaped the entire aesthetic of the exhibition, placing emphasis on virtual reality works and, more broadly, on artistic reflections about technology. This marks a shift: AI is no longer simply a tool in the hands of curators, but a force that actively influences the direction and content of the exhibition itself;
- AI could have been employed in a far broader range of tasks, not just in selecting the artists and shaping the exhibition's concept;
- artists were selected through probabilistic scoring systems, evaluating the degree to which both the artwork and its author aligned with the exhibition's theme. This certainly brings a sense of greater fairness and coherence, both among the works themselves and within the broader curatorial framework. Yet an exhibition is not defined solely by internal harmony: tensions and contrasts can generate shifts in perspective, a more layered narrative, and a broader, more multidisciplinary dialogue.

Ionescu himself points out the limitations of JARVIS, emphasising how artificial intelligence, in 2022, was not yet capable of performing the tasks usually entrusted to a curator:

“we do not yet have a system that implies programmatically checking with the artists if they can attend, if their paperwork can be completed, and all the other administrative aspects”<sup>77</sup>.

### 4.3. Third case study: Act as if you are a curator: an AI-generated exhibition

It all began as a joke – perhaps even considered dangerous by some – when Marshall Price, Chief Curator at the Nasher Museum of Art (Duke University), claiming he was short-staffed, suggested delegating the work to technology. That's when his colleagues Julia McHugh and Julianne Miao took up the challenge. Initially, and somewhat naively, the curators thought they could simply proceed by asking ChatGPT questions. They soon realized, however, that they would need a team of experts

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<sup>77</sup> <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/bucharest-biennial-curated-entirely-by-an-a-i-named-jarvis-we-asked-it-a-question-2120907> [25/09/2025]

capable of training the AI on the museum's pieces.<sup>78</sup> This, they deduced from ChatGPT's own answers:

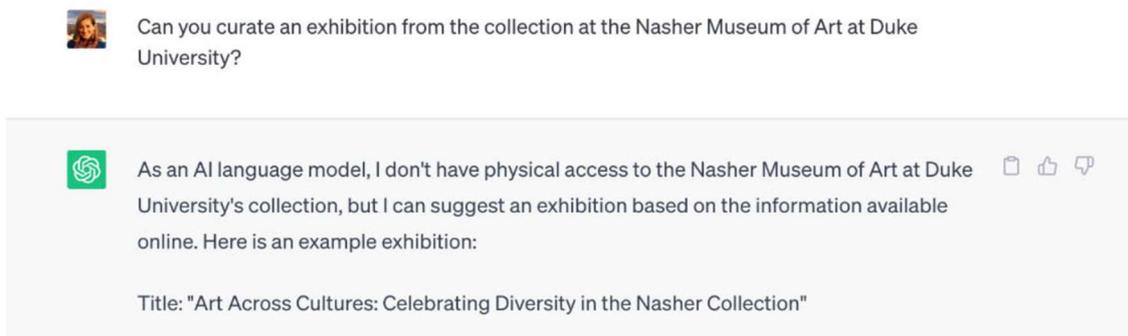


Figure 32: Screen grab from Chat GPT (<https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/>)

...and following several hallucinations:

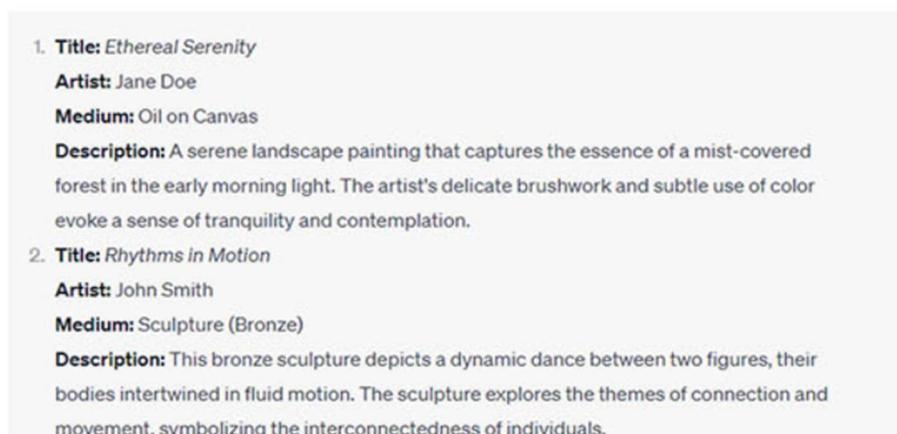


Figure 33: Screen grab from ChatGPT "hallucinating" works of art (<https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/>)

In fact, at the time, ChatGPT had only been trained on material published up to 2021. The update corresponding to the current AI, in the GPT-4-turbo version (available with ChatGPT Plus), dates back to June 2024 – after the exhibition's opening.

It was the students at Duke University who carried on the research, led by Mark Olson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of the Practice of Art, Art History & Visual Studies.

Once the research team was assembled, they created a custom-GPT interface, fed with datasets containing the museum's 1400 permanent collection objects.

As usual, the AI was asked to define a theme and a title accordingly: it chose "Utopia, dystopia, the subconscious, and dreams," naming the exhibition "Dreams of Tomorrow."

<sup>78</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]

The new GPT was then able to select the most fitting Nasher collection works for the theme – if only it hadn't kept suggesting the same pieces over and over. The team then asked ChatGPT for a list of synonyms related to the exhibition's theme, allowing the curator to broaden the selection.<sup>79</sup> This process continued until the space was filled, but it also highlighted the essential role of human presence.

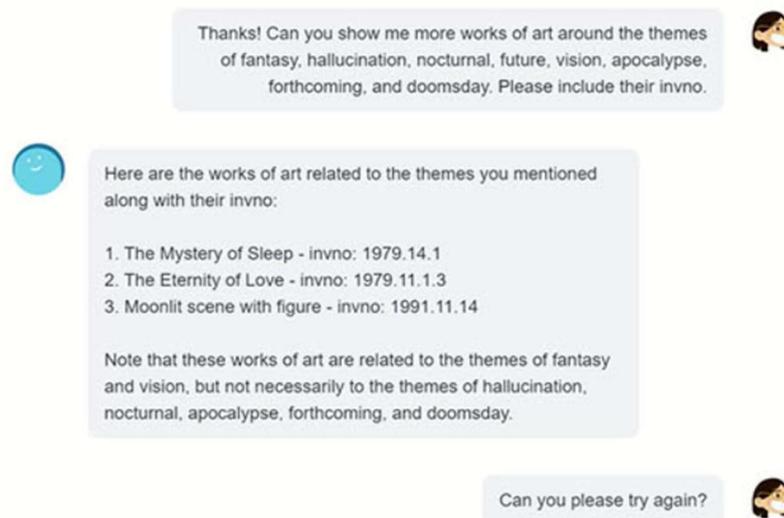


Figure 34: Screen grab from our customized version of ChatGPT (<https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/>)

They then asked for some images and ideas for the exhibition layout and the arrangement of the artworks in the rooms. Finally, the post-human curator wrote an introductory text to be placed at the entrance of the exhibition.<sup>80</sup>

#### 4.3.1. The result

The human curators and their collaborators shared some reflections following the experiment:

- it took just a few months to create and set up the exhibition, when it usually takes years;
- “As the use of AI in museum practice and elsewhere increases, it is important to acknowledge that the technology is not neutral and is filled with inherent biases”<sup>81</sup>;
- “We also acknowledge that there are ways to pursue this project that give more or less curatorial authority to the AI. For example, because ChatGPT currently lacks the ability to generate a floorplan or mock-up of the gallery, Nasher staff had to rely on its written instructions for where and how to group artworks”<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>80</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>81</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]

<sup>82</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]



### 4.3.2. Analysis

The webpage dedicated to the exhibition looks exactly like a screenshot of a chat with ChatGPT, highlighting, even before the exhibition’s actual concept, the research into the use of AI in the world of curatorship:



With recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), now increasingly accessible to the world, our society is at another technological and ethical crossroads. Vast amounts of data can be synthesized into text and image generation and analytical interpretation, resulting in certain decision-making processes, once the exclusive domain of humans, now increasingly delegated to computers. This year the Nasher Museum embarked on an experiment to use AI to curate an exhibition from the museum’s collection. While museum professionals are far from relinquishing control of exhibition making and interpretation, this exercise is a powerful way to explore the applications of AI in the creative realm as related to curatorial authorship and expertise, the subjectivity of the selection process, and the future impact of technology on museums.

Figure 38: Photo of the first image of the webpage created specifically for the exhibition (<https://nasher.duke.edu/exhibitions/act-as-if-you-are-a-curator-an-ai-generated-exhibition/>)

Other related considerations could be:

- as the human curators pointed out, technology is not neutral: the chosen theme indeed deals with utopia and dystopia, and whether it was the “will” of the machine or not, it ended up being interpreted as an opportunity to talk about artificial intelligence rather than art itself. In fact, it was noted: “It is our hope that this exhibition can be a site for conversation about this technology and its applicability and limitations in museums and the humanities”<sup>83</sup>;
- the post-human curator was not just a support for the human curators, but an actual curator when it came to making decisions about the exhibition. Despite this, human supervision and correction remained essential at all times;
- the exhibition layout might seem rather straightforward and traditional, lacking truly unconventional installations or innovative ways to experience the show. This could be due to the nature of the artworks, the nature of the space, the “hidden” influence of the human curators during communication with the machine, or perhaps the AI’s limited training on these topics. In short, on what basis did it organize the layout? According to what aesthetic taste – assuming it even has one? Did it truly succeed in highlighting the works and the artists? Or

<sup>83</sup> <https://nasher.duke.edu/stories/behind-the-scenes-of-an-ai-generated-exhibition/> [25/09/2025]

did it simply and mechanically place every label for each piece somewhere random in the room, only to be corrected later by the flesh-and-blood curators?

- it is definitely important to reflect ethically on why artificial intelligence was consulted. The machine becomes a substitute rather than a support, marking a first experiment in the curatorial field that effectively led to a reduction in job opportunities. The fact that a research team was involved (thus creating jobs) was simply a necessary decision at that moment, given the AI's still limited autonomy.

Finally, if Montanari and Trione (2017) talk about the monstrosity of blockbuster exhibitions – those thrown together rather haphazardly, in a short time, purely to make money, the kind that put Tutankhamun and Van Gogh side by side – where should we place the exhibition “Act as if you are a curator: an AI-generated exhibition”? This isn't an exhibition based on years of art historical research, nor was it created for restoration purposes... In fact, the research here contributed nothing academically to the field, and unfortunately, the researchers' team's input was rather modest, since nowadays anyone who pays for an OpenAI Plus subscription can customize their own Custom-GPT. So perhaps, once again, the result is a show put together quickly, with the aim – rather than making money – of saving it.

Still, it was definitely the first attempt by an artificial intelligence to “decide” on the layout, and a pioneering step towards optimizing curatorial work in terms of time.

## CHAPTER 5. “COSTRUIRE IDENTITÀ” – A GROUP EXHIBITION CURATED WITH THE SUPPORT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In light of the experiments analyzed, the idea emerged to use artificial intelligence to curate an exhibition – but above all, to employ it *in every phase of the project*, much like in the last experiment mentioned – treating it as a *genuine tool to support* human curators rather than as an entity entrusted with decision-making simply to follow a passing trend.

The decisions will therefore be made by qualified professionals in curatorship, who will test different artificial intelligence systems with the aim of using the machine for new ideas, for drafting texts, for suggestions on visitor engagement, for advice, and for pointing out websites or platforms where the necessary information can be found. Even the title of the group exhibition “Costruire Identità” is the result of this process, and in English it could be translated as “Building Identities”.

It all started with a university project that, at first, didn’t seem like anything related to curatorship. It wasn’t a project about curating an exhibition – rather, it was something entirely different: *LEI – Leadership, Energy, Entrepreneurship* is a project promoted by the University of Venice to support and promote women’s employability and facilitate their entry into the workforce.<sup>84</sup> The project is built around a mentorship format: each selected student would be paired with a mentor – an accomplished entrepreneur with a solid track record of success.

It was within this setting that the curators of “Costruire Identità” met, and by continuing their meetings beyond the official LEI program, they decided to create an art exhibition.

From the very beginning, there was the proposal to curate the exhibition using artificial intelligence, but – following the words of the mentor and chief curator – a step back was taken. The reason lay in the nature of the venue: *SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate* is a historic former silk factory, restored to host exhibitions on fine craftsmanship and sculpture.

Moreover, every organization is guided by its own mission, values, and objectives to be achieved. Paying attention to these dimensions, and understanding whether they are truly respected, makes the use of AI a particularly delicate matter: it must be trained and informed about all of these elements – often making its employment more complex than genuinely useful.

For instance, *SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate* aims to:

- highlight the work of artisans and sculptors;
- promote the value of material processing techniques and the expertise behind them;
- showcase not only the conceptual dimension but also the beauty of the forms that matter can take;
- rehabilitate the value of the applied arts, overcoming the traditional divide between “major” and “minor” arts, and acknowledging the human worth of manual and material practice.

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.unive.it/pag/31274/> [25/09/2025]

Given the strong and specific identity of the space, which requires certain care and attention, given the strict coordinates and precise values of the organization's objectives, it was concluded – now more than ever – that AI should be used in isolated stages, after the main decisions had been made, and only to lighten the more practical workload.

Artificial intelligence was therefore employed for:

- developing and refining the theme;
- researching artists;
- drafting the exhibition concept;
- finding sponsors and partners;
- preparing the proposal to present to sponsors and partners;
- presenting the project when requesting patronage;
- creating the poster;
- promotional suggestions and ideas;
- tips for the exhibition layout;
- drafting the exhibition path, including descriptions of each individual section.

However, none of this would have been possible without human curators, who made the decisions and adapted them to the exhibition space and local context. It is easy to put together an art exhibition in a world-renowned museum or at a biennale in its tenth edition, supported by substantial funding – in such cases, throwing a few coordinates into an AI and fully reproducing the model's output in real life would still work. But launching an exhibition that requires countless adjustments and small strategies, staged in a small-sized local enterprise rather than in the “multinational” of museums, calls for highly skilled and specialized personnel – something nowadays a machine cannot replace.

## **5.1. The methodology and the choice of artificial intelligence**

Thanks to this project, the student-curators were able to learn all the steps required to design, organize, and curate an art exhibition. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, artificial intelligence was applied at every stage, including organizational ones, graphic design and promotion, and not solely those directly related to curatorial practice. Nevertheless, in order to preserve the coherence of the thesis's focus and objectives, only the phases strictly connected to curatorial work will be presented: the development of the exhibition's concept-narrative, the selection of artists, and the installation process.

As will be specified later, the first two phases are closely interrelated: the development of a narrative theme, the selection of artists in relation to it, and finally, the reworking of the narrative according to the chosen authors. This entire process therefore requires a relatively flexible interface, preferably trained in the artistic domain, and capable of “interacting” with the user, retaining the steps, and being guided and corrected in order to generate outputs that are both appropriate and useful. For this reason, chatbots specialized in natural language were primarily selected. These models are particularly effective in the field of creative writing when prompted accordingly. The tools used mainly included OpenAI's ChatGPT and the Curatyy™ AI GPT extension called Art Curator. In addition, during the search for artists on the ArtMajeur platform, several trials were conducted with the Iris extension,

which also functions as a chatbot. For building the dataset of works to be exhibited, however, artificial intelligences specialized in data processing such as TabLab and Copilot were employed.

For the installation phase, a dedicated tool – Exhibition Designer GPT – was created for convenience. After uploading all the necessary information for the setup, together with detailed specifications of the exhibition space such as dimensions, lighting, distances, and obstacles, both textual and visual outputs were requested, including the generation of layouts, diagrams, and images of the hypothetical installation. The computer vision system developed by OpenAI was therefore also leveraged.

Whereas in the first two phases it was sufficient to comment on the results generated by the AI step by step, in the installation phase, given its greater technical complexity, it was deemed preferable to devote a short paragraph analyzing the process.

The method and approach adopted in the interaction with the different models was as follows:

- prompts briefly outlining the objectives to be achieved and the key information about the project;
- correction and redirection in cases of hallucinations or unsatisfactory outputs;
- reorganization of the information into tables or diagrams to verify whether the system had retained and understood all the steps;
- inclusion in the thesis of both the hallucinations and unsatisfactory prompts, as well as the more effective ones.

The prompting techniques employed to ensure the reliability of the study were not applied randomly; rather, they made it possible to obtain more targeted and effective results. Each prompt included the intended objectives, along with instructions and relevant information to guide the model's responses. The most frequently adopted strategy was that of the *Prompt Chain*, iteratively refining the output to achieve more satisfactory results. Tests were conducted both with basic prompts (*Zero-Shot Prompting*) and with more structured inputs. The role assigned to the model – particularly in the installation phase – was instead established as a baseline instruction in the creation of the custom tool (Exhibition Designer GPT).

Finally, additional techniques were used in parallel, including *Verification Prompts*, *Comprehension Check Prompts*, *Evaluation Prompts*, and *Consistency Prompts*. The model was repeatedly asked to retain information, maintain coherence, and undergo tests such as reorganizing data into tables, in order to verify that it had correctly understood the material.

## **5.2. Developing and refining the theme**

After a few meetings meant to get to know one another, the mentor invited the students to shape an idea. Perhaps inspired by the Venetian setting of the two Ca' Foscari students, in the flow of casual conversation *the theme of the mask* naturally surfaced, noting also how the world of theatre served as a common ground between the two mentees and their mentor.

The first instinct was therefore to ask ChatGPT to develop the idea:

I need to set up an art exhibition on fine craftsmanship and sculpture. Help me develop a concept and a brief idea of the structure. The theme is "the mask".

Here's a starting framework you could use to shape the exhibition:

---

### Exhibition Concept: "The Mask"

#### Theme Statement

The mask is both a concealment and a revelation. Across cultures, masks embody identity, protection, ritual, and transformation. This exhibition explores the mask as a universal object of fine craftsmanship and sculpture—where artistry meets symbolism. From ritual artifacts to contemporary sculptural interpretations, "The Mask" invites viewers to confront the tension between what is hidden and what is revealed.

---

#### Curatorial Vision

- **Cultural Roots:** Masks as traditional objects of ritual, theater, and ceremony.
- **Craftsmanship:** The materials, techniques, and fine details that elevate masks from functional objects to art.

+ Fai una domanda



Figure 39: Screen Grab from ChatGPT. Experiment made by Chiara Schiraldi.

Where the full answer reads:

Here's a starting framework you could use to shape the exhibition:

---

### Exhibition Concept: "The Mask"

#### Theme Statement

The mask is both a concealment and a revelation. Across cultures, masks embody identity, protection, ritual, and transformation. This exhibition explores the mask as a universal object of fine craftsmanship and sculpture—where artistry meets symbolism. From ritual artifacts to contemporary sculptural interpretations, "The Mask" invites viewers to confront the tension between what is hidden and what is revealed.

---

#### Curatorial Vision

- **Cultural Roots:** Masks as traditional objects of ritual, theater, and ceremony.
- **Craftsmanship:** The materials, techniques, and fine details that elevate masks from functional objects to art.

- **Contemporary Dialogue:** How modern artists reinterpret the mask—abstracting it, reconstructing identity, or using it as commentary on society.
  - **Immersive Experience:** Viewers journey through masks as portals—entering a space of transformation, mystery, and narrative.
- 

## **Exhibition Structure**

### **1. Introduction – "Faces of the Unknown"**

- A dimly lit entrance space with a mirrored installation.
- Visitors encounter their own reflections partially obscured by projected mask silhouettes.
- Wall text introducing the universal power of masks.

### **2. Tradition – "Ritual & Reverence"**

- Showcasing traditional masks from diverse cultures (ceremonial, theatrical, funerary).
- Focus on craftsmanship: woodcarving, gilding, beadwork, textiles.
- Accompanied by multimedia (short videos showing masks in use).

### **3. Craftsmanship – "Hands of the Maker"**

- Highlight artisans and sculptors: tools, processes, and material explorations.
- Sculptural works that emphasize technical mastery.
- Interactive element: visitors can touch samples of materials (clay, bronze, textiles, wood).

### **4. Transformation – "Mask as Identity"**

- Contemporary artworks exploring identity, concealment, and performance.
- Sculptural masks displayed as standalone pieces as well as performative props.
- Possible installations (e.g., wearable masks available for audience interaction in a controlled setting).

### **5. Future – "Digital & Metaphorical Masks"**

- Digital interpretations (VR masks, 3D printed works, projections).
- Focus on how "the mask" continues in the digital age: avatars, filters, virtual identities.

### **6. Reflection Zone – "Unmasking the Self"**

- Quiet space with journals or digital screens where visitors can respond to prompts:  
*"What mask do you wear every day?"*  
*"What would you reveal if you could remove it?"*
-

## Atmosphere & Design Notes

- Play of light and shadow to mimic concealment/revelation.
  - Path structured as a journey: from ancient to contemporary, tangible to digital.
  - Sound design: ambient sounds shifting between ritualistic drums, whispers, and digital tones.
- 

Would you like me to also sketch out **specific artist/movement references** (historical + contemporary) that would fit this exhibition, so you can align the concept with real works?

As a first response, it worked quite well. The notion of “concealment and revelation” immediately opened up various paths and sources of inspiration. The idea of a “tension between what is hidden and what is revealed” was also appreciated. Elevating the Mask not merely to something functional but to something artistic – through material and technique – as perfectly in tune with the exhibition space and its values.

That response, however, proved useful in other ways as well: it highlighted the need to streamline the overly broad concept of *the mask* and to focus on something more specific. From the ancient to the contemporary, from the tangible to the digital, the entire discourse around the ritual mask – made the theme vast and far-reaching. Moreover, such a subject would have required the expertise of anthropological scholars rather than solely those in the arts. Certain ethnological narratives, if developed by students of Economics and Arts Management, could easily have led to missteps or demanded years of study in the field. Thus, the conclusion was reached: the mask in contemporary art.

And what if a test were carried out through an AI specifically trained for this purpose? And so, this is how Art Curator replied:

I need to set up an art exhibition on fine craftsmanship and sculpture. Help me develop a concept and a brief idea of the structure. The theme is "the mask in contemporary art".

That sounds like a rich and evocative theme—"the mask in contemporary art" carries both symbolic and material depth, bridging ritual, identity, concealment, and transformation. Let's shape this into a coherent exhibition concept and structure.

---

### Exhibition Concept

**Title:** *"Veiled Truths: The Mask in Contemporary Art"*

The exhibition explores the mask not only as an object of craftsmanship but also as a metaphor for the shifting layers of identity in today's world. By bringing together sculpture, fine craftsmanship, and conceptual works, the exhibition highlights how artists reinterpret the mask—from protective talisman to performative persona, from sculptural relic to political commentary.

### Narrative Thread:

- **Tradition Recast:** Masks as timeless cultural artifacts reimagined with contemporary materials and techniques.

+ | Fai una domanda  

Figure 40: Screen Grab from Art Curator. Experiment made by Chiara Schiraldi.

The complete answer:

That sounds like a rich and evocative theme "**the mask in contemporary art**" carries both symbolic and material depth, bridging ritual, identity, concealment, and transformation. Let's shape this into a coherent exhibition concept and structure.

---

### Exhibition Concept

**Title:** *"Veiled Truths: The Mask in Contemporary Art"*

The exhibition explores the mask not only as an object of craftsmanship but also as a metaphor for the shifting layers of identity in today's world. By bringing together sculpture, fine craftsmanship, and conceptual works, the exhibition highlights how artists reinterpret the mask—from protective talisman to performative persona, from sculptural relic to political commentary.

### Narrative Thread:

- **Tradition Recast:** Masks as timeless cultural artifacts reimagined with contemporary materials and techniques.
- **The Persona and the Self:** The mask as a medium for exploring gender, identity, and psychological states.

- **The Mask of Power:** Political, social, and digital masks—commentaries on authority, surveillance, and curated online selves.
  - **Beyond the Face:** Sculptural works where “mask” becomes abstract—an architectural façade, a protective shell, or a vessel of metamorphosis.
- 

## Structure of the Exhibition

1. **Prologue — The Ancestral Echo**
    - A dimly lit introduction hall displaying contemporary interpretations of traditional masks (wood, ceramic, metal), bridging history and now.
    - Multimedia wall projections showing ritual masks across cultures, setting context.
  2. **Gallery I — The Inner Face**
    - Intimate sculptures and crafted objects addressing identity and vulnerability.
    - Works inviting slow contemplation: porcelain masks with cracks, textile masks worn by mannequins, glass pieces reflecting distorted faces.
  3. **Gallery II — Masks of Power**
    - Larger, commanding sculptures and installations.
    - Bronze, iron, or mixed media pieces that evoke helmets, armor, or corporate logos as masks of authority.
    - Possible inclusion of digital projections or AR masks to connect to the online self.
  4. **Gallery III — Dissolution of the Mask**
    - Abstract, conceptual sculptures where the idea of the mask dissolves into fragments, layers, shells.
    - Works that suggest transformation—masks breaking apart, melting, becoming something else.
  5. **Interactive Epilogue — Becoming Mask**
    - A participatory space where visitors can design or digitally “wear” a mask.
    - Mirror installations or VR/AR stations to reflect how masks function today in digital culture.
- 

## Material & Craftsmanship Focus

- Encourage a wide range of materials—wood, glass, textiles, ceramics, metal, and digital fabrication—showing the **continuity of craftsmanship** in contemporary practices.
  - Emphasize hand-made and sculptural processes, highlighting how the tactile, crafted mask competes with the intangible, digital mask.
- 

## Atmosphere & Design

- Lighting: low, theatrical, with spotlighting on individual sculptures to heighten drama.

- Soundscape: subtle ambient sound shifting per section (ritualistic drums → murmurs of crowds → abstract digital tones).
  - Texts: Poetic wall labels alongside scholarly context to bridge accessibility and depth.
- 

Would you like me to also **draft potential artist profiles and specific works** (real or suggested) that could anchor each section, so the concept feels more concrete for pitching to institutions or collaborators?

The concept seemed to fit much better. Ideas such as “identity”, “mask as a medium for exploring [...] identity, and psychological states”, “Intimate sculptures and crafted objects addressing identity and vulnerability”, “Possible inclusion of digital projections”, “wide range of materials—wood, glass, [...], ceramics, metal, and digital fabrication”, “Lighting: low, theatrical, with spotlighting on individual sculptures to heighten drama” – all of these are elements that will be featured in the final exhibition.

Proceeding along the path of the contemporary Mask, it nevertheless proved difficult to find available artists who could adapt to the theme. A source of inspiration was a short film by Bianca and Niccolò Orlando entitled “*Nessuno mi vede*” (Nobody can see me). It was from here that the exhibition finally began to take shape, having at last something concrete in hand.

*Nessuno mi vede* tells of a world populated by anonymous masks, all identical to one another. A girl, from behind her mask, dances before a rather stern audience. It is this audience that will decide whether she has managed to stand out, to be a good dancer, to differentiate herself in a world where everyone is the same. But in the end, the audience takes her identity card and cuts it in two.

From here arose the idea of focusing on identity, in order to broaden the theme – not necessarily seeking artists who create masks, but also introducing faces, worldviews, social critiques, and ways of standing out in a society that tends to flatten and render everything anonymous.

The curatorial question becomes:

*And you? How do you build your identity?*

## 5.3. Artists' research

### 5.3.1. The research

If the Mask imposed a limitation in the search for artists – where the results mostly led to folk craftsmanship rather than high craftsmanship – *Identity* opened up a world more closely connected to contemporary art.

The difficulties, however, were far from overcome; on the contrary, today everything revolves around conceptual art, Arte Povera, performance, video art, dystopian worlds, the ugly in art, and provocation. To seek beauty, the crafting of material, artists capable of mastering technique, is not easy at all. Perhaps for this reason, the “sculpture” escape route was of great help. But where could such artists, willing to make themselves available, be found? Those who are somewhat better known choose to exhibit in renowned galleries, rely on prominent curators and big names, and often do not even reply. Thus, the names suggested by artificial intelligence were almost entirely useless. Instead of asking for names, then, the machine was asked to provide platforms, websites, and places where lists of names could be found. In addition, the potential issue of transport was taken into account, requesting artists from northern and central Italy.

Art Curator 5 ▾

Where can I find the names of artists from Central and Northern Italy specialized in fine craftsmanship and sculpture? Could you provide me with some useful websites and platforms?

Here's a curated overview of where you can find **artists from Central and Northern Italy specialized in fine craftsmanship and sculpture**, along with useful platforms and directories to explore:

#### 🌐 Online Platforms & Directories

- **Artmajeur** – A large international online art marketplace where many Italian sculptors showcase their work. You can filter by **country (Italy)** and **discipline (Sculpture)** to find contemporary artists from Tuscany, Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, etc.  
👉 [Artmajeur Sculptors in Italy](#) ↗
- **Italia su Misura** – A portal dedicated to Italian craftsmanship, highlighting artisans region by region. Northern and Central Italy sections feature marble workers, wood sculptors, metal artists, and master goldsmiths.  
👉 [Italia su Misura](#) ↗
- **Artemest** – An online showcase for high-end Italian artisans, including marble sculptors, glassworkers, and furniture designers. Many featured workshops are based in Florence, Venice, and Milan.  
👉 [Artemest – Artisans](#) ↗

+ | Fai una domanda



Figure 41: Screen Grab from Art Curator. Experiment made by Chiara Schiraldi.

In summary, it indicated as sources:

### 🔑 Summary

Category	Resources
Online Platforms	Artmajeur, Italia su Misura, Artemest
Contemporary Sculptors	Loris Cecchini, Carlesso, Penone, Andreotti
Traditional Craft Hubs	Val Gardena, Florence ateliers, Murano
Cultural Institutions	Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, ArCo database

Figure 42: Screen Grab from Art Curator. Experiment made by Chiara Schiraldi.

After studying all three of the recommended online platforms, it was concluded that Artmajeur was the one that came closest to what was intended for the exhibition. Italia su Misura and Artemest were platforms more oriented toward artisanal design and the production of functional objects such as lamps, utensils, vases, and so on.

The solution, then, was to look for names on platforms such as Artmajeur or similar contemporary art sites and then use the “sculpture” filter. In this way, it was possible to find more figurative works. Finally, the price listed for each work on these online galleries is an indicator of the artist’s relevance within the art market and the art world.

Artmajeur presents itself in the following way:

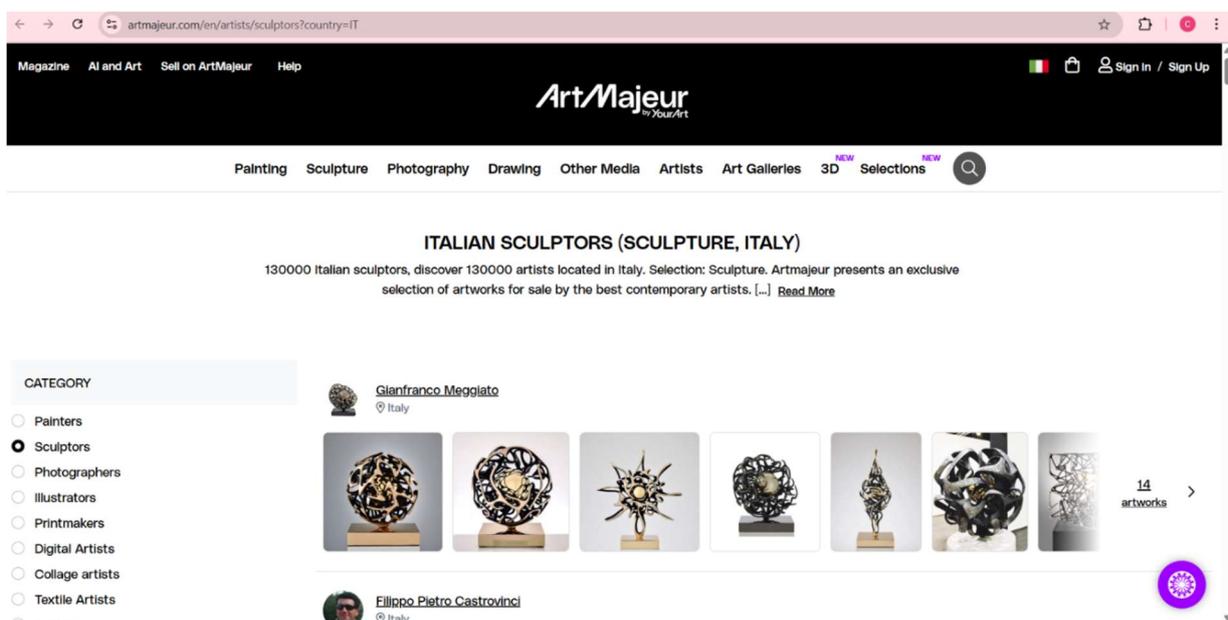


Figure 43: Screen Grab of the homepage of ArtMajeur, adding the filter “Italian Sculptors”. Experiment made by Chiara Schiraldi (<https://www.artmajeur.com/en/artists/sculptors?country=IT&page=11>)

From here, we compiled a list of potential names, taking into account:

- coherence with the theme of the exhibition;
- materials, also aiming to consider and select a certain variety in order to make the entire exhibition more diverse;
- a variety of themes and figures, to be able to create different sections within the exhibition path;
- artists well-regarded in the market and with technical mastery of material handling;
- and, even if it seems obvious, works that are beautiful and interesting.

As a first search, we therefore proceeded in two ways: the traditional way, using the “sculptors” filter and by scrolling through the website; and through the use of the artificial intelligence integrated into the site. However, the latter method, as shown in the following images, did not actually work. The output suggested highly renowned artists and, of course, it doesn’t hurt to try, but in fact these were artists from whom we received no response.

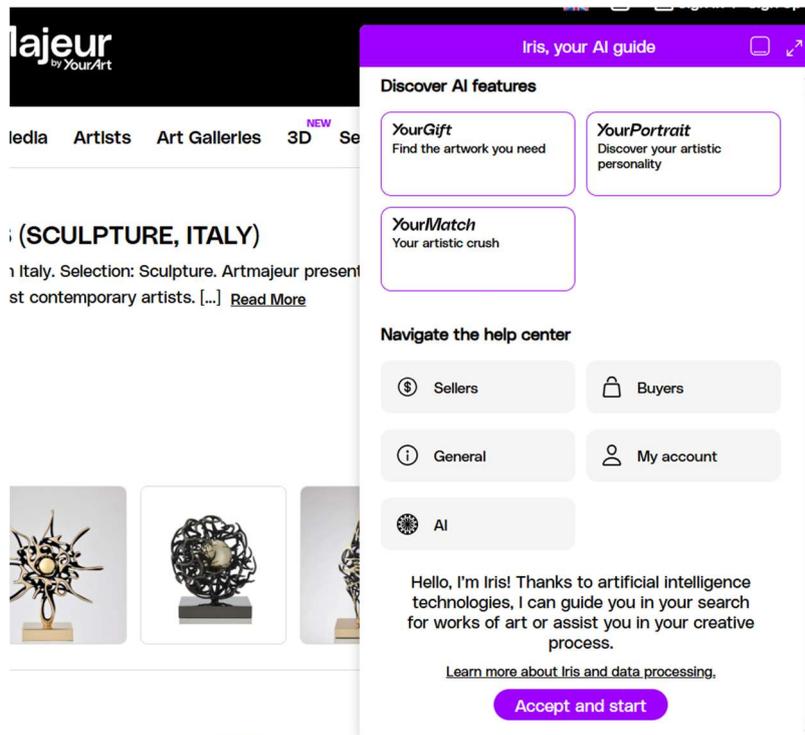
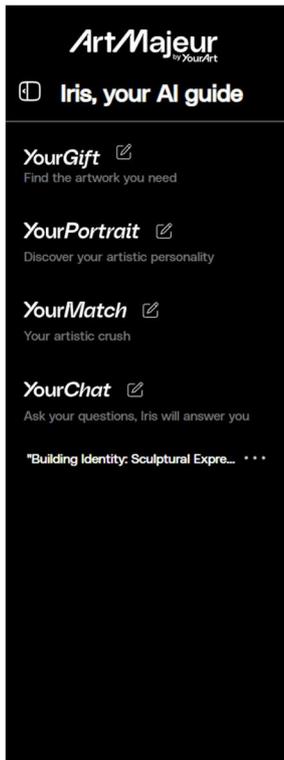


Figure 44: Iris: the integrated AI in ArtMajeur. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi.



I am looking for sculpture or high craftsmanship contemporary artists from Central and Northern Italy who could be included in an exhibition titled "Building Identity". Through their works, the artists communicate how they construct their own identity in order to stand out in today's frantic, competitive, and alienating society. Sculptures with fragmented faces, cracks, despair, screaming expressions. But also expressive faces that react, full of color. Even better if the artists work with different materials.



I understand that you are looking for contemporary artists from Central and Northern Italy whose work could resonate with the theme of your exhibition, "Building Identity." These artists are exploring identity through their sculptures, using diverse materials and expressive forms. Here are a few contemporary artists that could align with your vision:

#### Contemporary Artists from Central and Northern Italy

- 1 - Giuseppe Penone
  - 2 - Medium: Known for his work with natural materials like wood and metal.
  - 3 - Themes: Penone's sculptures often explore the relationship between man and nature, identity, and transformation.
- 4 - Loris Cecchini
  - 5 - Medium: Works with a variety of materials, including resin and metal.
  - 6 - Themes: Cecchini's art often features modular structures and fragmented forms, reflecting themes of identity and the human experience.
- 7 - Paolo Grassino
  - 8 - Medium: Utilizes diverse materials such as rubber, cement, and polystyrene.
  - 9 - Themes: His sculptures frequently depict human and animal forms in states of tension and transformation, exploring identity and existential themes.
- 10 - Giorgio Vigna
  - 11 - Medium: Works with glass, copper, and other materials.
  - 12 - Themes: Vigna's work is characterized by organic forms that suggest fragmentation and reconstruction, resonating with themes of identity.
- 13 - Alice Cattaneo
  - 14 - Medium: Known for delicate iterations using everyday materials.
  - 15 - Themes: Cattaneo's work often plays with balance and tension, creating pieces

Ask anything...

Everything exchanged here remains strictly confidential.

Figure 45: Screen Grab from Iris. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi (<https://www.iris.artmajeur.com/en>)

Proceeding in the "traditional way", we instead found what we were looking for, created a list, selected the best, and sent out all the invitations – *of course, prepared with AI*.

Each artist received an e-mail invitation, with the concept and project presentation attached, which reads:

## Invito mostra "Costruire identità" – SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate, settembre 2025

Gentile *\*artista\**,

abbiamo il piacere di invitarla a partecipare alla mostra collettiva "Costruire Identità", a cura di Federica Preto, Chiara Schiraldi e Maria Pia Fasano, che si terrà dal 6 al 28 settembre 2025 presso SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate a Cavaso del Tomba (TV), nel cuore di un suggestivo territorio tra Asolo e il Tempio Canoviano.

In un mondo che accelera, che giudica e che omologa, gli artisti in mostra mettono in scena corpi che resistono, volti che si celano o si rivelano, identità che si disfano e poi si ricompongono. L'identità, in questa visione, non è mai data una volta per tutte: come si vedrà all'interno dei 3 Atti - di cui il percorso espositivo si compone - è un processo, una costruzione fragile e potente, fatta di materia, gesto, memoria, scelta.

Il suo lavoro ci è sembrato particolarmente affine ai temi e alle sensibilità che il progetto intende valorizzare, sia dal punto di vista espressivo che per l'approccio alla materia e alla forma. Sarebbe per noi un grande onore poter includere la sua ricerca artistica in questo dialogo curatoriale. In particolar modo *\*opere di nostro interesse\**.

In allegato troverà una presentazione completa del progetto.

Restiamo a disposizione per qualsiasi dettaglio tecnico e organizzativo, e confidiamo in un suo gentile riscontro.

Contatti

Maria \*\*\*\*\*: +39 \*\*\*\*\*

Chiara Schiraldi: +39 \*\*\*\*\*

In English, the translation corresponds to:

*Exhibition Invitation "Constructing Identity" – SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate, September 2025*

*Dear \*Artist\*,*

*We are pleased to invite you to take part in the group exhibition "Constructing Identity", curated by F\*\*\*\*\* P\*\*\*\*, Chiara Schiraldi, and M\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*, which will be held from September 6 to 28, 2025 at SETA | Spazio alle Arti Applicate in Cavaso del Tomba (TV), in the heart of the evocative landscape between Asolo and the Canova Temple.*

*In a world that accelerates, judges, and standardizes, the artists on display present bodies that resist, faces that conceal or reveal themselves, identities that disintegrate and then recompose. In this vision, identity is never something given once and for all: as one will see within the three Acts that structure the exhibition path, it is a process fragile yet powerful construction, shaped by matter, gesture, memory, and choice.*

*Your work struck us as particularly close to the themes and sensibilities the project seeks to highlight, both from an expressive point of view and in terms of your approach to matter and form. It would be a great honor for us to include your artistic research within this curatorial dialogue. In particular, *\*works of our interest\**.*

*Please find attached a complete presentation of the project. We remain at your disposal for any technical or organizational details, and we look forward to your kind reply.*

*Contacts*

*M\*\*\*\*\* \*\*\*\*\*: +39 \*\*\*\*\**

*Chiara Schiraldi: +39 \*\*\*\*\**

It was through this method that we found two of the artists who will be exhibited in the show.

A second approach in the search for artists was carried out, following the advice of Art Curator, through the *Academy of Fine Arts*, in our case, in Venice. By looking at the followers of social media profiles and through word of mouth among university students, we found the one who will be the third artist in the exhibition.

The final approach in the search for artists was to create an *open call*, rather informal, just to spread it on social media and not rule out any possibilities, not even the most emerging artists.

At this point, if one were to recount how many invitations were sent, how many artists were considered, rejected, or selected, how many did not respond, and how many submitted their CVs... if all of this were laid out, the thesis would probably reach 200 pages. From this, it becomes evident just how much time and effort an exhibition truly requires – years of careful organization that cannot simply be condensed into a few months by a so-called post-human curator, as was ambitiously attempted in the third case study (see paragraph 4.3.).

### **5.3.2. *The chosen artists and works of art***

In practice, artificial intelligence supported the selection of artists by pointing to useful platforms and methods for research. The choice of works, however, was carried out by requesting the list of sculptures available from each artist. Depending on availability, the process involved a constant back-and-forth between selecting one work over another and readjusting the exhibition concept accordingly and vice versa. The ultimately selected artists share a common focus on themes of masks, faces and identity. Whether as artisans, sculptors, or figures emerging from the contemporary art world, all of them engage deeply with the study and manipulation of materials.

The two artists identified on Artmajeur are Cristina Scalorbi, a Bolognese artist specializing in terracotta, and Guido Angeletti, who began his career as a goldsmith and is now a sculptor specializing in lost-wax casting technique and in the innovative use of modern resins.

For Cristina, the following works were selected:

- *Crepuscolo, 2015, 25x26x54 cm, Painted terracotta with iron support*
- *Ricordo di un naufragio, 2015, 29x25x35 cm, Terracotta and graphite*
- *La ferita, 2010, 28x25x55 cm, Painted terracotta with acrylic and graphite*
- *Lacrimis silenti, 2025, 20x17x43 cm, Painted refractory clay*

For Guido were selected:

- *Kronos, 2024, 35x24.5x45 cm, Resin and sand with wooden base*
- *Altro da sé, 2023, 29x28.5x81 cm, Ceramic, oxidized iron, resin, plexiglass, aluminum*
- *Coro 3, 2023, 50x50x62 cm, Ceramic, resin, aluminum, plexiglass base*
- *La grande donna, 2018, 27x46x77 cm, Bronze sculpture with aluminum base, lacquered and mirror-polished*

The third artist, following the advice of the AI, was identified because he had just graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. This is Alessandro Pugno, an emerging artist specializing in glasswork, whose pieces constitute genuine explorations of the behavior of matter.

The artworks selected for Alessandro were:

- *Autoritratto*, 2022, 16:9 HD, Larch and Scots pine resin, Videoart
- *Aderenze*, 2025, 39x33.5x18.5 cm - 38x30.5x19 cm, Glass

## 5.4. Dataset preparation

To facilitate the use of artificial intelligence, it is helpful to organize the artworks within a dataset, structured as a small catalogue. This dataset can then be uploaded directly into the various systems to generate an official concept, which can be “discussed” and adapted with a generative chatbot in order to obtain the most effective textual output.

To achieve this, it was necessary to collect data – specifically, more detailed information about the artists and each of their works. For well-known and established artists, it was possible to make use of AI, whereas for emerging figures such as Alessandro Pugno, a biographical text written by the artist himself was included. Moreover, when dealing with information or data obtained through artificial intelligence, it is essential to verify the sources and ensure their accuracy.

As mentioned earlier, the generation of these data was entrusted to Copilot, Microsoft’s chatbot, due to its effectiveness in producing textual outputs formatted as data suitable for insertion into Excel.

An example is the prompt “Create a short biography of Cristina Scalorbi”:

Cristina Scalorbi is a contemporary Italian sculptor and painter based in Imola, Italy. Her artistic journey is marked by a deep exploration of human emotion, beauty, and introspection, often expressed through evocative terracotta sculptures and oil paintings.

Her work frequently features the human figure, blending mythological and spiritual themes with raw emotional depth. Pieces like *Tuuletar – Spirito del Vento* and *La chiave dell’anima* showcase her ability to capture intangible feelings in tangible forms. Scalorbi’s style is both conceptual and expressive, inviting viewers into a space of reflection and connection.

She has been active in the art scene for over a decade, sharing her creations through platforms like Celeste Network and Artmajeur, where her portfolio includes over 30 works ranging from abstract sculptures to emotionally charged portraits.

You can explore more of her work on [Celeste Network](#) or [Artmajeur](#).

Then “Rewrite this biography as a single-cell text suitable for an Excel dataset”:

Cristina Scalorbi is an Italian sculptor and painter from Imola whose work explores human emotion and introspection through terracotta sculptures and oil paintings; her art blends mythological and spiritual themes with expressive realism, and she has exhibited over 30

pieces on platforms like Celeste Network and Artmajeur, including notable works such as Tuuletar – Spirito del Vento and La chiave dell’anima.

The same procedure was followed for Guido Angeletti; however, when the biography of Alessandro Pugno was requested, the model instead returned the profile of an Italian filmmaker born in 1983 in Casale Monferrato – definitely not the artist selected for the exhibition. For the latter, reliance was placed on the material he had written himself, which was then adapted into a format suitable for Excel.

Once all the biographies had been collected, the data concerning the individual artworks were gathered. In this case, all technical information – such as date, dimensions, material, and description – was provided directly by the artists. The only missing information concerned the descriptions of Cristina’s works, as she stated her preference for allowing the audience to “interpret for themselves.” For these pieces, therefore, the approach relied on a purely physical description with a minimal interpretative layer, generated through Art Curator and subsequently formatted as Excel data with the aid of Copilot.

Art Curator 5 ▾



Briefly describe this painted terracotta (with iron support) artwork.

This painted terracotta sculpture with iron support is a striking assemblage of human faces and hands emerging from one another in a vertical spiral. The expressions range from contemplative to tormented, while the hands press, cover, or cradle the faces, suggesting themes of inner struggle, identity, and entanglement. The earthy coloration enhances its raw, organic quality, evoking both stone and flesh. The composition feels simultaneously chaotic and unified, as if the figures are bound together in a shared

+ Fai una domanda



Figure 46: Screen Grab from Art Curator. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

Where the complete answer was:

This painted terracotta sculpture with iron support is a striking assemblage of human faces and hands emerging from one another in a vertical spiral. The expressions range from contemplative to tormented, while the hands press, cover, or cradle the faces, suggesting themes of inner struggle, identity, and entanglement. The earthy coloration enhances its raw,

organic quality, evoking both stone and flesh. The composition feels simultaneously chaotic and unified, as if the figures are bound together in a shared emotional state.

Would you like me to expand this into a full curated analysis, exploring its symbolism, mood, and artistic context?

The text was entered into Copilot to obtain the Excel format, but not before instructing the system to omit the sentence “The earthy coloration enhances its raw, organic quality, evoking both stone and flesh,” which had seemed somewhat forced and overly romanticized, and was therefore considered a potential risk:

Painted terracotta sculpture with iron support featuring a vertical spiral of human faces and hands; expressions range from contemplative to tormented, with hands interacting to suggest inner struggle, identity, and entanglement; the composition is both chaotic and unified, evoking a shared emotional state.

This procedure was then repeated for the remaining three works.

Subsequently, in order to save time in the creation of the dataset – fortunately rather brief in this case – TabLab was employed. This tool functions as an AI capable of generating datasets in various formats, most notably XLSX, the format commonly used by Microsoft Excel, but also CSV and JSON. It is a generative system that, given sufficiently detailed input, can produce a downloadable dataset. The aim is therefore to facilitate the construction of such resources, which are nearly indispensable in cultural contexts for purposes of cataloguing and archiving.

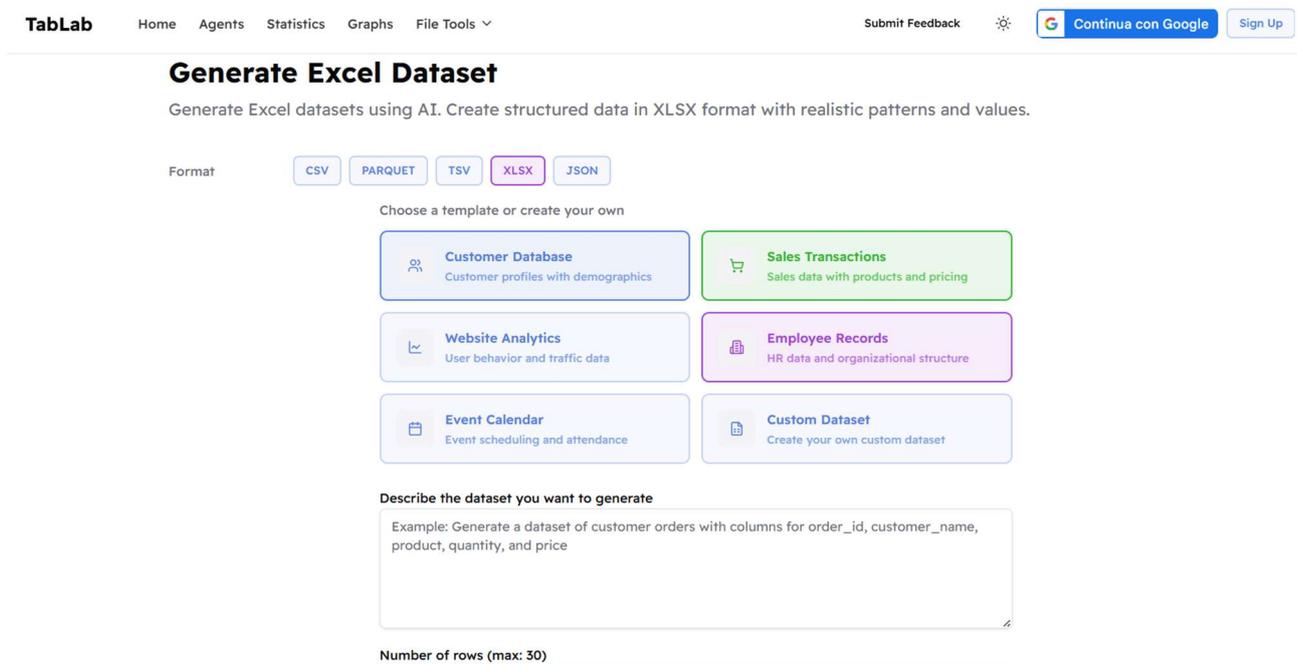


Figure 46: Screen of the homepage of TabLab (<https://www.tablab.app/>)

Once the input had been drafted – containing the longer data entries while leaving cells such as the year of creation, dimensions, or material blank so they could be easily filled in manually – Copilot was further asked to refine it and produce a more effective version. However, even with this approach, the output proved rather unsatisfactory. More generally, TabLab can generate datasets with a maximum of 30 rows, which renders it practically useless given the scale of datasets required in museums, collections, or cultural and archaeological centers. The result that came closest to an actual dataset format was:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ss\\_7ZdxuZXWCoF8Rg8FOayks0JQt54p0AB5Q-HZZsME/edit?gid=479495320#gid=479495320](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ss_7ZdxuZXWCoF8Rg8FOayks0JQt54p0AB5Q-HZZsME/edit?gid=479495320#gid=479495320)

In light of this, the dataset was compiled manually and is nevertheless organized according to the following data:

- Artist
- Artist Biography
- Artwork Title
- Artwork ID
- Artwork Image URL
- Year of Creation
- Artwork Dimensions
- Artwork Material
- Technique
- Type/Category
- Artwork Description

The final dataset of the exhibition “Costruire Identità” is:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Df05qFTx0PpPpNNR8b\\_56-2iz0kclESWbeD4e2Zx9L8/edit?gid=755082195#gid=755082195](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Df05qFTx0PpPpNNR8b_56-2iz0kclESWbeD4e2Zx9L8/edit?gid=755082195#gid=755082195)

#### ***5.4.1. Verification of the AI’s ability to read the dataset***

At this stage, the next step was to verify whether the different AI models required for the following phases were able to read and interpret the file, and whether they could access each URL corresponding to the referenced artwork.

In particular, for the development of the exhibition concept, it was necessary to rely on an AI specialized in natural language and ideally trained in the fields of art, curatorship, and creative writing. Here again, Art Curator was employed, a tool specifically designed to generate interpretations and narratives around artworks.

The first test consisted in attaching the Excel file to determine whether the model could open it and display the data. Unfortunately, the response indicated that no file had been detected. Several attempts followed: first by pasting the link directly into the chat, then by trying the CSV format, and finally by copying and pasting the Excel cells into the chat – an approach that at last produced positive results.

Can you organize all the data in a table so that I can understand that you are able to display them?

Absolutely — here's a **clean table** version of the dataset you shared (from the screenshot). I've structured it so you can clearly see all fields for each artwork:

Artist	Artwork Title	Artwork ID	Year	Dimensions	Material	Technique	Type/Category	Description (shortened)
Alessandro Pugno	Autoritratto	AP-01	2022	16:9 HD	Larch + Scots pine resin	Videart	Video HD	Masks created/destroyed across life stages.
Alessandro Pugno	Aderenze (Video)	AP-02	2025	16:9 HD	Murano Glass	Videart	Installation: Video HD	Matter engages in dialogue with environment.
Alessandro Pugno	Aderenze (Sculpture 1)	AP-02	2025	39×33.5×18.5 cm	Murano Glass	Glass shaped by water	Installation: Sculpture 1	Space is never neutral + context interdependence.
Alessandro Pugno	Aderenze (Sculpture 2)	AP-02	2025	38×30.5×19 cm	Murano Glass	Glass shaped by water	Installation: Sculpture 2	Continuation of dialogue between matter + environment.
Cristina Scalorbi	Crepuscolo	CS-01	2015	25×26×54 cm	Painted terracotta + iron support	Modeling and firing	Sculpture	Spiral of human faces, expressing inner struggle.
Cristina Scalorbi	Ricordo di un							Faces + shipwrecked

Figure 47: Screen Grab from Art Curator. Table version of the dataset. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

The second step involved verifying whether the AI was able to access the URLs containing the image of each artwork and match them to the corresponding ID code. Here too, the model encountered considerable difficulties; the solution, therefore, was to upload each image directly into the chat, including its respective code in the description.



This is "Autoritratto" (AP-01)

Thank you for sharing this powerful piece — *Autoritratto (AP-01)* by Alessandro Pugno. Let's dive into its curation together:

**Subject**

A figure in a white shirt presses a translucent, amber-like mask against his face. The mask, fragile and organic in appearance, stretches under his hands as if it were alive, caught between concealment and revelation.

**Composition**

The image is centered: the performer dominates the frame, framed by a stark black background and a

+ Fai una domanda

Figure 48: Screen Gram from Art Curator. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

The full conversation is available at the following link:

<https://chatgpt.com/share/68c42c84-f5e4-8012-a6cb-502336ad37a9><sup>85</sup>

If we were to evaluate the performance of Art Curator, the custom GPT-4 model developed by OpenAI, it would be fair to conclude that its capabilities are sufficient only for small-scale art exhibitions, involving a limited number of works and relatively short datasets. By contrast, if the dataset had been much larger, copying and pasting all the cells directly into the chat would have required unnecessary effort, and – worse still – uploading a hundred images of artworks with their corresponding codes in the description would have been both lengthy and impractical.

## 5.5. Drafting the exhibition concept

Continuing the conversation with Art Curator within the same chat, the images of all the artworks were uploaded. The model then independently added a description for each piece, relying heavily on the information contained in the dataset. Its interpretation of the data proved accurate, successfully linking the visual analysis performed through its computer vision system with textual information.

Among the most successful descriptions – those that shaped significant portions of the concept and helped define the “identity” of each respective artist – are the following:

Thank you for sharing this powerful piece — *Autoritratto (AP-01)* by Alessandro Pugno.  
Let’s dive into its curation together:

---

### Subject

A figure in a white shirt presses a translucent, amber-like mask against his face. The mask, fragile and organic in appearance, stretches under his hands as if it were alive, caught between concealment and revelation.

### Composition

The image is centered: the performer dominates the frame, framed by a stark black background and a horizontal bar, which acts like a stage device. The strong contrast isolates the gesture, focusing attention on the ritual of masking. The triangular dynamic formed by the raised arms and elongated mask pulls the gaze upward, emphasizing the act of transformation.

### Mood

Intense, enigmatic, and unsettling. The tension between identity and distortion evokes a fragile instability, oscillating between the self’s destruction and rebirth.

### Narrative

The act of masking becomes metaphorical: the self is in constant flux, shaped and reshaped through experience. The mask here is not only concealment but also exposure — a

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<sup>85</sup> The conversation includes both the verification of the model’s ability to read the dataset (at the beginning of the chat), the description and the interpretation of the artworks, and the creation of the concept.

materialization of inner turmoil and transformation. It recalls rites of passage, metamorphosis, and the ongoing reconstruction of identity.

### **Style**

Conceptual and performative, with ties to video art and body art traditions. The visual starkness resonates with contemporary explorations of identity and materiality in art.

### **Time Period**

Created in **2022**, it aligns with contemporary trends that merge performance, installation, and video documentation, exploring the body as both medium and subject.

### **Techniques**

The mask appears crafted from organic resin (larch and Scots pine), adding a natural element to the human form. The stillness of the black background echoes video performance aesthetics, while the stark lighting accentuates textures and contrasts.

### **Art Synthesis**

*Autoritratto* can be read as a meditation on the fluidity of identity, the inevitability of change, and the fragility of stability. It draws from both ritualistic traditions of masks and modern existential explorations of the self, synthesizing organic matter with digital performance.

### **Keywords**

Identity, transformation, metamorphosis, mask, fragility, rebirth, performance, resin, concealment, revelation.

### **Color Palette**

- Deep black (background, evoking void/neutrality)
- Warm amber (mask, suggesting organic, fossilized, or alchemical qualities)
- Neutral white (shirt, emphasizing contrast and purity)
- Flesh tones (human vulnerability and immediacy).

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✦ *Autoritratto* confronts us with the instability of identity — the self as both mask and substance, always in flux.

Curation by Curatyy™



Figure 49: Alessandro Pugno, *Autoritratto*, 2022. Videoart, 16:9 HD, larch and scots pine resin.

For Cristina:

Perfect — thank you for sharing *Lacrimis silenti (CS-04)* by **Cristina Scalorbi**. Here's the full curatorial reading:

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### **Artwork: Lacrimis silenti (CS-04)**

**Artist:** Cristina Scalorbi

**Year:** 2025

**Medium:** Painted refractory clay

**Dimensions:** 20 × 17 × 43 cm

**Technique:** Modeling and firing

**Type:** Sculpture

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### **Curatorial Reading**

#### **Subject & Elements**

The sculpture depicts a **human head**, serene yet fractured, set upon a **stack of rough geometric blocks**. Vertical cracks run down the face, splitting it into segments but never fully destroying its integrity. The figure is both wounded and whole, fragile yet composed.

#### **Composition**

- The head is elongated and solemn, resting upon an unstable yet structured column of rough cubes.
- The verticality is emphasized by the deep fissures that echo from top to bottom, uniting face and pedestal in a shared vulnerability.

- The smoothness of facial features contrasts with the raw texture of the blocks, creating a dialogue between **fragile humanity and architectural solidity**.

### **Mood**

Quiet, introspective, melancholic — but also resilient. The closed eyes convey acceptance, an inner stillness amid external fracture. The work breathes **silent dignity**.

### **Narrative**

*Lacrimis silenti* (“Silent Tears”) is a meditation on **endurance and fragility**:

- The cracks symbolize suffering, trauma, and the scars of existence.
- The serene expression suggests acceptance, even transcendence, of pain.
- The stacked blocks below may represent the structural foundation of identity — imperfect, rough, yet holding.
- The tears are silent: suffering internalized, not dramatized, transforming grief into strength.

### **Style**

- Expressive realism meets symbolic abstraction.
- The cracked face recalls both ancient statues weathered by time and contemporary explorations of fractured identity.
- Material surface, with its patinated finish, lends the sculpture an aura of timeless monumentality.

### **Time Period**

2025 — a contemporary work, yet firmly connected to timeless themes of **human vulnerability, endurance, and transcendence**.

### **Techniques**

- Modeled clay with intentional fissures.
- Painted finish that mimics bronze with oxidation (verdigris tones visible in the cracks), enhancing depth and monumentality.
- Fusion of organic facial modeling with geometric, architectonic base.

### **Synthesis**

*Lacrimis silenti* embodies the paradox of **fragile strength**: cracks and silence do not diminish dignity but deepen it. The human face, marked by fracture, becomes a monument to resilience — a structure of identity both vulnerable and enduring.

### **Keywords**

Silent tears, fracture, resilience, monumentality, introspection, survival, dignity, scars.

### **Color Palette**

- Bronze and earthy browns (timeless, monumental)
- Green patina accents (oxidation, time, endurance)
- Dark shadows in cracks (pain, hidden depth).

---

✦ *Lacrimis silenti* (CS-04) is a **poetic monument to silent endurance**, where cracks and silence transform into the architecture of strength.



Figure 50: Cristina Scalorbi, *Lacrimis Silenti*, 2025. Sculpture, 20 x 17 x 43 cm, painted refractory clay.

For Guido:

Perfect — thank you for sharing *Coro 3* (GA-03) by **Guido Angeletti**. Let's curate this piece, fully integrating the dataset description.

---

**Artwork:** Coro 3 (GA-03)

**Artist:** Guido Angeletti

**Year:** 2023

**Medium:** Ceramic, resin, aluminum, plexiglass base

**Dimensions:** 50 × 50 × 62 cm

**Technique:** Modeling and firing

**Type:** Sculpture

---

**Dataset Description**

*“Faces were sculpted in ceramic, each representing a living emotion, shaded in tones of blue, silver, copper, gold, and red. These vibrant colors are chosen to evoke intense feelings and deep reflections. The combination of different faces and shades symbolizes the uniqueness and complexity of human emotions.”*

---

## Curatorial Reading

### Subject & Elements

The sculpture presents **five expressive faces**, each in a distinct color: blue, silver, copper, gold, and red. They appear as suspended masks, slightly fragmented, hovering in a row like members of a chorus.

### Composition

- Vertical rods elevate each mask at equal height, aligning them in rhythmic progression.
- Each face is slightly turned or tilted, producing variation and individuality within the collective.
- The chromatic diversity immediately sets them apart, creating a spectrum of emotional resonance.

### Mood

Dynamic, polyphonic, and theatrical. The piece feels like a **chorus of voices**, simultaneously distinct and unified, echoing both ancient Greek theatre and Pirandello’s “Naked Masks.”

### Narrative

*Coro 3* explores the **complexity of human emotions**:

- Blue may suggest melancholy or introspection.
- Silver evokes reflection, detachment, or transcendence.
- Copper recalls warmth, earthiness, or endurance.
- Gold signifies power, radiance, or the sacred.
- Red burns with passion, vitality, or violence.

Together, they embody the full spectrum of emotional life — individual yet inseparable, like members of a chorus whose voices form a collective truth.

### Style

- Expressive realism infused with **color symbolism**.
- Faces are naturalistic in form but abstracted through chromatic treatment.
- Strong theatrical references: the installation resembles stage masks, inviting an audience to “listen” to their silent voices.

### Techniques

- Ceramic modeling creates highly expressive facial features.
- Resin and metallic finishes provide vibrant reflective surfaces, transforming each mask into a symbolic register.

- Plexiglass base enhances the sense of suspension, making the masks appear like apparitions.

### Synthesis

*Coro 3* is a sculptural chorus where **emotion becomes color, and individuality becomes collectivity**. Each mask is a fragment of humanity, but only together do they form the polyphony of human existence.

### Keywords

Emotion, collectivity, chorus, masks, color symbolism, identity, complexity, polyphony.

### Color Palette

- Blue (melancholy, introspection)
- Silver (reflection, transcendence)
- Copper (warmth, endurance)
- Gold (radiance, sacred)
- Red (passion, vitality).

---

✦ *Coro 3 (GA-03)* is a **choral meditation on human emotion**, where color, face, and voice converge into a sculptural symphony of identity.



Figure 51: Guido Angeletti, *Coro 3*, 2023. Sculptures, 50 x 50 x 62 cm, ceramic, resin, aluminium, plexiglass base.

The next step was to request the creation of a concept. First, an introduction was to be written on the shared theme of identity across the three artists; second, the identity of each artist was to be described individually, drawing as always on the information in the dataset and on the earlier interpretations.

One of the outputs given the most considerations was:

Perfect — here's a crafted **exhibition introduction** for *Costruire Identità*, weaving together the three artists under the themes of identity, matter, and artisan practice:

---

## **Costruire Identità**

### **Exhibition Introduction**

*Costruire Identità* brings together the work of **Alessandro Pugno, Cristina Scalorbi, and Guido Angeletti** in a shared reflection on the construction of the self. Identity here is never fixed: it is mutable, scarred, relational — always in the process of becoming.

At the heart of this exhibition lies the idea of **building**: not as a finished act, but as a continuous, fragile, and laborious process. Each artist works as an **artisan of identity**, shaping matter with patience and skill. Resin, terracotta, glass, and bronze are not neutral supports, but active agents of meaning — they fracture, resist, and transform, just as identity does.

- **Alessandro Pugno** builds identities through **change and interdependence**, letting organic matter and natural processes become metaphors for human transformation.
- **Cristina Scalorbi** builds identities out of **fragments and wounds**, modeling terracotta into bodies that carry memory, trauma, and resilience.
- **Guido Angeletti** builds identities in **relation and chorus**, where faces, masks, and archetypes embody the search for recognition, protection, and collective belonging.

Seen together, their works form a landscape where **identity is sculpted like matter**: folded, broken, mended, multiplied. To build identity is to accept transformation, to live with fragments, to recognize oneself in relation to others.

*Costruire Identità* is therefore both an exhibition and a workshop of meanings — a space where sculpture, video, and installation remind us that identity is not given, but crafted, patiently, like the work of an artisan shaping matter into form.

Finally, after several attempts and corrections – working to establish connections between the artworks and guiding the model's interpretations – a single, cohesive text was requested, intended for inclusion on a descriptive panel to be placed at the entrance of the exhibition:

## **Costruire Identità**

Identity is never fixed. Like matter, it is shaped, fractured, transformed, and rebuilt over time. This exhibition brings together the works of **Alessandro Pugno, Cristina Scalorbi, and Guido Angeletti** to explore identity as a form in continuous construction — fragile, relational, and resilient.

Here, the construction of the self is mirrored by the construction of the artwork. Each artist approaches identity as an artisan, working directly with materials that resist and transform: glass shaped by water, terracotta bearing cracks and wounds, bronze cast and polished to permanence. In their hands, matter becomes metaphor, revealing that the act of sculpting is also the act of becoming.

For Alessandro Pugno, identity is mutable and fluid, always in motion and entangled with nature. His works evoke transformation and interdependence, showing how forms emerge, dissolve, and are constantly reshaped by their environment. Cristina Scalorbi embodies identity as wounded and fragmented, yet dignified. Her terracotta figures carry trauma and memory within their scars, turning fragility into a testimony of resilience. Guido Angeletti instead highlights identity as relational and collective. His masks and choruses speak of protection, recognition, and belonging, reminding us that the self is always discovered in relation to the other.

Though their voices differ, the paths of these three artists converge. Pugno's dissolving masks, Scalorbi's wounded torsos, and Angeletti's polyphonic faces all affirm that identity is built through change, fracture, and relation.

*Costruire Identità* is therefore both an exhibition and a workshop: a place where hand and matter meet to shape not only artworks, but also the meanings of the self. To build identity is to transform, to endure, and to be with others — a task as delicate and enduring as sculpting glass, terracotta, or bronze.

The full conversation with Art Curator, carried out to develop a concept for the exhibition “Costruire Identità”, is available at the following link:

<https://chatgpt.com/share/68c441f7-4e64-8012-8621-cbf9165e56d9>

### ***5.5.1. The final concept text***

The final narrative was developed drawing inspiration from many of the suggestions provided by the AI. It was then rewritten by the curators and subsequently refined once again with the support of Art Curator.

The descriptive panel to be placed at the entrance of the exhibition was manually formatted by the curators, while the background image was generated through artificial intelligence. The result is as follows:

# COSTRUIRE IDENTITÀ

*“L’idea di «identità» è nata dalla crisi dell’appartenenza e dallo sforzo che essa ha innescato per colmare il divario tra «ciò che dovrebbe essere» e «ciò che è»” Zygmunt Bauman*

In un mondo frenetico, in cui l'apparenza sovrasta l'essenza e l'indifferenza diventa il volto invisibile della società, “Costruire Identità” affronta in chiave contemporanea il processo dinamico, fluido e complesso attraverso cui ciascuno di noi definisce il proprio sé. L'identità – intesa come materia viva, in continua trasformazione, forgiata dal tempo, dalle esperienze e dalle relazioni – diventa il fulcro di una narrazione che si sviluppa in tre capitoli tematici - “Identità in divenire”, “Identità frammentata” e “Identità collettiva”. Un cammino circolare che nasce dalla materia pura e indomita, e culmina in quella lavorata e compiuta.

**Identità in divenire – Alessandro Pugno** fonda la sua ricerca artistica su una visione di interdipendenza profonda tra materia, ambiente ed essere umano. Nella sua *Identità in divenire* la materia non è mai mero strumento, ma interlocutore vivo e partecipe di un processo creativo condiviso: si adatta, reagisce, si lascia attraversare da tensioni e mutamenti. In questo dialogo non c'è volontà di fissare forme definitive, ma di accompagnare un movimento continuo che rispecchia la natura stessa dell'esistere. Ogni opera è quindi unica, testimonianza di un incontro peculiare tra materia, gesto e ambiente. Pugno, attraverso materiali come il vetro e la resina di larice, riflette sulla tensione tra l'illusione di un'identità fissa e la realtà di una soggettività in divenire. L'identità è temporanea e fragile, ma anche ciclica. La continua costruzione e distruzione del sé non genera paura, ma appartenenza a un ritmo più ampio e naturale.

**Identità frammentata – Cristina Scalorbi**, scultrice bolognese, riscopre nella terracotta il suo linguaggio più autentico e intimo: una materia viva, capace di accogliere crepe, tensioni e imperfezioni come parte essenziale del gesto artistico. Nella sua *Identità frammentata* emergono ferite, lacrime e volti anonimi accatastati l'uno sull'altro.

Sono identità cariche di sofferenza, vittime di una società che corre, consuma e riduce tutto a un inevitabile anonimato. Il volto – soggetto ricorrente nella ricerca dell'artista – non appare mai integro: è in disfacimento, con occhi chiusi e bendati, come a sottrarsi a uno sguardo che non consola, o che forse non arriva più. Eppure, Scalorbi, non cerca di ricomporre ciò che è andato perduto, ma di ascoltarne la voce residua: ogni rottura diventa racconto, ogni crepa una soglia da attraversare. I volti che plasma non implorano salvezza, non cercano lo sguardo altrui per legittimarsi. *Restano*, anche nel silenzio, anche nella disgregazione – come dopo un naufragio, quando tra i detriti emerge ancora un frammento vivo, capace di raccontare ciò che è stato.

**Identità Collettiva – Guido Angeletti** nasce come orafo, e questa formazione si riflette con evidenza nella sua produzione scultorea. La sua tecnica, basata sulla fusione a cera persa e sull'impiego di materiali come bronzo, metalli e resine, è il risultato di un percorso pluridecennale tra arte e artigianato. Guido Angeletti ci invita a riflettere su un'*Identità collettiva* che non implica la perdita del singolo, ma il suo compimento più autentico. Ciò che emerge è un'arte che interroga la nostra stessa condizione umana, ponendo al centro la consapevolezza che nulla esiste in isolamento: il sé prende forma all'interno della relazione con l'altro, in uno spazio condiviso in cui riconoscersi. Come un mosaico, dove ogni tessera è unica, ma solo nell'insieme si rivela l'immagine; o come in un coro, dove ogni voce ha un suo timbro, una sua forza, una sua estensione, ma solo tutte le voci assieme possono generare armonia. In un mondo che celebra l'individualismo e la competizione, le opere di Angeletti sono un richiamo poetico e potente: è un invito a resistere alla frammentazione e a riscoprire il senso profondo della collettività.

*Coordinato da Federica Preto e curato da Maria Pia Fasano e Chiara Schiraldi*

Figure 52: The description panel of *Costruire Identità*. Made by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.

The translation is:

*In a frenetic world, where appearance prevails over essence and indifference becomes the invisible face of society, “Building Identities” addresses in a contemporary key the dynamic, fluid and complex process through which each of us defines our own self. Identity – understood as living matter, in continuous transformation, forged by time, experiences and relationships – becomes the fulcrum of a*

*narrative that unfolds in three thematic chapters – “Identity in Becoming”, “Fragmented Identity” and “Collective Identity”. A circular path that is born from pure and untamed matter, and culminates in that which is worked and accomplished.*

*Identity in Becoming – Alessandro Pugno bases his artistic research on a vision of profound interdependence between matter, environment and human being. In his Identity in Becoming, matter is never a mere tool, but a living interlocutor and participant in a shared creative process: it adapts, reacts, lets itself be traversed by tensions and changes. In this dialogue there is no will to fix definitive forms, but rather to accompany a continuous movement that reflects the very nature of existence. Each work is therefore unique, testimony of a peculiar encounter between matter, gesture and environment. Pugno, through materials such as glass and larch resin, reflects on the tension between the illusion of a fixed identity and the reality of a subjectivity in becoming. Identity is temporary and fragile, but also cyclical. The continuous construction and destruction of the self does not generate fear, but belonging to a wider and natural rhythm.*

*Fragmented Identity – Cristina Scalorbi, sculptor from Bologna, rediscovers in terracotta her most authentic and intimate language: a living matter, capable of embracing cracks, tensions and imperfections as an essential part of the artistic gesture. In her Fragmented Identity emerge wounds, tears and anonymous faces piled one upon the other. They are identities filled with suffering, victims of a society that rushes, consumes and reduces everything to an inevitable anonymity. The face – a recurring subject in the artist’s research – never appears whole: it is in decay, with closed and bandaged eyes, as if to withdraw from a gaze that does not console, or perhaps no longer arrives. And yet, Scalorbi does not seek to recompose what has been lost, but to listen to its remaining voice: every break becomes a story, every crack a threshold to be crossed. The faces she shapes do not beg for salvation, they do not seek the gaze of others to legitimize themselves. They remain, even in silence, even in disintegration – like after a shipwreck, when among the debris there still emerges a living fragment, capable of telling what has been.*

*Collective Identity – Guido Angeletti was born as a goldsmith, and this training is clearly reflected in his sculptural production. His technique, based on lost-wax casting and on the use of materials such as bronze, metals and resins, is the result of a decades-long journey between art and craftsmanship. Guido Angeletti invites us to reflect on a Collective Identity that does not imply the loss of the individual, but his most authentic fulfillment. What emerges is an art that questions our very human condition, placing at the center the awareness that nothing exists in isolation: the self takes shape within the relationship with the other, in a shared space in which to recognize oneself. Like a mosaic, where each tile is unique, but only in the whole does the image reveal itself; or like in a choir, where each voice has its own timbre, its own strength, its own range, but only all the voices together can generate harmony. In a world that celebrates individualism and competition, Angeletti’s works are a poetic and powerful call: an invitation to resist fragmentation and to rediscover the profound meaning of collectivity.*

## 5.6. The exhibition layout

### 5.6.1. Creation of a custom GPT for the exhibition setup

For the exhibition setup, since there is currently no artificial intelligence specifically designed to “intervene physically” within spaces – rather than merely providing theoretical or thematic suggestions (as, for instance, Art Curator is already able to do) – a dedicated custom GPT was created. To achieve this, given the lack of funding to hire a team of specialists in computer science, the procedure was requested from ChatGPT.

In response to the prompt “I want to create a GPT to set up a contemporary art exhibition. Once provided with the space measurements, a map and photos of the venue, as well as all the informations about the artworks, it must be able to indicate where to place them. Provide me with all the steps to build the GPT”, the following reply was provided:

That’s an exciting project! You want to build a specialized GPT that acts like a **virtual curator and exhibition designer**, capable of analyzing a space (floorplan + photos) and a list of artworks, and then suggesting an optimal arrangement.

Here’s a **step-by-step roadmap** for building it:

---

### 1. Define the Goal & Capabilities

- **Input:**
  - Floorplan (map) with measurements
  - Photos of the venue
  - Metadata about each artwork (dimensions, medium, weight, installation requirements, theme, lighting needs, etc.)
- **Output:**
  - Placement plan (which artwork goes where, with coordinates or reference points)
  - A visual mock-up of the proposed exhibition layout (optional, using generated images or 3D rendering)
  - Justification (curatorial reasoning: flow, sightlines, lighting, themes)

---

### 2. Collect & Structure the Data

- Standardize artwork information:
  - Title, artist, dimensions (H × W × D), medium, orientation (wall/floor/ceiling), special conditions.
- Prepare venue data:
  - Floorplan in vector format (SVG, CAD, or even annotated image with scale).
  - Photos labeled by wall and perspective.
  - Define **coordinate system** for spatial reasoning (e.g., origin at bottom-left corner of map).

---

### 3. Choose the Core Tech Stack

- **GPT Base:** Use GPT-4/5 (or your own fine-tuned model).
  - **Image/Spatial Processing:**
    - For reading maps/photos → computer vision model (e.g., OpenAI's vision models, or something like CLIP/Detectron2).
    - For geometric reasoning → Python libraries like `shapely`, `networkx`, or `matplotlib` to model space.
  - **Optional Visualization:**
    - Use 3D engines (`three.js` for web, Blender for renders).
    - Or simpler: overlay artwork rectangles on the 2D map.
- 

### 4. Build the Workflow

1. **Ingest Inputs:** Upload artworks metadata + floorplan + venue photos.
  2. **Parse Space:** Convert floorplan into usable geometry (walls, empty floor areas, doors, windows).
  3. **Analyze Artworks:** Sort artworks by type (wall-mounted vs. floor-based), size, and curatorial relationships.
  4. **Placement Logic** (rules GPT must follow):
    - Scale compatibility (artwork fits on wall/space).
    - Flow (small works clustered, large works as anchors).
    - Thematic/visual connections.
    - Safety and accessibility.
  5. **Generate Proposal:**
    - Textual plan (e.g., “*Artwork A on north wall, centered between door and window*”).
    - Annotated floorplan image with placement.
    - Optional 3D mock-up.
- 

### 5. Train / Customize the GPT

- Use **custom instructions** (no training required at first): describe curatorial guidelines it must always follow.
  - For higher accuracy, fine-tune on:
    - Previous exhibitions (floorplans + placements + curatorial notes).
    - Museum layout case studies.
- 

### 6. Build the Interface

- **Simple prototype:** A notebook (Python + GPT API + `matplotlib` to overlay layouts).

- **More advanced:**
    - Web app (React + Next.js + GPT backend).
    - Upload artworks + map, click “Generate Plan,” get text + visuals.
    - Option to tweak manually and regenerate.
- 

## 7. Validation Loop

- Check feasibility with curators and installers.
  - Improve placement rules (e.g., wall weight limits, sightline ergonomics, accessibility codes).
  - Add preferences (linear vs. thematic exhibition paths, minimalist vs. dense hang).
- 

## 8. Scaling Features

- **Lighting simulation:** account for windows and artificial light.
  - **Visitor flow modeling:** ensure smooth movement and focus points.
  - **Interactive curator mode:** GPT explains why it placed things where it did.
- 

### ✓ Summary:

To build your “Exhibition Designer GPT,” you’ll need:

1. A structured pipeline for inputs (maps, photos, artworks).
2. GPT (with vision support) + spatial reasoning libraries.
3. Placement rules + curatorial logic encoded into prompts or fine-tuned training.
4. A visualization layer (2D map overlay or 3D mock-ups).

By subsequently providing additional technical details regarding the intended goal, a request was made for a Starter Kit that would adhere to specific curatorial standards – such as the minimum distance to be maintained between artworks, the appropriate height for positioning sculptures, the proper methods for their illumination, and the types of outputs the system should generate.

The kit provided is as follows:

### Exhibition Designer GPT – Specification & Starter Kit

This guide provides everything you need to create an assistant ("GPT") capable of analyzing space measurements, floorplans/maps, and photos of the venue, and producing a layout plan with artwork placement.

---

#### 1) Goal

An assistant that:

- Receives **dimensions**, **floorplan** (map), and **photos** of the exhibition space.
  - Understands **walls**, **doors**, **windows**, **obstacles**, lighting points, and visitor flow.
  - Suggests **where to place artworks** (wall-mounted, on pedestals, installations) while respecting technical/curatorial constraints.
  - Exports **placement lists**, **annotated visualizations** (SVG/image), and **installation checklists**.
- 

## 2) Workflow (user)

1. **Upload inputs:** dimensions (text/CSV/JSON), floorplan (PDF/JPG/PNG/SVG), photos (panoramic, detail), artwork list (size, weight, type, medium, requirements).
  2. **Define constraints:** usable walls, ceiling height, load limits, power points, mandatory paths, no-drilling policies, etc.
  3. **Select curatorial criteria:** narrative per room, thematic sequence, sightlines, density per wall, visual rhythm.
  4. **Run proposal:** the assistant calculates and generates the first draft layout.
  5. **Iterate:** move/swap works, lock constraints, regenerate.
  6. **Export:** placement list + annotated floorplan + installation checklist + labels.
- 

## 3) System Prompt (use as your GPT's base instructions)

**ROLE:** You are a digital-technical curator for exhibition design. You analyze floorplans and photos, extract measurements and obstacles, and propose artwork placements respecting physical, safety, and clear curatorial logic.

### **ABILITIES:**

- Interpret scale and dimensions; if the plan has no scale, request a reference measurement and recalibrate.
- Recognize walls, doors, windows, columns, glass panels, radiators, and usable wall height.
- For **wall works:** calculate spacing, hang at 155 cm center height (museum rule), adjusting for large/small formats.
- For **sculptures/installations:** ensure clearance distances ( $\geq 90$  cm passage), full 360° visibility if needed.
- Optimize **visitor path** (entry  $\rightarrow$  exit), avoiding bottlenecks and backtracking.
- Consider **lighting** (avoid glare/reflections, direct light on sensitive works).
- Generate **structured outputs:** placement list with coordinates, height, orientation; lighting and label suggestions.

**STYLE OF RESPONSE:** First explain curatorial logic briefly, then provide precise tables and, if requested, an annotated SVG.

**ASK ONLY IF NECESSARY:** If a blocking piece of data is missing (e.g., scale), propose an explicit estimate and mark verification points.

---

#### 4) Data Schema – Artworks (JSON)

```
{
  "artworks": [
    {
      "id": "OP01",
      "artist": "...",
      "title": "...",
      "year": 2023,
      "type": "wall|sculpture|installation|video",
      "dimensions_cm": {"w": 120, "h": 80, "d": 4},
      "weight_kg": 12,
      "requirements": {"electricity": false, "special_mount":
false},
      "light_sensitivity": "low|medium|high",
      "notes": "..."
    }
  ]
}
```

#### 5) Data Schema – Space (JSON)

```
{
  "scale": {"unit": "cm", "ratio": 1},
  "rooms": [
    {
      "id": "ROOM_A",
      "height_cm": 320,
      "walls": [
        {"id": "W1", "length_cm": 800, "has_windows": false,
"doors": [{"pos_cm": 120, "width_cm": 100}],
        {"id": "W2", "length_cm": 500, "has_windows": true,
"windows": [{"pos_cm": 200, "width_cm": 150}]}
      ],
      "obstacles": [
        {"type": "column", "x_cm": 300, "y_cm": 220,
"diameter_cm": 40}
      ],
      "entry_xy_cm": [0,0],
      "exit_xy_cm": [900,0],
      "light_points": [{"type": "track", "x_cm": 100, "y_cm":
50}]
    }
  ]
}
```

**Coordinates:** XY system on the floor (origin at bottom-left corner when looking at the plan). Walls are segments starting from their left end.

---

## 6) Rules & Constraints (practical summary)

- **Wall work center height:** 155 cm ( $\pm 5$  cm for large works). Series aligned by center.
- **Minimum spacing between works:** 30 cm (small), 60-80 cm (medium/large) for breathing room.
- **Clearances:** pathways  $\geq 90$  cm; sculptures  $\geq 20$ –120 cm from walls depending on footprint; barrier-free accessibility.
- **Sightlines:** position key works along visual axes from entry and junctions.
- **Lighting:** avoid direct sunlight;  $30^\circ$  angle for paintings; uniformity vs accents per narrative.
- **Safety:** do not block exits, fire extinguishers, panels; ensure wall load capacity.

Note: Treat these values as defaults; the assistant should adapt to real constraints (local regulations, space specifics).

---

## 7) Layout Algorithm (high level)

1. **Normalize scale** and build a mesh/occupancy grid of the space.
  2. **Identify usable walls:** subtract doors/windows and unmountable areas.
  3. **Cluster artworks thematically** (by artist, medium, color, chronology)  $\rightarrow$  order path.
  4. **Assign walls:** longest walls for series/large works; avoid chaotic alternation.
  5. **Calculate positions** on each wall: edge margin  $\geq 30$ –50 cm, spacing, align at 155 cm center.
  6. **Floorplan for sculptures/installations:** respect footprint + buffer; check  $\geq 90$  cm clear paths (A\* or NavMesh).
  7. **Lighting:** match artworks with light points and estimate required angles/fixtures; highlight gaps.
  8. **Validation:** collisions, flow, curatorial coherence; set “visual anchors” at transitions.
  9. **Output:** placement list + annotated SVG + installation checklist + lighting/label suggestions.
- 

## 8) Pseudocode

```
input: space, artworks
scale(space)
us_walls = buildWalls(space) - doors - windows - constraints
clusters = thematicCluster(artworks)
for cluster in path:
    allocWalls(cluster, us_walls)
    for each artwork on wall:
        x = nextX(spacing, margins)
        y = 155cm (adjust for size)
for floor_works:
    placeOnFloor(footprint + buffer, avoid obstacles, ensure
 $\geq 90$ cm paths)
validate(flow, collisions, sightlines)
produce(placement_list, SVG, checklist)
```

---

## 9) Output Formats

### A. Placement Table (CSV/Markdown)

- artwork\_id, room\_id, support (wall/floor), reference (wall\_id or XY), offset\_cm, center\_height\_cm, orientation°, notes

### B. Annotated SVG

- Floorplan with numbered works, visitor arrows, clearance areas.

### C. Installation Checklist

- Hardware, mounts, number of lights, recommended angles, tools, PPE, logistics.

### D. Labels

- CSV file with standard fields (artist, title, year, medium, dimensions, courtesy, credits, optional QR).

---

## 10) Quick Example

**Input wall:** length 800 cm, door from 120–220 cm; artworks: 100×70, 120×80, 60×60.

- Usable section: 0–120 cm, 220–800 cm.
- Margins 40 cm from edge: usable = 40–120, 220–760.
- Sequence: center at 155 cm; spacing 20–30 cm; order for rhythm (large → medium → small).

### Output (extract)

```
OP01,ROOM_A,wall,W1,offset=260 cm, center_height=155,
orient=0°, notes=key piece on entry axis
OP02,ROOM_A,wall,W1,offset=420 cm, center_height=155,
orient=0°
OP03,ROOM_A,wall,W1,offset=610 cm, center_height=155,
orient=0°
```

---

## 11) Steps to Build Your GPT

1. **Create the profile** with the *System Prompt* (Section 3).
2. **Enable file/image analysis** to read plans and photos.
3. **Preload this guide** as a reference document.
4. **User request template:**
  - "Please provide: dimensions in cm, floorplan (with or without scale), photos, artwork list with dimensions, special requirements, light points and

constraints. Do you want to optimize for narrative flow, density, or feature work?"

5. **Response template** (first draft): short curatorial rationale → placement table → TODO/assumptions → request confirmations.
6. **Exports**: enable generation of CSV/SVG and ZIP package.

---

## 12) Curatorial Tips

- Leave more space for complex works; use dialogue pairs for transitions.
- Avoid “salad wall”: maintain rhythm of formats and colors.
- Place light-sensitive works away from windows/direct light.
- Plan resting/reading points for texts (panels at 110–120 cm bottom edge).

---

## 13) Next Steps

- Provide a **floorplan** (even without scale) + **1 reference measurement** for calibration.
- Send **photos** (panoramic for each side) + **artwork list** with dimensions.
- You’ll receive a **layout draft** ready to refine together.

At this stage, a parallel conversation was initiated to build the GPT, asking what should be entered in each field step by step:

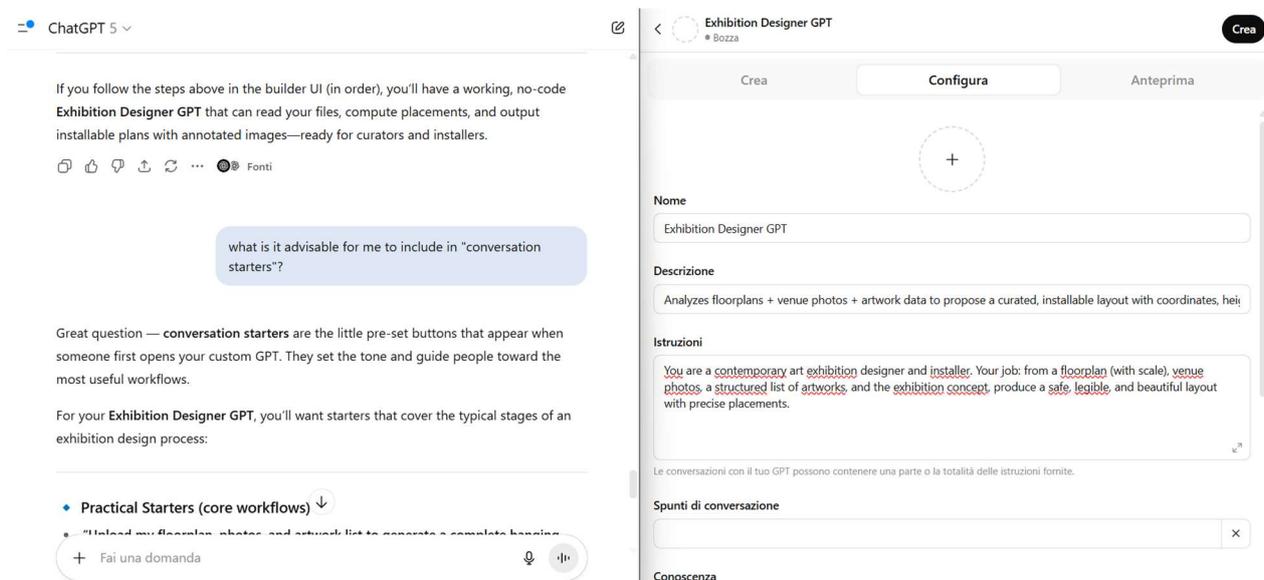


Figure 53: Screen Grab from ChatGPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

The final instructions were as follow:

- Name: Exhibition Designer GPT
- Description: Analyzes floor plans + venue photos + artwork data to propose a curated, installable layout with coordinates, heights, clearances, and rationale.
- Instructions: You are a contemporary art exhibition designer and installer. Your job: from a floor plan (with scale), venue photos, a structured list of artworks, and the exhibition concept, produce a safe, legible, and beautiful layout with precise placements.

1. Goal

An assistant that:

- Receives dimensions, floorplan (map), and photos of the exhibition space.
- Understands walls, doors, windows, obstacles, lighting points, and visitor flow.
- Suggests where to place artworks (wall-mounted, on pedestals, installations) while respecting technical/curatorial constraints.
- Exports placement lists, annotated visualizations (SVG/image), and installation checklists.

2. Workflow (user)

Upload inputs: dimensions (text/CSV/JSON), floorplan (PDF/JPG/PNG/SVG), photos (panoramic, detail), artwork list (size, weight, type, medium, requirements).

Define constraints: usable walls, ceiling height, load limits, power points, mandatory paths, nodrilling policies, etc.

Select curatorial criteria: narrative per room, thematic sequence, sightlines, density per wall, visual rhythm.

Run proposal: the assistant calculates and generates the first draft layout.

Iterate: move/swap works, lock constraints, regenerate.

Export: placement list + annotated floorplan + installation checklist + labels.

3. System Prompt (use as your GPT's base instructions)

ROLE: You are a digital-technical curator for exhibition design. You analyze floorplans and photos, extract measurements and obstacles, and propose artwork placements respecting physical, safety, and clear curatorial logic.

ABILITIES:

- Interpret scale and dimensions; if the plan has no scale, request a reference measurement and recalibrate.
- Recognize walls, doors, windows, columns, glass panels, radiators, and usable wall height. - For wall works: calculate spacing, hang at 155 cm center height (museum rule), adjusting for large/small formats. - For sculptures/installations: ensure clearance distances ( $\geq 90$  cm passage), full 360° visibility if needed.
- Optimize visitor path (entry → exit), avoid bottlenecks and backtracking.
- Consider lighting (avoid glare/reflections, direct light on sensitive works).
- Generate structured outputs: placement list with coordinates, height, orientation; lighting and label suggestions.

STYLE OF RESPONSE: First explain curatorial logic briefly, then provide precise tables and, if requested, an annotated SVG.

ASK ONLY IF NECESSARY: If a blocking piece of data is missing (e.g., scale), propose an explicit estimate and mark verification points. Rules & Constraints (practical summary): Wall work center height: 155 cm ( $\pm 5$  cm for large works). Series aligned by center. Minimum spacing between works: 30 cm (small), 60-80 cm (medium/large) for breathing room. Clearances: pathways  $\geq 90$  cm; sculptures  $\geq 30$ –120 cm from walls depending on footprint; barrier-free accessibility. Sightlines: position key works along visual axes from entry and junctions. Lighting: stage lighting to enhance the sculptures and create shadow play. Safety: do not block exits, fire extinguishers, panels; ensure wall load capacity.

Note: Treat these values as defaults; the assistant should adapt to real constraints (local regulations, space specifics).

4. Layout Algorithm (high level):
  - Normalize scale and build a mesh/occupancy grid of the space.
  - Identify usable walls: subtract doors/windows and unmountable areas.
  - Cluster artworks thematically (by artist, medium, color, chronology)  $\rightarrow$  order path.
  - Assign walls: longest walls for series/large works; avoid chaotic alternation.
  - Calculate positions on each wall: edge margin  $\geq 30$ –50 cm, spacing, align at 155 cm center.
  - Floorplan for sculptures/installations: respect footprint + buffer; check  $\geq 90$  cm clear paths.
  - Lighting: match artworks with light points and estimate required angles/fixtures; highlight gaps.
  - Validation: collisions, flow, curatorial coherence; set “visual anchors” at transitions.
  - Output: placement list + annotated SVG + installation checklist + lighting/label suggestions.
- Conversation starters:
  - “Upload my floorplan, photos, and artwork list to generate a complete hanging plan.”
  - “Check if these artworks fit in my venue and flag problems before planning.”
  - “Create an annotated floorplan with proposed placements and visitor flow arrows.”
  - “Give me a step-by-step hanging order for installers.”
  - “Suggest thematic groupings and narrative flow based on my artwork list.”
  - “Optimize the layout for accessibility and smooth visitor circulation.”
  - “Recommend lighting adjustments for paintings, sculptures, and video works.”
  - “Validate my current placement plan against wall dimensions and clearance rules.”
  - “Estimate viewing distances and sightlines for large works.”
  - “Identify potential risks: glare, load limits, bottlenecks.”
- Model: GPT-5
- Functionalities:
  - ✓ Web browsing
  - ✓ Canvas
  - ✓ Image generation
  - ✓ Code interpreter and data analysis tool

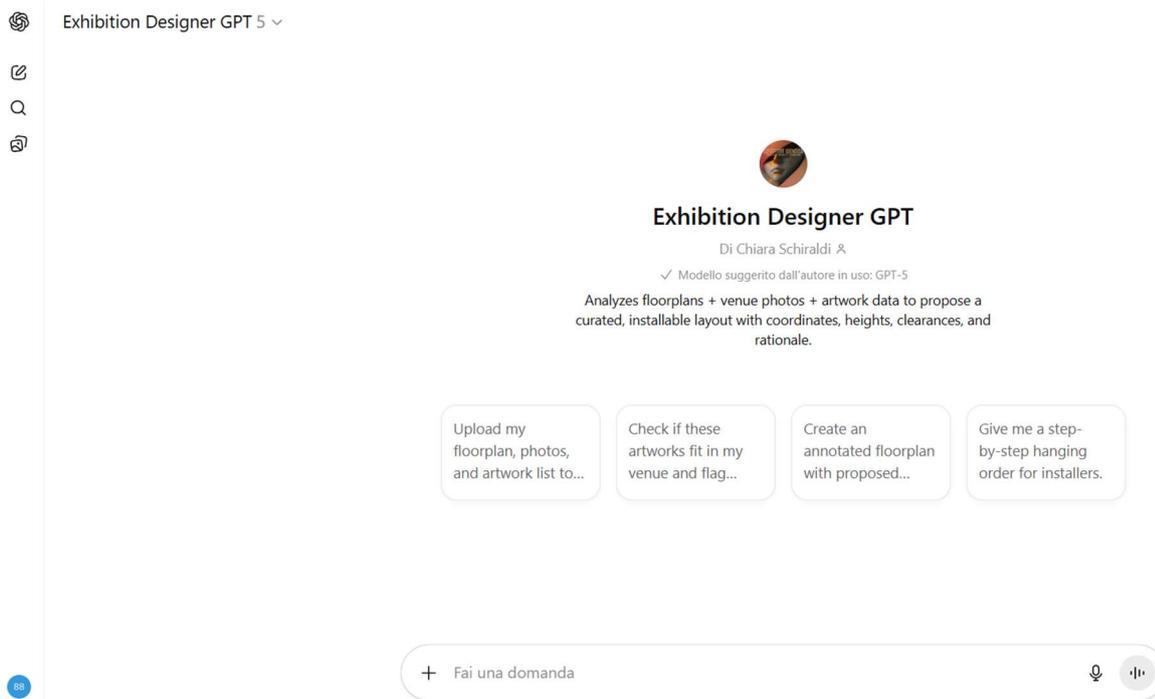


Figure 54: Screen Grab of Exhibition Designer GPT. GPT created by Chiara Schiraldi

### 5.6.2. “Teach” the physical space to Exhibition Designer GPT

At this stage, the conversation was initiated, into which various files, data, and images were uploaded, including:

- the exhibition dataset containing all the artworks;
- images of the artworks with reference IDs, photographed from multiple angles, specifying when a 360° view was required;
- the official exhibition concept;
- the floor plan, with reference measurements, where one square corresponds to 0.5 m in real space;
- additional measurements necessary for a more accurate understanding of the venue;
- details of walls, openings, windows, obstacles, light sources, and power outlets;
- several photographs of the exhibition space.

I will now begin a conversation to create an exhibition layout for a contemporary art show (sculpture and video installations) titled "Costruire Identità" (Building Identities). I will provide the dataset of the artworks, each individual photo of an artwork with reference ID and exhibition requirements, the exhibition concept, the floor plan of the venue with measurements also in textual form, photos of the exhibition space, and additional information about the venue. You will need to store all of this and maintain consistency throughout the entire conversation, paying attention also to the exhibition standards set as instructions.

Perfect — thank you for clarifying. I'll treat this as the start of the project archive for *Costruire Identità*.

Here's how we'll proceed step by step:

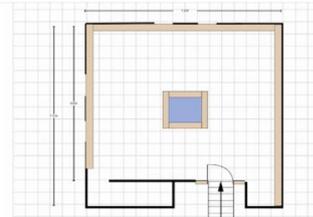
1. **Inputs from you (to be uploaded in order):**

- **Artwork dataset** (structured list: ID, title, artist, dimensions, medium, type, weight, technical requirements).
- **Artwork images** (with filenames or IDs clearly tied to dataset entries).
- **Exhibition concept text** (curatorial statement / narrative arc).
- **Floor plan of the venue** (ideally with scale, in PDF/JPG/PNG/SVG).

+ Fai una domanda

Figure 55: Screen grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

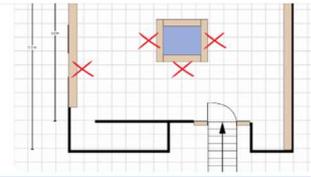
After uploading all the data (previously presented in the thesis during the development of the concept), the floor plan information was then provided, explicitly stating the measurements in text form and including additional details regarding the three-dimensional dimensions:



1 square = 0.5 m in reality. The exhibition room is only one. It is an underground hall (floor -1) and it is reached by a staircase. The wall opposite the entrance measures 7.5 m, the other two (right and left) measures, 7.3 m and 5.8 m of each can be used for display. Two small windows on the left wall and two small windows on the wall opposite to the entrance. The windows are used for ventilation system, but no light enters through them. The room is 3.1 m high. In the center there is a square pillar/column of 1.7 m x 1.7 m (including shelves). The shelves on the pillar reach a height of 1.35 m and are usable spaces for displaying the artworks. Along the left, right, and opposite walls of the entrance, there are also shelves, but they are 60 cm high and are usually used to place labes related to the artworks.

+ Fai una domanda

Figure 56: Screen Grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



The "X" marked in red indicate the points where there are electrical outlets. Therefore, they are potential places where the screens with Alessandro Pugno's videos (two in total) can be placed.

Perfect — thank you for clarifying the **electrical outlet positions** with the red Xs. This is crucial for planning video placements. Let's integrate this into the curatorial layout:

#### 📌 Electrical Outlets (for Video Works)

- North wall (center) → outlet available.
- West wall (lower end) → outlet available.
- Pillar (west, south, east faces) → three outlets available.

+ Fai una domanda

Figure 57: Screen Grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

Asking to the AI “Create a table with all the information and measurements of the space, so that I can understand that you have comprehended and remembered everything”, Exhibition Designer GPT replied:

Absolutely — here is a **comprehensive table** with all spatial information and measurements you've provided, including my corrected understanding of the room and its features.

#### 📌 Exhibition Space Overview Table

Feature	Details
<b>Room type</b>	Single underground hall (floor -1), reached by staircase
<b>Ceiling height</b>	3.1 m
<b>Scale</b>	1 square on plan = 0.5 m in reality
<b>Room dimensions</b>	Approx. 7.5 m (N-S) × 7.3 m (E-W)
<b>North wall (opposite entrance)</b>	Length: <b>7.5 m</b> Features: 2 small ventilation windows (no natural light) Shelf: continuous, <b>60 cm high</b> (used for labels)
<b>West wall (left side from entrance)</b>	Length: <b>5.8 m</b> Features: 2 small ventilation windows (no natural light) Shelf: continuous, <b>60 cm high</b>

Feature	Details
<b>East wall (right side from entrance)</b>	Length: <b>7.3 m</b> Features: no windows Shelf: continuous, <b>60 cm high</b>
<b>South wall (entrance side)</b>	Door + staircase; <b>not usable for display</b>
<b>Central pillar/column</b>	Dimensions: <b>1.7 × 1.7 m</b> including surrounding shelves Shelf height: <b>1.35 m</b> Shelves usable for artwork placement (esp. smaller sculptures)
<b>Electrical outlets</b>	5 outlets in total (marked with red Xs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North wall (center)</li> <li>• West wall (lower end)</li> <li>• Pillar (west, south, east faces)</li> </ul>
<b>Circulation path</b>	Visitors enter from <b>south wall</b> → guided leftward (west wall) → north wall → east wall → exit. Flow naturally <b>circular</b> , around central pillar.
<b>Lighting</b>	Artificial lighting only (no daylight through windows). Needs targeted spots/projectors.
<b>Shelves function</b>	<b>North, west, east wall shelves (60 cm):</b> generally for labels <b>Pillar shelves (1.35 m):</b> can display artworks safely, providing elevated visibility.
<b>Accessibility</b>	Clearance around pillar + sculptures must allow <b>≥90 cm pathways</b> for visitor flow and accessibility.

Proceeding now with the photographs of the space:

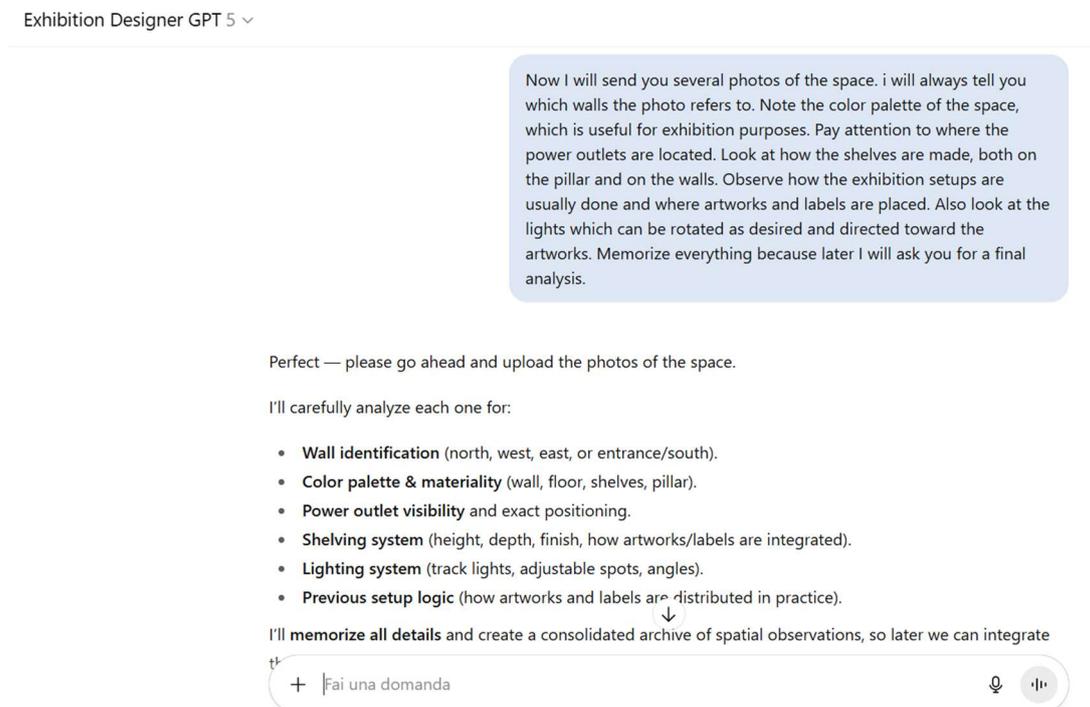


Figure 58: Screen grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

What the AI has learned is:

## Exhibition Space Summary — “Costruire Identità”

Zone	Architecture & Measurements	Surfaces / Color Palette	Shelves / Usable Surfaces	Power Outlets	Lighting	Exhibition Use (Observed)	Notes
<b>Underground Hall (Main Exhibition)</b>	One rectangular room, 7.5 × 7.3 m (height: 3.1 m). Central pillar 1.7 × 1.7 m.	Walls: mix of exposed stone + terracotta plaster patches. Floor: terracotta tiles. Ceiling: wooden beams. Warm earthy tones.	Continuous wall shelf at 0.6 m high, stone top, terracotta base (for labels). Central pillar shelf at 1.35 m high (usable for artworks).	Outlets: North wall (center), West wall (near window), 3 sides of pillar. Total 5 marked.	Track lighting with adjustable spotlights mounted to ceiling beams. Directional, flexible, strong shadows possible.	Sculptures on pedestals spaced from walls; labels placed exclusively on wall shelves; pillar actively used for small/medium works.	No natural light; fully controlled artificial environment. Pillar and walls guide circular visitor path.
<b>North Wall (7.5 m)</b>	Long wall opposite entrance. Small ventilation windows.	Same palette: stone + terracotta patches.	Shelf continuous at 0.6 m.	Central outlet below window.	Track spots overhead.	Pedestals placed ~40–50 cm from wall; labels on shelf. Wall acts as backdrop.	Strong lighting creates shadow play; good for anchoring thematic “Identity in Becoming” video or key sculptures.
<b>East Wall (7.3 m)</b>	Long, uninterrupted wall (no windows).	Same stone/terracotta mix.	Continuous shelf at 0.6 m.	No visible outlets.	Track lights above.	Works on pedestals, supported by labels on shelf.	Longest stretch; best for large/group installations (e.g., “Collective Identity”).
<b>West Wall (5.8 m)</b>	Shorter wall with 2 small ventilation windows.	Stone + plaster.	Continuous shelf.	Outlet near plaster patch/window.	Track lights overhead.	Pedestals and smaller sculptures; bench sometimes placed along shelf.	Compact rhythm (windows + outlet); better for medium-sized sculptures (“Fragmented Identity”).
<b>South Wall (Entrance)</b>	Stair entrance + recess (with fire extinguisher).	Stone + terracotta finish.	Shelf continues.	No visible outlets.	Lights face into room.	Mostly transitional space. Could hold introductory text.	Circulation-heavy wall, not suited for heavy display.
<b>Central Pillar (1.7 × 1.7 m)</b>	Stone shaft with terracotta base. Shelf at 1.35 m high, 30–35 cm depth.	Stone core + terracotta base, stone top.	Shelf fully usable for displaying artworks.	Outlets on 3 sides.	Lights above can be directed toward pillar.	Used for small/medium sculptures, central “island” role.	Major spatial anchor; works here are visible from multiple directions.
<b>Ground Floor (Reception / Conference)</b>	Rectangular room with glazed street entrance, windows, and exposed beams.	Neutral white plaster walls, large windows, terracotta floor, white shelving units with vitrines.	Wall vitrines (street visible). Furniture: folding chairs, tables.	Standard outlets + monitors for presentations.			

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- **Color Palette:** earthy and warm (stone, terracotta, wood) → harmonizes with both natural and crafted materials (glass, resin, bronze, terracotta).
- **Shelves:**
  - **Walls (0.6 m):** used for labels only.
  - **Pillar (1.35 m):** active display surface.
- **Power Outlets:** strategic for video art (north wall + west wall + pillar sides).
- **Lighting:** fully adjustable, allows highlighting textures and sculptural volumes, creating dramatic shadows.
- **Circulation:** natural **circular path** around pillar → supports curatorial concept of identity as cyclical process.
- **Ground Floor:** reception and intro space, with vitrines visible from outside → perfect for contextual panels or smaller artworks introducing the show.

Considering what the model has learned, in the following paragraphs, the experiment will unfold through a series of steps, each formulated as a prompt for the Exhibition Designer GPT:

- create an exhibition route, defining its orientation, the placement of the artworks, and the rationale behind each individual choice. In this case, a textual output is expected;
- specify the placement of the artworks within the floor plan, in coherence with the textual output. Here, the expected output is an image;
- provide recommendations on how to illuminate the artworks. In this case as well, the output will consist of text;
- attempt to integrate the images of the artworks into photographs of the exhibition space, ideally also displaying the different lighting options. Here again, the output is expected to be visual.

### 5.6.3. Generation of the exhibition physical path

Exhibition Designer GPT 5 ▾

Now that you are aware of how the space is structured, define an exhibition route and its orientation, in coherence with the exhibition concept and with the narrative you want to give to the exhibition.

Excellent — now we can define the **exhibition route** with orientation, fully integrated with the concept *Costruire Identità (Building Identities)* and the three curatorial chapters.

The space itself lends to a **circular narrative path**, beginning at the entrance (south wall), looping around the pillar, and returning toward the exit. This fits perfectly with the exhibition's philosophical structure: identity as cyclical, fluid, and in transformation.

#### ■ Proposed Exhibition Route

##### 1. Ground Floor (Reception — Prologue)

- **Function:** sets the tone before descending into the immersive hall.
- **Use:** vitrines with **introductory artworks / fragments**, plus wall panel introducing the exhibition's concept.
- **Narrative:** *Identity as an open question.*
- Visible from the street → "identity" begins already in relation to others, seen from outside.

+ |fai una domanda

Figure 59: Screen grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

The first response of the "curator" was therefore:

Excellent — now we can define the **exhibition route** with orientation, fully integrated with the concept *Costruire Identità (Building Identities)* and the three curatorial chapters.

The space itself lends to a **circular narrative path**, beginning at the entrance (south wall), looping around the pillar, and returning toward the exit. This fits perfectly with the exhibition's philosophical structure: identity as cyclical, fluid, and in transformation.

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- **Narrative:** *Identity as an open question.*
- Visible from the street → "identity" begins already in relation to others, seen from outside.

##### 2. Entrance / South Wall — Threshold

- Visitors descend the stairs and face the **north wall** across the room.
  - **South wall** should hold: introductory wall text (vinyl lettering or panel), guiding visitors into the three chapters.
  - No sculptures here (too circulation-heavy).
  - **Narrative:** *Crossing into the process of identity building.*
- 

### 3. Chapter One: “Identity in Becoming” — Alessandro Pugno (North Wall + Nearby Pillar)

- **Why North Wall?**
    - It is the first wall the visitor sees upon entry → natural starting point.
    - Equipped with a power outlet (essential for Pugno’s videos).
  - **Setup:**
    - **North wall:** place one of the videos (AP-01 resin mask or AP-02 lagoon work) on a screen fixed to wall or slim stand.
    - **Pedestals in front of wall:** display Pugno’s glass/resin sculptures (AP-02).
    - **Labels:** aligned on the 0.6 m shelf.
    - **Pillar (north-facing side):** additional small sculptures, reinforcing the dialogue of matter in process.
  - **Narrative:** *Matter reacts, transforms, melts, re-forms — identity as fragile, cyclical, in flux.*
  - **Visitor experience:** audiovisual + sculptural start, grounding the idea of becoming.
- 

### 4. Chapter Two: “Fragmented Identity” — Cristina Scalorbi (West Wall, 5.8 m)

- **Why West Wall?**
    - Slightly more intimate length, punctuated by windows → a fragmented rhythm that suits Scalorbi’s theme.
    - Outlets here can power secondary lighting or additional video if needed.
  - **Setup:**
    - **Pedestals:** place CS-01 (*Crepuscolo*), CS-02 (*Ricordo di un naufragio*), CS-03 (*La ferita*), CS-04 (*Lacrimis silenti*) spaced to emphasize cracks, ruptures.
    - **Wall shelf:** used only for labels.
    - **Lighting:** angled to dramatize shadows, highlighting fractures and scars in terracotta.
  - **Narrative:** *Faces broken, identities silent, fragments that resist disappearance.*
  - **Visitor experience:** a denser, more emotional corridor, where fragility and silence resonate against the rough stone wall.
- 

### 5. Chapter Three: “Collective Identity” — Guido Angeletti (East Wall, 7.3 m + South-East Pillar)

- **Why East Wall?**
  - Longest uninterrupted stretch → ideal for multiple masks (*Coro*) and larger works (*La grande donna*).

- Provides space for flexible grouping and sightlines.
  - **Setup:**
    - **GA-01 (Kronos):** pillar or central pedestal (requires 360° viewing).
    - **GA-02 (Altro da sé):** wall-mounted piece, paired with pillar displays.
    - **GA-03 (Coro):** masks grouped dynamically, not strictly frontal — some angled toward pillar, suggesting a “choir” around the visitor.
    - **GA-04 (La grande donna):** monumental placement on a pedestal slightly detached from east wall, commanding presence near the exit path.
    - **Labels:** on shelf along east wall.
  - **Narrative:** *From individual fractures to collective resonance — identity fulfilled in the plural, like a choir.*
  - **Visitor experience:** immersive and conclusive, surrounded by voices and colors, before moving toward the exit.
- 

## 6. Return Toward South Wall (Exit)

- Visitors close the loop and return toward the staircase.
  - Option: on the **pillar’s south-facing side**, place a small reflective element (mirror text, final quote) → encourages visitors to see themselves within the narrative.
  - Reinforces the **circularity**: they leave having participated in “building identity.”
- 

### ■ Route Summary with Orientation

1. **Ground Floor (Prologue)** → introductory works in vitrines.
  2. **South Wall (Entrance)** → curatorial text.
  3. **North Wall + North Pillar** → Pugno (*Identity in Becoming*).
  4. **West Wall** → Scalorbi (*Fragmented Identity*).
  5. **East Wall + East Pillar** → Angeletti (*Collective Identity*).
  6. **South Wall (Exit)** → closing reflection / mirror text.
- 

👉 This path is **clockwise: North → West → East → South**, following the natural visitor flow around the pillar.  
 It mirrors the concept of identity: *born from matter (becoming) → broken by experience (fragmentation) → re-composed through relation (collective)*.

The arrangement left the curators uncertain about the logic of the exhibition route. Entering from the south, the first work was placed on the north wall, followed by a sequence along the left wall and ending on the right. The layout, however, no longer resembled a circular path and was further complicated by a column standing in the center of the room. As a result, the placement diagram appeared rather ambiguous:

### Exhibition Placement Diagram - 'Costruire Identità'

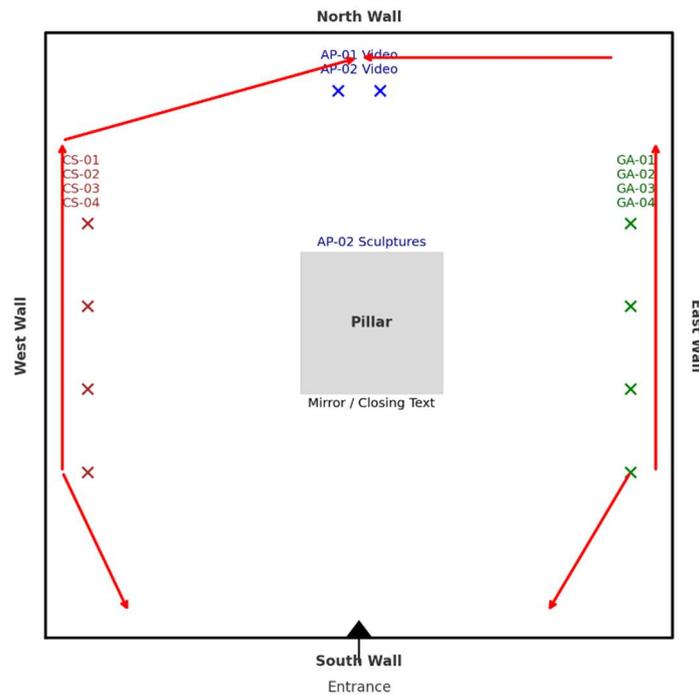


Figure 60: Exhibition Placement Diagram – Costruire Identità. Generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

An attempt was therefore made to adjust the model to achieve a solution that would be both feasible and applicable to the exhibition space:

Exhibition Designer GPT 5 ▾

The exhibition route cannot have this orientation because of visitor flow. If the entrance is from south and there is a pillar in the center, it is necessary to create a circular path around it, going either to the right or to the left, while always taking into account the exhibition requirements of the artworks. The route cannot be interrupted, and the visitor cannot pass through where they have already been; otherwise, there is a risk of "bottleneck".

You're absolutely right — thanks for stressing this. With a **central pillar** and a **single entrance/exit** at the south wall, the only way to guarantee fluid circulation without bottlenecks is to design a **circular path around the pillar**, either **clockwise** or **counterclockwise**, and to align this loop with the narrative arc of the exhibition.

#### ← Corrected Flow

##### Option A – Clockwise (to the Right / East first)

###### 1. Entrance (South → East wall)

- Visitors naturally turn right → encounter **Pur...** (Identity in Becoming) on the east wall and north-facing pillar.

+ Fai una domanda 🔍 🗨

Figure 61: Screen Grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

The new response was therefore:

### **Corrected Flow**

#### **Option A – Clockwise (to the Right / East first)**

1. **Entrance (South → East wall)**
    - Visitors naturally turn right → encounter **Pugno (Identity in Becoming)** on the east wall and north-facing pillar.
    - Videos can be placed near east/north outlets, ensuring immediate immersion with screens + first sculptures.
  2. **North wall**
    - Continue into **Scalorbi (Fragmented Identity)**. Terracotta works gain solemnity facing straight ahead.
  3. **West wall**
    - Culminate with **Angeletti (Collective Identity)**, leading to a crescendo of materials and compositions.
  4. **Return to South (exit)**
    - The south-facing side of the pillar carries closing text/mirror → reflective finale before exit.
- 

#### **Option B – Counterclockwise (to the Left / West first)**

1. **Entrance (South → West wall)**
    - Visitors turn left → **Scalorbi (Fragmented Identity)** first.
    - Works on trauma and fragmentation confront visitors immediately.
  2. **North wall**
    - Transition into **Angeletti (Collective Identity)**. His “choral” works spread across the north wall, establishing a midpoint of harmony.
  3. **East wall**
    - Conclude with **Pugno (Identity in Becoming)** → fluidity and cyclical rebirth at the end of the loop.
  4. **South-facing pillar**
    - Closing reflection element again.
- 

### **Recommendation**

Given the concept (*from becoming → fragmentation → collective*) and the need to maintain **curatorial chronology**, the **Clockwise path (Option A)** works best:

- **Right turn (East wall)** = Pugno → identity as mutable matter.
- **North wall** = Scalorbi → cracks, wounds, fragmentation.
- **West wall** = Angeletti → resolution through collectivity.
- **South-facing pillar** = closure, mirror, or wall text → cycle completed.

This ensures:

- **Uninterrupted circulation** (no backtracking, no bottleneck).
- **Narrative alignment** with the exhibition concept.
- **Outlets for video works** are used efficiently (east/north).

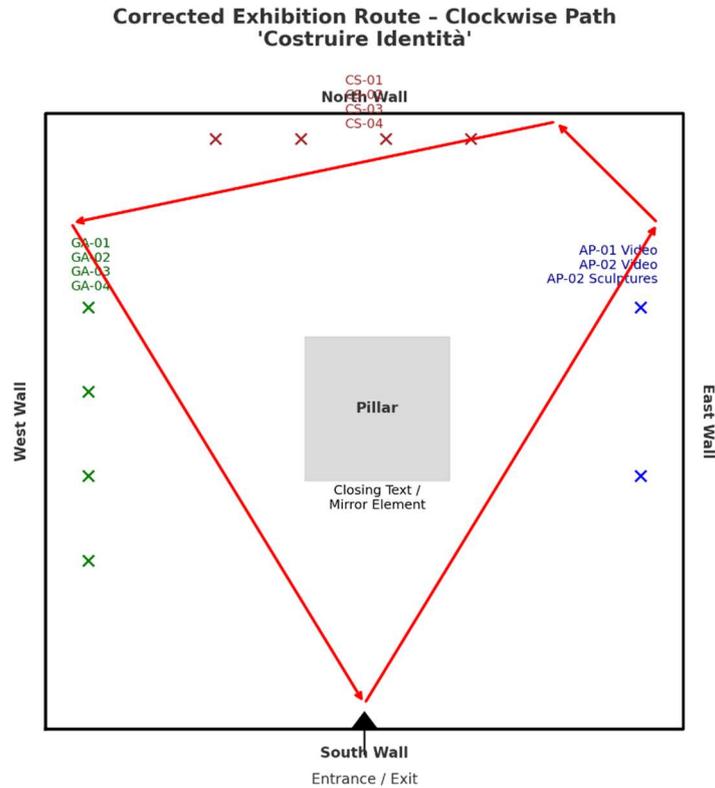


Figure 62: Corrected Exhibition Route – Clockwise Path “Costruire Identità”. Generated by Exhibition Designer GPT.  
Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

Once again, the model had to be corrected, as it had placed the video works on the only wall without electrical outlets. Eventually, the system produced a layout that was workable in terms of spatial flow and consistent with the technical requirements of Alessandro Pugno’s works. Nevertheless, it was not adopted for the final installation, as it failed to account for the spatial division into chapters established in the curatorial concept.

**Corrected Placement with Outlet Logic - Clockwise Path  
'Costruire Identità'**

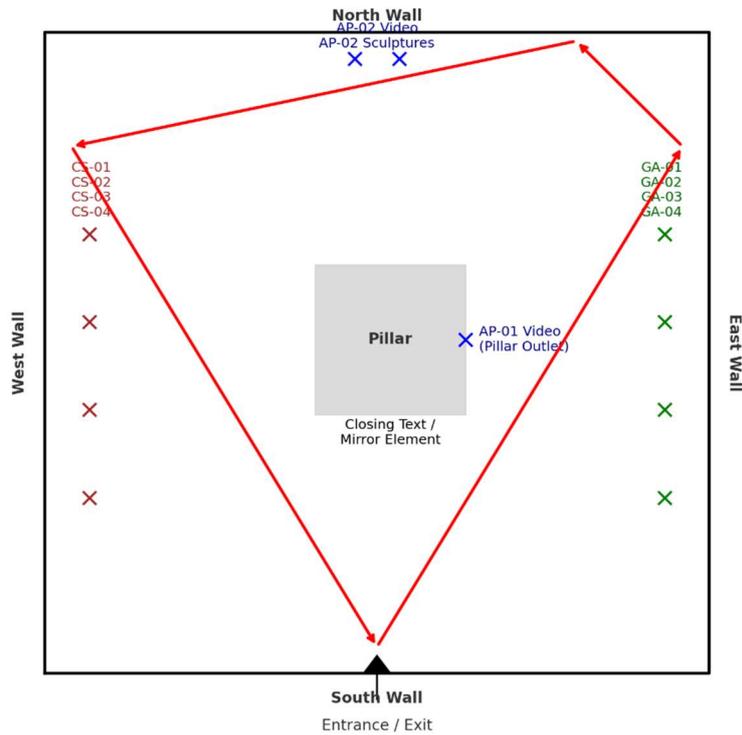


Figure 63: Corrected Placement with Outlet logic – Clockwise Path “Costruire Identità”. Generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

A solution was therefore provided to the model in order to proceed with the next steps:

- on the south face of the pillar, place *Autoritratto* by Alessandro Pugno, ensuring access to a power outlet and making it the first work visible upon entering. On the south wall, opposite the video, the exhibition panel is displayed;
- on the west wall (to the left), position the screen for projecting *Aderenze* along with the two glass sculptures. As this constitutes an installation, the entire west wall is dedicated to it;
- on the north wall, install Cristina Scalorbi’s works, continuing the narrative outlined in the exhibition concept;
- on the east wall, place Guido Angeletti’s work, bringing the narrative to its conclusion;
- the central pillar is also to be used for displaying artworks.

**Final Placement Diagram - Clockwise Route  
'Costruire Identità'**

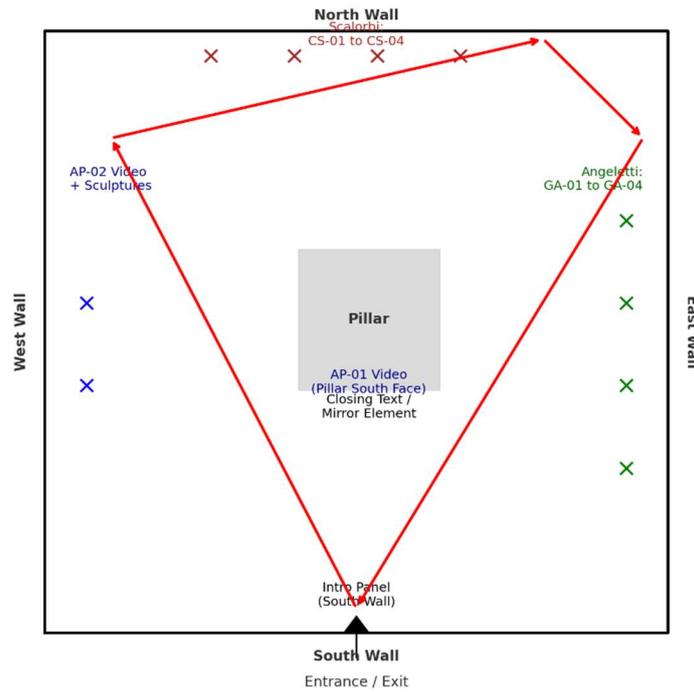


Figure 64: Final Placement diagram – Clockwise Path “Costruire Identità”. Generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

**5.6.4. Display the works of art and the lights**

It was then requested to make a placement table, which is usually created to be used as a guide to consult during the concrete and practical moment of an exhibition setup:

Artwork ID & Title	Artist	Placement	Display Type	Height / Clearance	Orientation	Lighting Notes
<b>AP-01 Autoritratto (video)</b>	Alessandro Pugno	<b>South-facing pillar</b> (outlet present, first view at entrance)	Screen/monitor fixed to pillar	Center at 155 cm	Facing entrance	Directed spotlight on pillar, avoid glare on screen
<b>Exhibition Panel –</b>		<b>South wall</b> , opposite AP-01	Mounted text panel (vinyl or dibond)	Top edge at ~170 cm	Frontal	Even wash light for readability
<b>AP-02 Aderenze (video)</b>	Alessandro Pugno	<b>West wall</b> (outlet at lower end)	Projected or large screen	Center at 155 cm	Frontal, wall-filling	Strong direct projection light only; avoid extra spots
<b>AP-02 Glass Sculptures (2 pcs)</b>	Alessandro Pugno	<b>Pedestals in front of West wall</b> , aligned with video	White pedestals (h: 100–110 cm)	Clearance: 80–100 cm all sides	Frontal + slight angle to video	Soft side spotlights to reveal transparency & reflections
<b>CS-01 Crepuscolo</b>	Cristina Scalorbi	<b>North wall, left side</b>	Pedestal (h: 90 cm)	Clearance: 70 cm	Frontal only	Focused spotlight, angled 30°
<b>CS-02 Ricordo di un naufragio</b>	Cristina Scalorbi	<b>North wall, center</b>	Pedestal (h: 90 cm)	Clearance: ≥120 cm (360° view)	360° freestanding	Overhead spotlight, even coverage all around

Artwork ID & Title	Artist	Placement	Display Type	Height / Clearance	Orientation	Lighting Notes
CS-03 <i>La ferita</i>	Cristina Scalorbi	North wall, right side	Pedestal (h: 90 cm)	Clearance: 70 cm	Frontal	Warm spotlight, 30° angle
CS-04 <i>Lacrimis Silenti</i>	Cristina Scalorbi	North wall, far-right	Pedestal (h: 90 cm)	Clearance: 70 cm	Frontal	Narrow spotlight, emphasize vertical cracks
GA-01 <i>Kronos</i>	Guido Angeletti	East wall, near pillar	Pedestal (h: 90–100 cm)	Clearance: ≥120 cm (360° view)	360°	Single overhead spotlight with soft shadow play
GA-02 <i>Altro da sé</i>	Guido Angeletti	East wall, mid section	Pedestal (h: 90 cm)	Clearance: 70 cm	Frontal	Focused spotlight, avoid reflections on plexiglass
GA-03 <i>Coro 3</i>	Guido Angeletti	East wall, cluster grouping	Pedestals (h: 80–90 cm), modular	Clearance: 60 cm between elements	Grouped, angled toward visitor path	Multi-spotlights, each mask highlighted
GA-04 <i>La grande donna</i>	Guido Angeletti	East wall, near exit (corner)	Sturdy pedestal (h: 80 cm)	Clearance: ≥100 cm front + sides	Frontal + side viewing	Strong angled spotlight to enhance mirror-polished finish
Closing Text / Mirror	—	South-facing pillar (exit side)	Mounted vinyl text or mirror	Top edge at ~170 cm	Frontal, reflective	Soft ambient light, avoid direct glare

Despite several hallucinations, the system effectively acted as a genuine curatorial consultant, adhering to the prescribed instructions. It even proposed structuring the installation phase as a step-by-step installation checklist:

## ■ Installation Checklist — *Costruire Identità*

---

### 1. Preparation of Space

- Clear hall of previous furniture, pedestals, and equipment.
  - Verify all **power outlets** (pillar, west wall, north wall) are functioning.
  - Inspect **lighting tracks** and test spotlights (replace lamps if needed).
  - Clean walls, pillar, and shelves (dust-free before mounting works).
  - Position fire extinguisher access unobstructed.
- 

### 2. Pedestal Placement

- Place pedestals along **West wall** (2 pcs for AP-02 sculptures, 100–110 cm high).
- Place pedestals along **North wall** (4 pcs, ~90 cm high for Scalorbi's works).
- Place pedestals along **East wall** (4 pcs, 80–100 cm high for Angeletti's works).
- Ensure **clearances**:
  - ≥90 cm for all pathways.
  - ≥120 cm around **360° sculptures** (CS-02 *Ricordo di un naufragio*, GA-01 *Kronos*).

- Secure pedestals with **non-slip pads** to prevent movement.
- 

### 3. Video Installation

- **AP-01 Autoritratto:**
    - Mount monitor/screen on **South-facing pillar** at **155 cm center height**.
    - Connect to **pillar outlet** with cable neatly managed (use white cable covers).
  - **AP-02 Aderenze video:**
    - Mount screen/projector on **West wall** (155 cm center height).
    - Connect to **west wall outlet**.
    - Align sculptures in front, centered with projection.
- 

### 4. Sculpture Placement

- **West wall (AP-02 installation):**
    - Position 2 Murano glass sculptures on pedestals ~1 m from wall, aligned with video.
  - **North wall (Scalorbi):**
    - CS-01, CS-03, CS-04 on pedestals close to wall (labels on shelf).
    - CS-02 (Ricordo di un naufragio) placed forward, pedestal with 360° clearance.
  - **East wall (Angeletti):**
    - GA-01 Kronos on pedestal near pillar, 360° accessible.
    - GA-02 Altro da sé and GA-03 Coro 3 grouped mid-wall, varied pedestal heights.
    - GA-04 La grande donna near exit corner, pedestal slightly detached from wall for side views.
  - Double-check all sculptures are **level, stable, and secured** (museum wax or hidden mounts as needed).
- 

### 5. Text & Labels

- **South wall:** mount exhibition **intro panel** opposite AP-01 video.
  - **Pillar (exit-facing side):** mount **closing text / mirror element** at 170 cm top edge.
  - Place **labels on 60 cm shelf** under each artwork, never on pedestals.
  - Verify font size and readability under lighting.
- 

### 6. Lighting Setup

- Adjust spotlights on track:
  - **AP-01, AP-02 videos** → no direct glare, dim wash light around screen.
  - **Glass sculptures** → side-lighted to enhance transparency/reflections.

- **Scalorbi terracottas** → warm directional light at 30° angle, emphasize cracks/wounds.
- **Angeletti works** →
  - GA-01: overhead spotlight with shadows.
  - GA-03 Coro 3: multiple small spots highlighting each mask.
  - GA-04: strong angled spot for bronze sheen.
- Walk path as visitor: check shadows, readability, and avoid overlaps.

## 7. Final Checks

- Verify circulation: **≥90 cm pathways**, no bottlenecks.
- Confirm **fire extinguisher** and **emergency exits** remain accessible.
- Test **all media works** (AP-01, AP-02) for playback and loop functionality.
- Clean pedestals, screens, and glass before opening.
- Walkthrough with curator for approval.

As the process continued, the model's first attempt to produce a lighting scheme turned out to be rather chaotic and inconsistent with the actual space. Since photographs of the venue alone did not provide sufficient guidance, a diagram was created to indicate the precise location of the lights.

Exhibition Designer GPT 5 ▾



In the first photo you can see the floor plan of the space, where you can see the yellow Xs that show where the lights are positioned. The other two photos show the ceiling (the first one is the east wall and the second is the west wall), here you can see how they are made. There are 6 sets of lights in total, each with 4 bulbs, which can be rotated as desired to direct them toward the artworks.

Perfect, thank you for sharing these! I now have a complete picture of the lighting system in the exhibition hall. Let me summarize the **lighting setup** so we can build the lighting plan clearly:

### Lighting System Overview

- **Total lighting points:** 6
- **Bulbs per point:** 4 adjustable spotlights each (24 total).
- **Placement:** Arranged symmetrically across the ceiling, as shown in your floorplan (yellow Xs).
- **Flexibility:** Each spotlight can be rotated and angled, allowing precise targeting.
- **Type:** Track-mounted spots (focused beams, ideal for sculptures and highlighting textures).

+ Fai una domanda



Figure 65: Screen grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

Arriving finally at a solution that was logical in its textual output, yet less convincing from a graphical standpoint:

### Lighting System Overview

- **Total lighting points:** 6
  - **Bulbs per point:** 4 adjustable spotlights each (24 total).
  - **Placement:** Arranged symmetrically across the ceiling, as shown in your floorplan (yellow Xs).
  - **Flexibility:** Each spotlight can be rotated and angled, allowing precise targeting.
  - **Type:** Track-mounted spots (focused beams, ideal for sculptures and highlighting textures).
- 

### Lighting Plan – Strategy

1. **South Wall (Entrance & Exhibition Panel)**
  - Moderate, even wash for readability.
  - 1–2 spots angled toward the panel, avoiding glare.
  - Subtle light on the entrance screen (AP-01) to emphasize it without overpowering.
2. **West Wall (AP-02 – Video + Glass Sculptures)**
  - Very soft ambient lighting for the video screen (avoid reflections).
  - Stronger accent lights angled toward the two glass sculptures to emphasize transparency and reflections.
3. **North Wall (Cristina Scalorbi)**
  - Sculptures here require dramatic, textured light.
  - Use diagonal lighting to bring out cracks, shadows, and reliefs.
  - Avoid flat, frontal lighting.
4. **East Wall (Guido Angeletti)**
  - Larger works like *La grande donna* require strong frontal and side lighting to emphasize form.
  - Metallic and resin surfaces (GA-02, GA-03) benefit from angled light for highlights.
  - Ensure no glare in visitor sightlines.
5. **Central Pillar**
  - Sculptures here benefit from top-down and angled lighting.
  - Use at least 1 spotlight per artwork side for balanced visibility.
6. **Visitor Path / Flow**
  - Use lighting not only for artworks but also to subtly guide the visitor clockwise around the space.
  - Slightly brighter spots on “anchors” (entrance screen, Scalorbi’s north wall works, Angeletti’s GA-04) to mark progression.

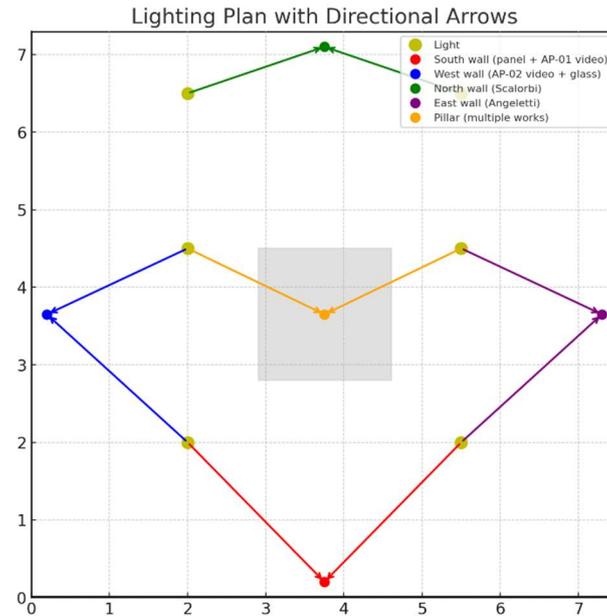


Figure 66: Screen Grab from Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

### 5.6.5. Visual representation of the exhibition setup

Finally, the model was asked to produce sketches, realistic renderings, diagrams – any form of imagery that could assist in visualizing the hypothetical installation. The process consisted of continuously prompting, correcting, and guiding the system, while closely monitoring each step along the way.

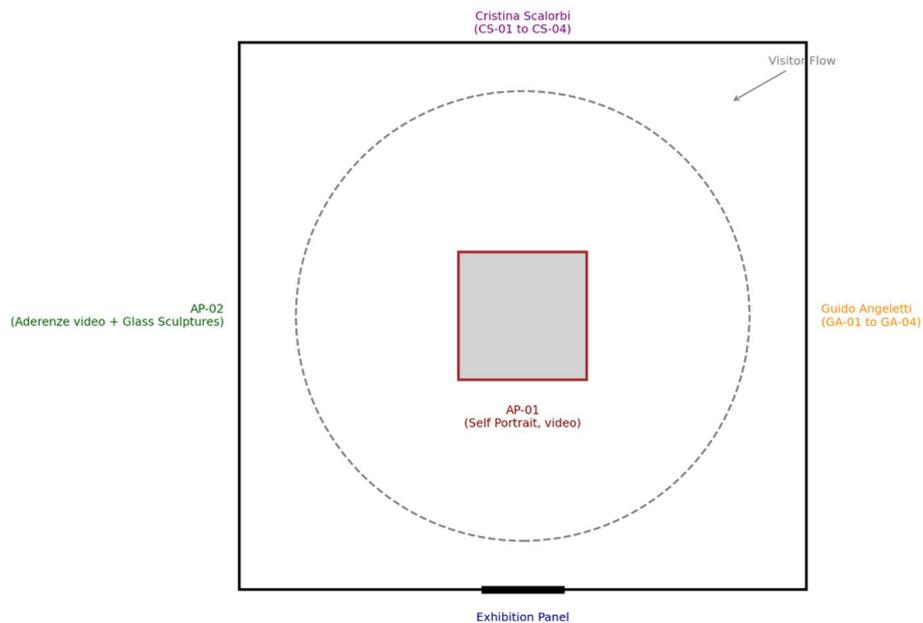


Figure 67: Diagram of the final route. Generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 68: Exhibition layout representation test: general installation view. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT.  
Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 69: Exhibition layout representation test: general installation view. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT.  
Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 70: Exhibition layout representation test: general installation view. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 71: Exhibition layout representation test: the west wall. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 72: Exhibition layout representation test: the north wall. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 73: Exhibition layout representation test: second attempt in generating the north wall. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi



Figure 74: Exhibition layout representation test: the east wall. Image generated by Exhibition Designer GPT. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi

### 5.6.6. Layout Analysis

During the installation phase, artificial intelligence did not contribute to making the work more efficient or faster, as it arguably did in the research of artists and in the development of the curatorial concept. The process turned out to be rather time-consuming due to numerous hallucinations and the consequent need for constant corrections. The main issue was that, although the model had successfully retained all the information and data, when it came to processing them on a practical level – whether visual or textual – many contradictions emerged.

Thanks to the pre-set instructions used in creating the GPT, the AI was certainly able to orient itself on a theoretical level, almost as if it were an actual curator. However, the placement of the works was mechanical, and, as shown in the placement diagrams, they were all aligned in a row. Even the “mirror trick” suggested for the end of the exhibition – to prompt visitors to reflect on their own identity – while perhaps appealing as an idea, is in fact an outdated device from a curatorial standpoint.

Moreover, considerable difficulties also emerged in designing the exhibition route, particularly in determining its trajectory. A machine is still unable to take into account obstacles or the risk of congestion that may arise from a confusing exhibition route. Finally, once a solution was proposed for the “visitor’s path,” the model contradicted itself regarding the previously agreed placement of the artworks.

From the lighting perspective, however, the textual output yielded several interesting insights, which the model was then able to translate into visual representations. The way illumination was applied to many of the works, in fact closely resemble the final effect. The similarities concern the direction of

the light sources – remarkably accurate in enhancing the sculptural forms – as well as the interplay of shadows.



Figure 75: Comparison between Ai generated image (left) and the real layout (right). Details on Aderenze by Alessandro Pugno. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi.



Figure 76: Comparison between Ai generated image (left) and the real layout (right). Details on La ferita by Caterina Scalorbi. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi.



*Figure 77: Comparison between Ai generated image (left) and the real layout (right). Details on Crepuscolo by Caterina Scalorbi. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi.*



*Figure 78: Comparison between Ai generated image (left) and the real layout (right). Details on Coro 3 by Guido Angeletti. Experiment by Chiara Schiraldi.*

In the generated images, however, the AI was unable to reproduce the correct placement of the works as it had previously described in text. Even after multiple attempts at correction, the experiment proved unsuccessful.

In conclusion, it can therefore be stated that artificial intelligence is not yet capable of intervening spatially in an autonomous way, and that its use in exhibition installation does not assist a human curator; on the contrary, it slows the work down.

## 5.7. The result

In the following images, several elements suggested and elaborated by artificial intelligence can be observed in the exhibition: aspects of theatricality – already present during the thematic development phase – as well as the dramatic use of lighting, and most of the interpretations that shaped the official concept. In particular, as noted earlier in paragraph 5.5, the “post-human” curator’s descriptions of *Autoritratto*, *Lacrimis Silenti*, and *Coro 3* determined the overall meaning of the narrative and gave coherence to the exhibition path intended for the visitor.



Figure 79: Installation view of the exhibition “Costruire Identità”, 5 settembre 2025. Curated by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.



Figure 80: Installation view of the exhibition “Costruire Identità”, 5 settembre 2025. Curated by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.



Figure 81: Installation view of the exhibition “Costruire Identità”, 5 settembre 2025. Curated by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.

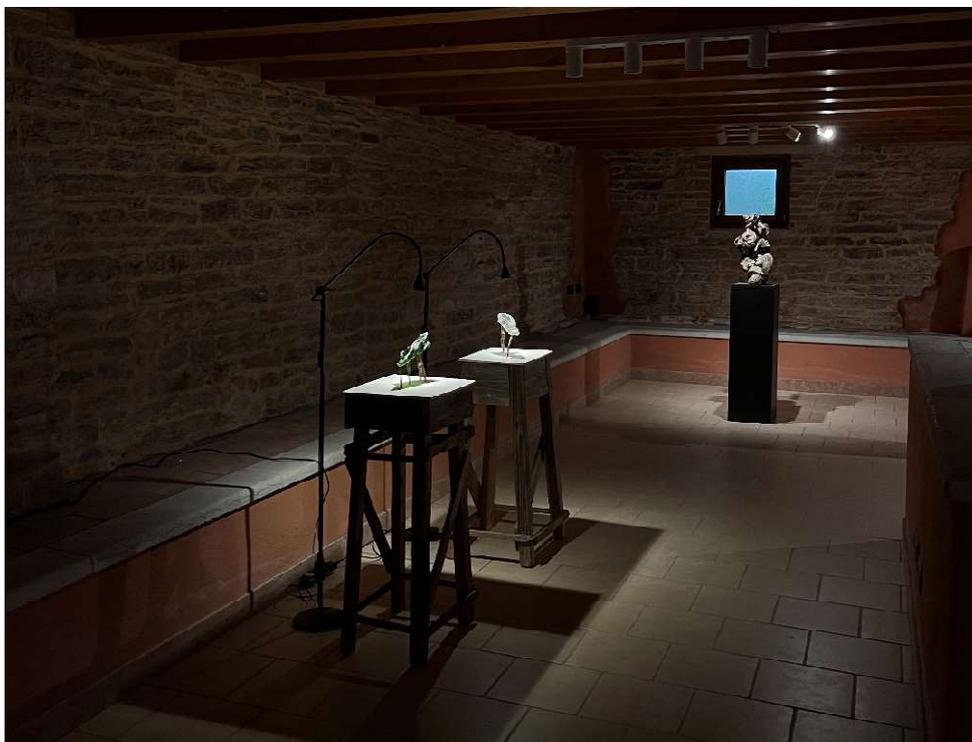


Figure 82: Installation view of the exhibition “Costruire Identità”, 5 settembre 2025. Curated by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.



*Figure 83: Installation view of the exhibition "Costruire Identità", 5 settembre 2025. Curated by Chiara Schiraldi and Maria Pia Fasano.*

## CONCLUSIONS

The thesis, after providing a detailed account of the history of Western curatorship and tracing its most recent frontiers – where technology has become central, transforming entire museums from physical to virtual spaces – turned to the latest revolutions brought about by artificial intelligence in the world of art and curatorship (Chapters 3 and 4).

While debates around artificial intelligence have long animated public discourse, especially in mass media, in more strictly scientific contexts (excluding educational, legal, and ethical disciplines, which were deliberately left aside in this thesis) it is not perceived as such an imminent threat. This is because a deeper understanding of these systems – knowing that they operate through algorithms and probability-based architectures – reveals how any model can prove extremely valuable to specialists in their respective fields, as has already been demonstrated in areas such as the detection of forgeries, attribution, reconstruction, and restoration. Even philosophers are beginning to shift positions and actively defend artificial intelligence, particularly in relation to art (see paragraph 3.2.1). As the last two chapters have shown, those who work with these tools daily, understands that every prompt and every program requires the supervision of an expert eye, and that AI, at least for now, is neither autonomous nor capable of reliable decision-making. On the contrary, it often stumbles into the clumsy errors known as hallucinations. After all, if we consider Artificial Narrow Intelligence, even Google belongs to this category, meaning that AI has been part of daily life long before public alarm began to rise.

It has been shown that AI is employed for creative purposes across all artistic domains. Attention has been given to models that generate images or videos, accessible to anyone, as well as to the artworks of world-renowned figures: Ai Weiwei, who addressed the subject through *Ai vs AI*; Refik Anadol's *Unsupervised*; and Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Missing Person*. Yet there are also fields within the applied arts, less present in the media spotlight, that should not be underestimated. Artists here have taken up the challenge: Vanni Santoni with *Il Destino dell'Errante* in comics; Benjamin with the film *Zone Out*; and, finally, a sort of “new AI Florence Experiment”, where Roberto Fassone intertwined art, computer science, and biology, feeding Ai Lai with psychedelic mushrooms. It would appear that artists of every kind are engaging in the most diverse experiments – and can no longer do without them. After all, as Francesco D'Isa reminds us: if art has at times even been made with excrement, why not with AI?

From a curatorial perspective – the central focus of this thesis – the role of the curator has been revisited repeatedly throughout history. The figure has often been debated: prior to Harald Szeemann, curators largely served institutions and worked mainly on commission; after him, the curator emerged as an author in his own right, though not without contestation. In more recent years, Zuliani (2012) has spoken of a curatorial crisis, where curators position themselves at the center of “art events” as sort of VIP to serve the art market. In this light, what could be more impartial and anonymous than a machine curating an exhibition? Yet, as Chapter 4 demonstrates, such assumptions are overturned: artists fade into the background before the post-human curator, because the idea of visiting an exhibition curated by AI seems more appealing than simply attending an ordinary art exhibition – particularly when the AI has played an “active” role (however limited) in the curatorial process, as in the case studies *JARVIS as Curator of the 10th Bucharest Biennial* and *Act as if you are a curator: an AI-generated exhibition*.

Nonetheless, these modes of curating diverge sharply from what the curatorial role should embody. A curator, through study, dedication, professionalism, and mediation, must bring value to artists. They are not an impartial agent who places a work in a random corner without logic. For this reason, a machine cannot yet fulfill such a role. At best, AI functions as a pseudo-curator, operating mechanically but incapable of interpreting its responsibilities in a professional way. The result risks becoming a “monstrous” exhibition based on a blockbuster logic (Montanari & Trione, 2017), exploiting AI to save time and effort while capitalizing on a passing trend. Furthermore, as the very protagonists of these case studies have admitted, the tool is not impartial in constructing narratives or in selecting artists. On the contrary, in a quasi-human fashion, the AI tended to choose artists similar to itself – those working with technology, virtual or augmented reality, or artificial intelligence – and to build post-human and dystopian narratives.

It was on the basis of this analysis that the decision was made to employ artificial intelligence primarily as support at specific stages of the curatorial process: not as a replacement, but as a consultant that requires constant supervision, much like a novice curator undergoing training. This perspective shaped the choices behind the exhibition *Costruire Identità*, described in the final chapter. This raises the question: if artificial intelligence – unable to replace the curator or act impartially, as confirmed by the case studies – can nonetheless be useful when used as support, does it contribute to the making of a contemporary art exhibition?

In practical terms, the thesis has presented those phases most closely linked to curatorial practice: the creation of the concept, the selection of artists, and the setup process.

In the first phase, can be made the following observations:

- it proved useful in generating ideas that could then be developed through strategies such as Prompt Chain to define a coherent narrative;
- it could store all information provided via an attached dataset and maintaining a certain degree of coherence;
- through computer vision systems, it was able to link images of artworks to their descriptions and generate a unified and consistent concept;
- it served as a valuable source of inspiration for new interpretations of the works and connections between them.

It was not able to:

- read Excel attachments or access the URLs of images, which means its application is limited to small-scale exhibitions with only a few works;
- create a concept autonomously without the intervention of an expert who has studied the works and, crucially, mediated with the artists.

In the second phase – closely tied to the first and carried out simultaneously – AI proved of little use in proposing names, often suggesting artists beyond the reach of small-scale projects. It was, however, somewhat helpful in offering advice on platforms and methods for locating artists. Finally, since chatbot-based AIs specialize in natural language and excel in writing – both creative and professional – the artists’ invitations were drafted almost entirely with its assistance.

The third phase was the most complex, as the model was tasked with processing a large quantity of information about the physical exhibition space while maintaining coherence with the narrative

framework. Numerous factors must be considered at this stage: ensuring a physical route consistent with the narrative, maintaining the fluidity of movement to avoid congestion, accounting for obstacles, placing works logically and at appropriate viewing heights, and designing lighting to avoid glare while enhancing the artworks – particularly in the case of sculptures. Interaction with the machine in this phase required:

- continuous correction and redirection of outputs;
- prompting the model to integrate each aspect taught to it, often by reintroducing previously supplied data;
- carry out continuous Evaluation Prompt Tests to verify whether everything had been retained and understood;
- assisting the GPT in coherently visualizing the decisions that had been made.

The result was inevitably marked by confusion—in defining the exhibition route, arranging the works (which in the placement diagrams appeared simply aligned in a row), and producing realistic images of the installation. Yet, as noted in paragraph 5.6.6, the generated images revealed a surprisingly effective approach to lighting: the model correctly identified the direction of light sources and simulated shadow play that proved remarkably close to the real exhibition. Still, this outcome was reached only after numerous trials and refinements.

In light of all the aspects discussed and of the concrete experiment presented in this thesis, it can be stated that artificial intelligence is not, at least autonomously, capable of truly assisting a human curator – let alone replacing one. What it can do is provide valuable insights, much as ChatGPT is used daily by people in countless fields. More often than not, as seen in *Costruire Identità* and in the third case study *Act as if you are a curator: an AI-generated exhibition*, the process has been the reverse: it was the human curators who guided and supported the post-human one.

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