

RESEARCH THEME

XLI Cycle – a.y. 2025/2026

Title of the doctoral research Weak Futures: Reimagining Design as Ethical Resistance

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Abstract

Today, perhaps more than ever, envisioning alternative futures beyond the narratives of technological determinism and human automation seems increasingly difficult. The future, once seen as an open field of infinite possibilities, now appears to be pre-scripted, dominated by narratives of technological inevitability and a diminished sense of human agency. This call invites innovative and critical research proposals exploring philosophical frameworks—particularly Gianni Vattimo's concept of 'weak thought'—and their transformative implications for design theory and practice.

Proposals should critically engage with philosophical perspectives that challenge prevailing techno-centric ideologies, addressing how creativity and conceptual invention might reclaim uncertainty, complexity, and openness in imagining alternative futures. Researchers are encouraged to investigate the ethical dimensions of design practices within the posthuman condition, exploring how speculative-material methodologies can question and disrupt established design paradigms.

Central to this research inquiry is the transformative potential of design, positioned across aesthetic, ethical, productive, and socio-political dimensions. Proposals are expected to adopt a visual-critical methodology, integrating philosophical discourse with tangible case studies. This approach aims to foster dialogue between theoretical insights and the lived realities shaped by contemporary design practices.

Ultimately, the objective is to reconceptualize design as an ethical and imaginative act of resistance, capable of reclaiming and regenerating the multiplicity and openness of possible futures.

Keywords Weak Thought, Design Philosophy, Hermeneutics and Design Futures