

Different Differentiations (Genoa, 7–8 May 26)

University of Genoa, School of Humanities, Aula Magna, Via Balbi 2, May 7–08, 2026

Deadline: Feb 15, 2026

Vittoria Magnoler, Venezia

"Different Differentiations. Logiche e pratiche della differenziazione sociale attraverso i secoli", University of Genoa, School of Humanities, Aula Magna, Via Balbi 2, May 7-8, 2026.

Scientific committee:

Organizing committee:

Morella Alpa, Lucrezia Boiani, Clotilde Brandone, Chiara Dodero, Paola Gargiulo, Monica Gestro, Kevin Imbimbo, Leila Leoni, Vittoria Magnoler, Bianca Romano, Matteo Trotta, Arianna Vallarino, Mattia Viti

Professors:

Gianluca Ameri, Denise Bezzina, Matteo Caponi, Maria Elena Cortese, Antonino Facella, Marco Folin, Fabio Negrino, Valentina Ruzzin, Daniele Sanguineti, Guri Schwarz, Paola Valenti, Stefania Ventra

PhD students:

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The PhD conference aims to promote a dialogue between young scholars on the theme of the social differentiation in a diachronic and interdisciplinary perspective. Since the proposed research themes are shared by numerous scopes in the field of the PhD course disciplines, our purpose is to promote reflections and discussions which could lead to the elaboration of new research paths.

The "social differentiation" concept refers to the process with which the elements of a collective organism acquire specific autonomy and identity, namely they become reciprocally different. This definition recalls the delineation, into a specific social contest, of areas and communities which distinguish each other by shared traits which assume social significance. It is a process characterizing every human society, regarding, generally, the progressive increase of their complexity which could be analysed through a historical, archaeological and art-historical perspective. This is the meaning of the chosen theme, "different differentiation", i.e. analysing the transformations of social differentiation processes as the research objects and instruments change.

Therefore, we intend to reflect about two main aspects: the first, typological, aims to describe the

nature of the observed differentiation (based on ethnicity, gender, juridical status, economic situation etc.); the second, methodological, regarding the sources and the instruments used to analyse the case study. Moreover, it will evenly be important to consider the reasons and dynamics ("logics") which cause the differentiation, and the modalities with which it manifests ("practices"). The theme enables, furthermore, to consider the relationship between the social differentiation and other related problems, such as the origin of inequality, the outlining of alterities, discrimination cases and social marginalization. Eventually, studying the differentiation implies the possibility to consider its contrary, namely the absence of differentiations and the attenuation of differences that could lead to extreme social homologations.

The aim of the symposium is to explore the theme through a historical, art-historical and archaeological perspective. Proposals concerning the following research areas will be accepted: Prehistoric, Classical and Medieval Archaeology; Medieval, Modern and Contemporary History, including Gender History; Archival Science, Palaeography, Diplomatics and Codicology; Medieval, Modern and Contemporary Art History.

Theoretical or experimental contributions will be welcome, with particular attention to the enhancement of the critical approach, relating to the following (but not restrictive) thematic areas:

- Origins and dynamics of (in)differentiation: emergence of élites, persistence, processes of transformation, conflicts and breakdowns of hierarchies;
- Materiality of (in)differentiation: objects, prestige goods, practices of production, gestures and rituals;
- Representation of (in)differentiation: logics and practices of appropriation, selfdetermination and imitation among social and cultural groups;
- Depictions, insignia, censorship and iconoclasm: public or private tools for identity affirmation, self or otherness recognition, social distinction or standardization;
- Class, race and (in)differentiation: processes of inclusion, exclusion, and marginalisation on ethnic, religious, and socio-economic grounds;
- Gender and (in)differentiation: social roles, identity constructions, feminisms, masculinities, and queer perspectives;
- Spaces of belonging and distinction, selection or social segregation: geographies, architecture, monuments, public and private places;
- Economies and trade movements: communication routes, supply chains, free-ports and monopolies for the exchange of goods and services;
- Craft categories, professions, positions and roles: work hierarchies, guilds, workshops, institutions;
- Digital technologies and new methodological implications: accessibility practices, inclusion and uses through AI; diversification of digital tools as a means of creating experiences (tactile, visual, performative);
- Differentiations by law: rules, legal texts, political and legislative guidelines on (in)differentiation;
- Public memories, cultures and politics of remembrance: processing, reuse, erasure or exaltation of social groups' memories;
- Individual experiences and expressions of (in)differentiation: sources for reconstructing biographical events;
- Theoretical and methodological reflections: ways of defining and interpreting difference and/or

standardisation.

Submission guidelines:

The Call for Papers is open to PhD students and young researchers who have obtained their degree in the last three years.

Applicants are required to send a single PDF file containing a brief scientific CV (maximum one page) and an abstract of approximately 300 words (excluding essential references), a title and five keywords.

Proposals may be submitted in Italian or English.

Applications must be sent by email to the following address: phd.conference.starch@gmail.com, specifying "Proposta Convegno Dottorale" in the subject line and indicating the relevant field of research.

The deadline for submitting applications is February 15, 2026.

Selection results will be notified by March 6, 2026.

The conference programme will be established in accordance with the chronological, thematic or methodological similarities of the contributions. The conference will be held in person, and each participant will have a maximum of 20 minutes for their presentation.

Keynote speakers affiliated with national and international academic institutions will be invited.

There are no registration fees or refunds.

Proceedings will be considered for publishing.

For further information, please write to: phd.conference.starch@gmail.com.

Reference:

CFP: Different Differentiations (Genoa, 7-8 May 26). In: Arthist.net, Dec 15, 2025 (accessed Jan 10, 2026),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/51347>>.