

Istituto Svizzero

DEADLINE WITH THE WORLD GABRIELE GARAVAGLIA & MIRIAM LAURA LEONARDI

19.09.2025

30.11.2025

Via del Vecchio Politecnico 3
Milano

OPENING

18.09.2025 H18:00-20:00

OPENING HOURS

Mon/Fri	H11:00-17:00
Thu	H11:00-20:00
Sat	H14:00-18:00
Sun	Closed

Press Release

For press inquiries please contact
press@istitutosvizzero.it

Deadline With The World is the first joint exhibition by Gabriele Garavaglia (1981, Vercelli / Zurich) and Miriam Laura Leonardi (1985, Lörrach / Zurich). While both artistic practices are rooted in conceptual art, Garavaglia's work incorporates elements drawn from urban mythologies, fantasy literature, and cinematic aesthetics into politically charged installations. Leonardi's practice, on the other hand, translates the observation of public space into a rigorous investigation of language, where semantic codes are dismantled and reshaped into images of strong critical and poetic impact. For Istituto Svizzero, they have developed a project conceived in response to the exhibition context, featuring both jointly created pieces and individual works.

For their first collaborative show, Garavaglia and Leonardi have devised a site-specific installation for the spaces of Istituto Svizzero in Milan. Entitled *Deadline With The World*, the exhibition engages with the sterile, corporate architecture of the building, transforming it into a para-urban landscape punctuated by a sequence of shutters. The initial impression is that of readymades taken from the street but, on closer inspection, the objects are precisely designed, refined to their utmost formal clarity. The works are arranged strategically along the walls to neutralise any architectural distractions such as air vents, doors, or other access points.

Once stripped of its pre-existing features, the Istituto Svizzero can open up to new possible spaces. Garavaglia and Leonardi's interventions draw on the iconography of the garage as a space of promise, of the eternal "not yet". It is the rehearsal room of someone learning to play music, but also the first office of the "self-made man" in the founding myth of technological innovation. A full-scale bulldozer dominates the space, an eccentric trophy kept in someone's garage, or a weapon ready to uproot whatever it encounters. Above the shutters, a sign limiting access to oversized vehicles in the car park reads "Pull Up To The Climax". Outside the space, someone has played golf too vigorously in the courtyard, smashing into the window. In *Deadline With The World*, the visual grammar of success and that of impending catastrophe alternate and overlap, suggesting that the world might have been built – and destroyed – in a garage.

Curated by Lucrezia Calabrò Visconti (Head Curator Istituto Svizzero)

With the support of: Ernst und Olga Gubler-Hablützel Stiftung, Stanley Thomas Johnson Stiftung, Stiftung Erna und Curt Burgauer, Kanton Solothurn (for Miriam Laura Leonardi's work).

Biographies

Gabriele Garavaglia (*1981, born in Vercelli, lives and works in Zurich) studied architecture at the Politecnico di Milano and at The Bartlett School of Architecture in London. From 2015 to 2017, he attended the Fine Art Master programme at ECAL in Lausanne, where he is currently visiting professor. In recent years Garavaglia's works have been exhibited at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen (2024) and Fondation Pernod Ricard Paris (2024), zazà Milano (2024), Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles (2023), Le Consortium Dijon (2023), Shivers Only Paris (2023), Galerie Gregor Staiger Milan (2023), Museum im Bellpark Kriens (2023), CAN Centre d'art Neuchâtel (2022), Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (2021), Swiss Institute New York (2020), Kunsthalle Zurich (2020), Istituto Svizzero Rome and Milan (2019/2020), Kunsthau Glarus (2019) and Museum Folkwang Essen (2019). He received the Swiss Art Awards 2019. The artistic production of Gabriele Garavaglia is rooted in conceptual art and operates halfway between site-specific and storytelling. His imagery feeds on various forms of pop culture and sub-culture, such as fantasy literature, anime and manga universe, gothic language, radical environmentalism, alien communities, urban mythologies, cinematic thrill. Borrowing production processes from other creative fields such as cinema, architecture and design, video games, fashion, etc. Garavaglia's hybrid artworks often function by connecting with the observer's psychology and mechanisms of perception: sculptures, installations and performances, become vehicles to fictional places of feeling and understanding.

Miriam Laura Leonardi (*1985, born in Lörrach, lives and works in Zurich) studied photography in Paris at Les Gobelins, l'École de l'Image, and received her Master of Fine Arts from the ZHdK (Zürcher Hochschule der Künste). She will represent Switzerland at the Biennale d'Arte di Venezia 2026 together with Lithic Alliance, Gianmaria Andreetta, Luca Beeler, Yul Tomatala and Nina Wakeford with their project "The Unfinished Business of Living Together". Leonardi's work has recently been exhibited at the Dangdai Art Fair representing Switzerland in Beijing (2025), Bechtler Foundation Zürich (2024), Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles (2023), Kunsthalle Zurich (2023), Jenny's New York (2022), Peres Projects Milano (2022), CAPC Bordeaux (2022), Swiss Institute New York (2022), MAH Geneva (2022), Centre d'art contemporain Geneva (2021), Galerie Maria Bernheim Zurich (2021), Kunsthalle Bern (2020), Centre Culturel Suisse Paris (2019), Bel Ami Los Angeles (2018), Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg (2018). She received the Prix Mobilière 2021, the Swiss Art Awards 2017, the Atelier Mondial traveling scholarship 2016 and the Kadist Production Grant 2015 and was the recipient of several residency programs, including *Studio of the South* led by Laura Owens for the Luma Foundation Arles (2021), Swiss Institute New York (2021), Gasworks London (2019) and Istituto Svizzero Rome (2018). Texts about her work have been published in Global Times China, Artforum, Texte zur Kunst, Cura Magazine, T Le Temps Magazine, Visionaire World Magazine and T Magazine NY Times and she was one of the selected artists in Phaidon's *Prime: Art's Next Generation 2022*. Leonardi is a lecturer of video-art in the Bachelor of Fine Arts at ECAL in Lausanne since 2018.