Predoctoral Fellows, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome

Application deadline: Dec 1, 2026

Valentine Bernasconi, Bibliotheca Hertziana

Call for Predoctoral Fellows (M/F/D) Max Planck Research Group "Machine Visual Culture: Artificial Intelligence and the History of Seeing".

The Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome (Italy) invites applications for predoctoral research fellowships within the Max Planck Research Group "Machine Visual Culture: Artificial Intelligence and the History of Seeing," led by Leonardo Impett.

About the Research Group

The Machine Visual Culture research group investigates the reciprocal relationship between artificial intelligence and visual culture, focusing on how machine vision systems both shape and are shaped by histories of seeing. Combining digital art history with critical AI studies and media archaeology, the group explores AI both as a revolutionary methodology for the study of visual culture, and also as a cultural phenomenon in its own right with important implications for the humanities. Machine Visual Culture offers an interdisciplinary approach that positions AI as both a subject of cultural critique and a transformative approach to art historical research.

For a summary of this approach, see: Leonardo Impett, “Digital art history as critical AI.” The Art Bulletin 106.2 (2024): 11–14.

We welcome applications from candidates of all disciplines; projects should be synergetic with the group’s main research interests, but do not have to follow it precisely. Projects may for instance engage with Digital Art History, Digital Humanities, History of Technology, Media Archaeology / Media Theory, Computational Aesthetics, or other relevant fields.

Eligibility and Application Requirements

The Predoctoral Fellows will pursue their own original research projects that align with the overall framework of the research group while working towards the completion of their PhD. As active participation in the group’s collective research activities and intellectual exchange is an important part of the fellowship, applicants are encouraged to consult the Machine Visual Culture webpage for information about ongoing projects and current fellows, and to consider potential areas of connection and collaboration with their own research.

Eligibility Criteria

Enrolled as a PhD student at a university
A clear research plan that demonstrates how a fellowship in Rome as part of the Machine Visual

Culture research group will benefit the PhD project.
Excellent verbal and written proficiency in English
Ability to reside in Rome for the duration of the appointment
Willingness to actively engage in the group's research activities, including seminars, reading sessions, and conferences

Application Documents

Cover letter (1 page)
Curriculum vitae (2 pages)
Description of research project including timeline (max. 1000 words, not including bibliography)
Sample of work or sample publication (max. 2000 words)
Contact details of two referees (reference letters are not required upfront)

Terms and Conditions

Predoctoral fellowships are available for stays of up to six months, starting at any point during 2027.

The financial arrangements will depend on the nature and scope of the proposed collaboration, as well as on the individual circumstances of the selected candidates. Depending on the specific arrangements, these may include financial support, such as a stipend or reimbursement of accommodation costs, or other forms of funding. Collaborations may also be pursued on a self-funded basis. Where appropriate, an employment arrangement may be considered, subject to the applicable institutional requirements and available funding.

The Max Planck Society is committed to fostering gender equality and diversity. We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds. Additionally, the Max Planck Society seeks to increase the representation of individuals with disabilities in its workforce and encourages applications from candidates with disabilities.

Application Deadline and Submission

Applications must be submitted in English by 1 December 2027.

All application materials should be submitted via the application portal: https://recruitment.biblhertz.it

Reference:
JOB: Predoctoral Fellows, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Rome. In: ArtHist.net, Nov 18, 2026 (accessed Nov 18, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/57156>.