

RIFUGIO DIGITALE

SYNCHRONIC

Xu Xiaowei in Florence

18.09 - 17.10.2026

From **18 September** to **17 October** 2026, Rifugio Digitale presents ***Synchronic***, a solo exhibition by photographer **Xu Xiaowei** in Florence. The exhibition opens on **Friday, 18 September** at **6:30 pm**, preceded by a **press preview** at **6:00 pm**.

In an age when algorithms increasingly dominate the flow of information, what does it truly mean to communicate authentically? As our lives become ever more data-driven, are we still able to recognize beauty through our own sensibility? And on the banks of the Arno in Florence, could the waves that once inspired Leonardo da Vinci have ever imagined that Shanghai's Suzhou Creek would reflect a universe capable of helping reshape the future of our world?

Curated by Gianni Zhang, with **artistic direction** by **Laura Andreini**, the exhibition is organized by **Rifugio Digitale** and the **FánHuā Chinese Film Festival**, in **cooperation** with **Zhong Art International** and in **collaboration** with **Forma Edizioni**.

Synchronic presents a selection of Xu Xiaowei's video works exploring themes of memory, light and shadow, sound, and synchronicity. Through a visual language that combines contemporary techniques with a poetic inquiry deeply rooted in social realities, the artist constructs a spiritual landscape of the post-globalized era, where emotions, memories, and desires from different times and places resonate with one another. Subtle shifts of light and shadow, together with unexpected chromatic harmonies, extend beyond the creation of a purely perceptual experience to become a meditation on the contemporary condition. The works invite viewers to reflect on the meaning of existence, the relationship between humanity and technology, and the possibility of rediscovering a sense of authenticity in a world increasingly mediated by algorithms.

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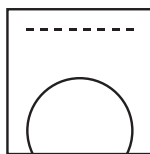


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RIFUGIO DIGITALE

Florence, via della Fornace 41
18 September 2026

6.00 - 6.30 pm

Press preview with Artistic Director Laura Andreini and artist Xu Xiaowei at Rifugio Digitale.

Event by reservation writing to info@rifugiodigitale.it

6.30 pm

Opening at Rifugio Digitale Rifugio Digitale Firenze, via della Fornace 41

SYNCHRONIC

Xu Xiaowei

18 September - 17 October 2026

wed-sat. 11 am - 7 pm

Rifugio Digitale

via della Fornace, 41

50125 - Florence (FI)

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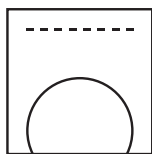


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Xu Xiaowei, photo by Chen Xindong

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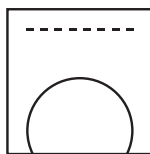


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RIFUGIO DIGITALE

Xu Xiaowei

Is an acclaimed Chinese photographer whose distinctive visual language is defined by surreal, layered compositions that capture the dissonant beauty of contemporary existence. Blending the precision of documentary photography with the evocative power of dreamlike collage, his work explores the tensions between tradition and modernity, memory and reality, reflecting on the transformations of a society in constant evolution. Through a refined visual narrative, Xu transforms ordinary scenes into images of striking poetic intensity, revealing the unexpected hidden within everyday life.

Throughout his career, Xu has presented his work in numerous solo and group exhibitions across mainland China and Hong Kong. His solo exhibitions include *Trace* (Hong Kong, 2017–2018), *Spacing Memories* (OFOTO, Shanghai, 2025), later presented at the Jimei Art Centre in Xiamen (2025–2026), and *Map of a Wandering Mind* (ZiWU, Shanghai, 2026). He has also participated in major group exhibitions, including *Creating Life* (Shanghai, 2018), *Time and Light* (Shanghai, 2018), and *Wave and Noah's Ark* (Xiamen, 2021).

His work has also been selected for prestigious invitational exhibitions, including *Growth* at the Long Museum, Shanghai (2021), and *Flourishing – Vanishing* 湮-花 at Maison Wave, Shanghai (2025–2026), further establishing him as one of the most compelling voices in contemporary Chinese photography.

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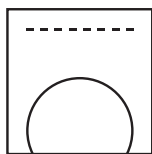


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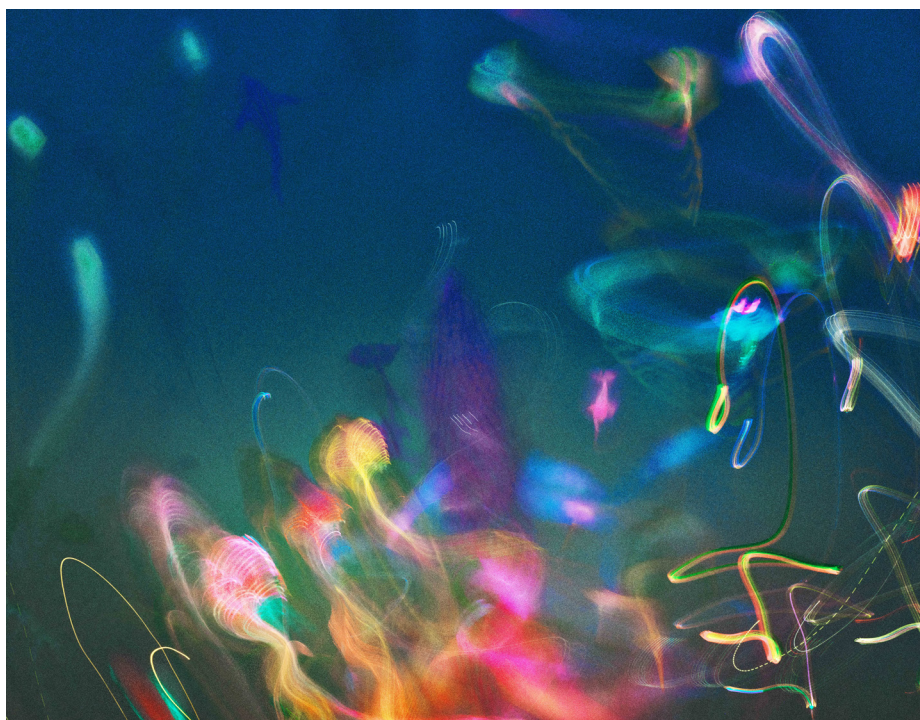


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Xu Xiaowei, *Pure Pledge* | 天真之诺, 2025

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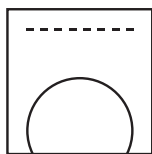


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Xu Xiaowei, *Spirited Cosmos* 灵寰, 2025

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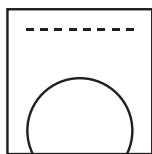


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Xu Xiaowei, *Royal Jade Manor* 御翠豪庭, 2023

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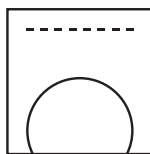


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Gianni Zhang

Xiuzhong Zhang, known in Italy as Gianni Zhang, is a Chinese entrepreneur and cultural promoter born in Henan Province, China. He lives in Florence, where he graduated in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts.

Since 2013, he has been promoting initiatives aimed at fostering cultural dialogue between Italy and China, with a particular focus on contemporary art, cultural documentary filmmaking, and cinema.

He serves as President of Zhong Art International and the Fanhua Chinese Film Festival. He is also a Academician of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno (Academy of the Arts of Drawing), a Research Fellow at the China National Academy of Painting, and an Honorary Professor at South China Normal University.

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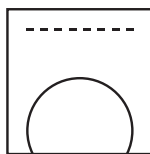


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Associazione Rifugio Digitale E.T.S.
FánHuā Chinese Film Festival

WITH THE COOPERATION OF

Zhong Art International

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Forma Edizioni

ART DIRECTION

Laura Andreini

CURATED BY

Gianni Zhang

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATION

Beatrice Papucci
Ester Menichelli

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Irene Borsotti

EXHIBITION TEXTS

Gianni Zhang

PRESS OFFICE AND COMMUNICATION

Associazione Rifugio Digitale E.T.S.
Niccolò Natali
Giulia Guasti
Eugenio Pincelli

GRAPHIC AND SET-UP PROJECT

Deepa Mary Parapatt
Vitoria Muzi
Mattia Gerardi

INSTALLAZIONE VIDEO

Associazione Rifugio Digitale E.T.S.

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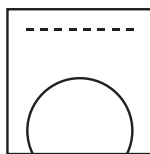


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FánHuā Chinese Film Festival

Is a travelling cultural festival dedicated to Chinese cinema and contemporary culture, founded in Florence in 2021 on the initiative of its President, Xiuzhong Zhang. Organized by the FánHuā Association in collaboration with Zhong Art International, and developed from its very first edition in partnership with Fondazione Sistema Toscana – Cinema Department and Cinema La Compagnia, the festival serves as a cultural bridge between East and West, offering Italian audiences the opportunity to discover the richness and vitality of contemporary Chinese cinema.

Alongside its film programme, which takes place primarily at Cinema La Compagnia in Florence, the festival offers a rich calendar of complementary activities, including masterclasses, meetings with filmmakers and industry professionals, exhibitions, children's workshops, tastings, and tea ceremonies, providing audiences with an immersive and multidisciplinary cultural experience.

The festival also represents an important opportunity for intercultural dialogue, engaging with younger generations of Chinese citizens who have grown up in Italy and encouraging them to rediscover and deepen their understanding of their cultural heritage, while fostering an open exchange between different cultures, traditions, and cinematic languages.

FánHuā Chinese Film Festival

Via de' Martelli, 8

50129 – Florence, Italy

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<https://www.fanhuafestival.com>

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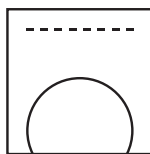


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Zhong Art International

Since 2013, Zhong Art International has been dedicated to promoting cultural dialogue between Italy and China, fostering the dissemination of Italian culture in China and the appreciation of Chinese artistic heritage in Italy, from traditional forms to contemporary expressions. With offices in Florence, Beijing, Chongqing, and Zhengzhou, it works to create opportunities for exchange, collaboration, and dialogue among institutions, artists, and cultural professionals from both countries.

Over the years, Zhong Art International has conceived and realized exhibitions, events, and international projects, contributing to the promotion of Italian and Chinese artists and institutions while developing a solid network of collaborations with ministries, embassies, museums, universities, academies, and prestigious cultural organizations.

Building on years of experience and strong relationships with institutional and cultural partners, Zhong Art International promotes artistic, educational, and strategic cooperation initiatives, with the aim of strengthening dialogue between Italy and China and fostering the development of relationships based on exchange, mutual understanding, and the enhancement of each country's cultural excellence.

Zhong Art International

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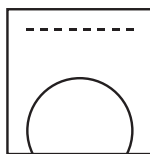


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Forma Edizioni

Is an editorial (publishing) initiative developed in order to allow the dissemination and knowledge of avenues and experiences belonging to the world of art, architecture photography and more generally, to promote the best research in production and technology, following the changing lifestyles and contemporary living.

Since its foundation in 2010, the catalogue has grown with about twenty titles a year giving "form" to the expressive traces that animate today's cultural debate, deepening both specific areas of knowledge already known to the public, and investigating those intellectual and artistic areas considered, for various reasons, revealing new points of observation of reality. A common feature of each project is the high quality of the product, images, printing, typographic or IT processes used, as well as a targeted diffusion and distribution in places of use, such as specialized bookstores, museum bookshops and exhibition sites, which they add to the normal availability on the net that necessary and indispensable presence in the "sites" where opinions and evaluations of merit are built.

The publications range from, important monographs dedicated to contemporary and renowned architectural works, such as *Cantina Antinori. Chronicle of the construction of a new landscape*, research and insights related to university study issues, catalogues of important exhibitions, such as the one hosted at the Cini Foundation of Venice *EST. Italian travel, city and architecture stories* curated by Luca Molinari or the monographic exhibition hosted at the MAXXI Museum in Rome *Gio Ponti. Love architecture* in 2019.

Exhibitions and events expand the cultural enhancement process that *Forma* sets out to offer to a refined and attentive public. The publishing house is in fact involved in the creation of volumes relating to the exhibitions annually hosted at the Forte di Belvedere in Florence and at the Stefano Bardini Museum and to the monographic exhibitions hosted in private galleries dedicated to artists of the calibre of Alighiero Boetti, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Lucio Fontana and Alberto Burri. There is no shortage of photography and design texts, such as the important monograph dedicated to the work and life of Karim Rashid, or the overview of contemporary Milanese design *The Design City. Milan city laboratory*. The *On the road city* architectural guide series is currently under construction. Mainly focused on contemporary works, each volume investigates the peculiar aspects of the most important cities in the world, proposing a critical reading of future scenarios. The publishing house has counted important collaborations with personalities of high intellectual depth and international fame such as the late Adolfo Natalini, founder architect of Superstudio, Bruno Corà, Luca Massimo Barbero and Sergio Risaliti, art critics and historians, Luca Molinari, architecture critic.

Forma Edizioni

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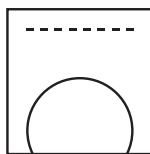


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Rifugio Digitale

Is an exhibition space in a former bomb shelter tunnel repurposed as a site devoted to the promotion of digital art, where architecture, design, photography, cinema, literature and all the other multiple forms of art and visual expression find their dimension and interact with one another. It was built on the foundations of an old anti-aircraft tunnel that served from 1943 as a bomb shelter in World War II. It was known as the *Rifugio della Fornace* a safe haven during the tragedy of the war, and now it has been rechristened as the *Rifugio Digitale*, a place of rebirth, where technology meets art, offering a contemporary space where people can explore creativity through the modern language of technology.

The requalification project, handled by Archea Associati, will house digital expressions of every kind, with an eye always on the future and on the new vanguards. In collaboration with the publisher **Forma Edizioni**, it will house exhibitions, but also events and performances related to art, architecture, photography, literature, cinema and other initiatives linked to the digital world. It will show original views and more on the 16 screens positioned along the 33 meters of the tunnel, a new idea for Florence where the connection between art, people and technology generates an intense visual experience, unexpected and interactive. It is a space designed for constant change, always dynamic, with a new and exciting speed that distinguishes it from a traditional art gallery.

Rifugio Digitale occupies an area of 165 square meters and is a versatile structure ideal for organizing exhibitions, events, presentation, but also debates, lectures and simple discussions. It is expected to appeal to a vast public desirous of indulging their interest in ideas and novel cultural experiences right in the heart of Florence.

Rifugio Digitale

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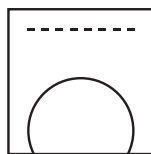


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Archea Associati, Rifugio Digitale, Florence, 2022
ph. Pietro Savorelli e Associati

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