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Stony Brook University and **The American University of Florence (AUF)** are pleased to announce their 14th Annual Academic Conference, taking place in Florence on **Friday, December 5, 2025**.

*With the support of **The Center for Italian Studies at Stony Brook University**.*

The title of the international conference:

The Renaissance of Material Media
in Photography, Film, and Beyond

The international conference will explore the theme of the return to analog in photography and filmmaking, seen as a cultural shift especially relevant for a generation raised in the digital era.

Many photography enthusiasts today use or have recently used analog cameras. Similarly, in the field of cinema, there is a renewed interest in the use of film by young filmmakers, often inspired by great masters, such as Spielberg, Tarantino, or Nolan, who have never completely abandoned the analog medium.

The phenomenon is not just a temporary trend and has tangible implications across multiple fields.

On the industrial level, a number of historic companies in the photographic and cinematographic sectors have relaunched film production to meet growing market demand. In academia, university programs, especially in artistic fields and media production, are renewing their focus on analog techniques. In various contexts, this translates into investments in infrastructure such as darkrooms and laboratories, as well as the integration of critical reflections on the medium and material practices within the curriculum.

The return to analog expresses a renewed desire for connection with the physical medium, understood as material to create or experience art and as a trace of human presence. For this reason, the conference intends to extend the investigation to all artistic disciplines that involve the use, whether total or partial, of analog materials, as well as to the renewed interest in manual writing and note-taking practices, such as the use of notebooks and pens.

Finally, the phenomenon also raises environmental concerns: some companies are actively exploring more sustainable solutions and responsible disposal methods for analog materials.

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We invite interdisciplinary contributions that address the diverse dimensions of this analog revival. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Generational Appeal:** Why are young generations drawn to analog formats (e.g., film photography, vinyl, cassettes, manual writing)?
- **Artistic and Aesthetic Implications:** How does analog media influence contemporary artistic production and aesthetics across different art forms?
- **Industrial and Economic Impact:** What are the economic and industrial ramifications of these resurgences for manufacturers, producers, and service providers in various analog industries?
- **Academic and Pedagogical Responses:** How are educational institutions adapting their curricula and facilities to accommodate the growing interest in analog practices in photography, filmmaking, music production, etc.?
- **Environmental Considerations:** What are the ecological challenges and sustainable solutions associated with the production, use, and disposal of various analog materials?
- **Analog in Specific Media:**
 - The use of analog **film** in contemporary filmmaking and its impact on cinematic expression.
 - The resurgence of **vinyl** records: production, consumption, sound quality, and cultural significance.
 - The revival of analog **audio** formats beyond vinyl (e.g., cassettes, reel-to-reel).
 - The trend towards **manual writing** with pens and notebooks, or the use of digital ink in creative fields.
 - Analog **gaming** or other emerging analog trends.
- **Socio-Cultural Perspectives:** The role of tangibility, nostalgia, authenticity, and ritual in the analog revival.
- **Technological Intersections:** The relationship between analog and digital technologies in contemporary creative practices.

Abstract Submission

Please submit a **one-page abstract (not exceeding 300 words)** and a **brief curriculum vitae** in English to conferences@auf-florence.org no later than **Friday, August 29, 2025**. All proposals will be reviewed by the Conference Committee, and selected candidates will be notified by **Monday, September 15, 2025**. Conference presentations must be conducted in English and should not exceed 20 minutes. Selected papers will be published in an online volume of the conference proceedings.

Conference Venue

The American University of Florence, Corso dei Tintori, 21, Florence, Italy 50122