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Reassessing Collage and Photocollage: From the Avant-Gardes to Digital Culture. Themes, Practices, Contexts.

Edited by Caterina Caputo and Carlotta Castellani.

By the terms collage and photocollage in artistic practice, we mean the full range of creative processes grounded in the fragmentation, decontextualization, and combination – in homogeneous or heterogeneous forms – of pre-existing visual elements (Ades 1976; Adamowicz 1998; Bergius 2000; LambertiMessina 2007; Nigro 2015; Muzzarelli 2023). Sometimes further distinguished at the lexical level through the concept of 'montage' (Krieber-Zervigón 2019; Dragu 2020; Krieger-Streim 2024), these procedures take shape as open structures of meaning, characterized by a momentary and flexible code determined by the interaction between factors internal and external to the artistic field.

The introduction, in the early twentieth century, of extra-artistic objects with high visual density (advertisements, periodicals, postcards, etc.) into everyday life and the urban environment (Chéroux 2015), alongside the spread of new media (cinema above all), brought about a fragmentation of vision and a synesthetic mode of perception grounded in the simultaneity of the "read and seen," in non-linear narrative temporalities, and in the juxtaposition of fragments linked by formal and symbolic analogy. These new visual and perceptual possibilities were adopted as a revolutionary creative principle across entire artistic movements not only in strictly artistic experimentation, but also within alternative spaces such as avant-garde and neo-avant-garde periodicals and other editorial publications. From their very origins, collage and photocollage thus took shape and transformed in close dialogue with the possibilities of image production and reproduction, giving rise to physical-material and conceptual procedures, as well as to theoretical, aesthetic, and ideological stances, which led these techniques to assume multiple functions – instrument of visual deconstruction, poetic device for the irruption of the imagination, means of propaganda, practice of resistance – in a continuous redefinition of their artistic status throughout history.

From Dadaism to Surrealism, from Fluxus to verbal-visual art, to the urban détournement of contemporary graffiti, collage and photocollage emerge as creative tools for a deep questioning of traditional visual narratives, as well as practices of storytelling, memory, and political, anti-institutional, and feminist critique often accompanied by genuine programmatic formulations elaborated by artists and critics, such as Wolf Vostell's "Décoll/age" (1962), General Idea's "Collage or perish" (1975), or the notion of collage aesthetic theorized by Lucy Lippard (1978). Within this framework,

cut and paste translates into an intermedial (Higgins, 1965) and interdisciplinary (Cran, 2014) practice. These experimentations continue in counterculture, in gender-based, postcolonial, and ecocritical practices, making collage and photocollage devices of ongoing visual, cultural, and social renegotiation. Yet their critical and contestatory dimension cannot be separated from the technical procedure and its consequent linguistic reformulations: from Cubist papiers collés to Kurt Schwitters's Merz works, from Alberto Burri's sacks to New Dada combines, through to the provocations of the 1980s and 1990s, when postmodernity raised new critical questions about the status of the image, problematizing the artistic field through the introduction of new visual reproduction techniques and technologies that marked the transition from the analog to the digital image.

For this issue of "piano b", we invite scholars to submit original and previously unpublished contributions analyzing collage and/or photocollage from the Avant-Gardes to digital culture, in light of new historical-critical perspectives, research methodologies, and through the lens of interdisciplinarity.

Possible – though not exclusive – areas for reflection:

- Collage and material culture

- Collage through journals, artist books, and scrapbooks

- Collage in the neo-avant-gardes

- Text-image relations in collage

- Interdisciplinarity and intermediality of collage (video, music, performance, theatre, dance, etc.)

- Collage and photography

- Collage and politics (propaganda, resistance, countercultures, feminisms)

- Postcolonial perspectives on collage (subjectivity, identity, alterity, memory, archives)

- Collage in the digital age

- The different readings of collage in twentieth-century art criticism

Submissions guidelines

The journal only accepts full contributions (30,000/40,000 characters, including footnotes and spaces) sent according to the terms below. The editors of each issue will evaluate the contributions and select those that will go to the double-blind peer-review process. Editorial staff will notify the authors of the outcome of the evaluation.

Authors must submit their articles via the journal's platform using a 5-step proposal submission process.

The file containing the proposal text must not display author's name appearing below the title, in the notes, or in the bibliographic references (where it will be replaced with *). The name of the

author should not be made explicit in any way. References that would allow the author himself or herself to be traced should also be excluded, otherwise the proposal will not be considered. Moreover, file properties must be devoid of names or other personal details, using the anonymization functions provided by various word processing programs (see instructions on how to Ensure Double-Blind Review for more information).

The anonymized contribution file must be uploaded during step 2 of the submission process. The text must conform to the formatting guidelines.

Metadata entry will occur during step 3 of the process and must include the following information:

1. For each author: first name and last name, email, ORCiD identifier (if available), institutional affiliation, country, and a brief biography (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces);

2. Title;

3. Abstract (maximum 1500 characters, including spaces);

4. Five keywords separated by semicolons;

Contributions can be written in Italian, English, and French. When submitting a contribution in Italian or French, the title and abstract must also be provided in English using the "Language of Forms" function on the platform. Proposals submitted through other methods will not be considered.

Timeline

Proposals must be submitted by June 12, 2026. Each contribution will undergo a double-blind peer review process. If the judgments of the two referees are not aligned, the editors will decide (in dialogue with the curators) whether to proceed with the publication or to send it to a third referee. The editorial staff will reach out the authors to convey the outcome of the evaluation.

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