

“Figuring and Describing”: *Leonardo and the History of Anatomy*

Call for Applications
8-10 September 2026

 Biblioteca Malatestiana
Cesena, Italy

The Municipality of Cesena and
the Nuova Fondazione Rossana e
Carlo Pedretti

are pleased to announce the **Summer
School “Figuring and Describing”:
*Leonardo and the History of Anatomy***,
organised within the framework of
COST Action CA24143.



SUMMER SCHOOL

Deadline

Applications must be submitted by
August, 10 12:00 noon.

Organising Secretariat

Anna Lia Proietti Ergün, Yıldız Technical
University (Turchia)
E-mail: aergun@yildiz.edu.tr



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Presentation and Objectives

Between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the understanding of the human body underwent a profound transformation. Anatomical works of the period, together with new modes of representing the body, testify to a radical change in the ways in which the human being was observed, studied and conceptualised.

Based on dissection and direct observation, anatomy became an area of enquiry capable of attracting the attention not only of physicians and natural philosophers, but also of artists, theologians, philosophers and humanists. Within this context, Leonardo da Vinci represents one of the most significant points of convergence between scientific knowledge and artistic practice.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, the Summer School will examine the practices, methods and perspectives of the different actors involved in early modern reflections on the human body. Particular attention will be given to the cultural, scientific, artistic and ethical questions that accompanied the emergence of modern anatomical knowledge.

The Summer School aims to provide participants with historical, methodological and critical tools for understanding the relationship between image, description, observation and anatomical knowledge, with particular attention to Leonardo's work and to the broader history of anatomy.

Particular attention will be devoted to Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical investigations, which constitute one of the most significant points of convergence between artistic practice, empirical observation and scientific inquiry. Leonardo's studies of the human body reveal not only an extraordinary analytical attention to anatomical structures, but also a constant effort to understand the functional relationships among organs, tissues and physiological processes within the living organism as a whole.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, the Summer School will examine the practices, methods and perspectives of the different actors involved in early modern reflections on the human body. Special attention will be given to the relationship between observation, description and visual representation, as well as to the cultural, scientific, artistic and ethical questions that accompanied the emergence of anatomical knowledge in the Renaissance.

The Summer School aims to provide participants with historical, methodological and critical tools for understanding the relationship between image, description, observation and anatomical knowledge, with particular attention to Leonardo's work and to broader questions concerning the relationship between parts and wholes in early modern conceptions of living nature.

Programme and Teaching Staff

The Summer School will include lectures, thematic seminars and monographic conferences. The detailed programme and timetable will be sent as soon as possible.

Invited Lecturers

Roberta Ballestriero, Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia
Berenice Cavarra, Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia
Giancarlo Cerasoli, Scuola di Storia della Medicina dell'Ordine dei medici chirurghi e odontoiatri di Rimini
Francesco Paolo de Ceglia, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro
Francesco Maria Galassi, University of Łódź (Poland)
Marco Gaiani, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
Pino Montalti, Independent scholar
Massimo Moretti, Sapienza Università di Roma
Donatella Lippi, Università degli Studi di Firenze
Margherita Melani, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II
Ferdinando Paternostro, Università degli Studi di Firenze
Sara Tagliagamba, Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo
Francis Wells, University of Cambridge and Papworth Hospital

Eligibility

The Summer School is open to graduate students, Master's students, PhD candidates and early-career researchers from scientific, medical, technical, humanistic and artistic disciplines.

Applicants of any nationality are eligible to apply.

Working Languages

The working languages of the Summer School will be Italian and English.

Venue

Cesena, Biblioteca Malatestiana, Italy.

Application Procedure

The Summer School will admit a maximum of 18 participants. In the event of a high number of strong applications, the Scientific Committee reserves the right to increase the number of available places.

Applications will be assessed by the Scientific Committee on the basis of the applicant's academic background, curriculum vitae, research experience and relevance of their profile to the themes of the Summer School.

Applications must include, in a single pdf:

- an updated curriculum vitae;
- a short motivation letter;
- identity card or passport.

Applications must be sent by email to the Organising Secretariat.

Scholarships

Ten scholarships are available.

Scholarships will be awarded on the basis of the evaluation of the applicants' academic curriculum and scientific activities. Admission results and scholarship awards will be communicated at the same time.

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