



VERTIGO SYNDROME

UNA CROCIATA CONTRO L'UGGIA DELLE MOSTRE D'ARTE

stregherie

LA MOSTRA SULLE STREGHE



**ICONOGRAFIA, RITI E SIMBOLI
DELLE ERETICHE DEL SAPERE**

WWW.STREGHERIE.IT



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The witch is never just a figure from the past.

She is a living memory, a political body, a symbol of resistance.

Crossing the doorstep of this exhibition means embarking on a journey, a path that winds through the folds of time and reveals, through all its expressive power, how the archetype of the witch has changed over the centuries. Art, historical documents and objects from an archaic past will guide visitors through a space that, from room to room, will become interior, symbolic and initiatory. Through the images that have constructed - and distorted - the figure of the witch, viewers are invited to free themselves from prejudice, to walk through the shadows and to recognise in the witch's eyes not a monster, but a mirror.



Conceived as a true **SECULAR INITIATION**, the exhibition is divided into eight different sections, eight portals, eight "tests" which, just as the anthropological concept of initiation defines, will allow visitors to acquire a new awareness, to be "reborn" with a new "power", identified with that of knowledge, art and culture. A triad much more powerful than any other magic.

Find out more by watching the video



EXHIBITION OBJECTIVES AND FINAL RESULTS

Witchcraft, Iconography, Rituals and Symbols of Heretical Knowledge is not just a book: it is a threshold. An invitation to reconsider our relationship with power, with the body, with knowledge. It is an act of reconciliation with what has been rejected, and an act of resistance against the most subtle and current forms of repression.

- Investigating, with a critical and poetic eye, the roots of popular witchcraft, its imagery, its practices and its repression, as well as its powerful survival in art and culture.
- Visitors to the exhibition are invited to leave their preconceptions behind and confront the brutality of persecution, but also the beauty of resistance. Hence the concept of initiation, which in anthropology refers to a rite of passage: one dies to a previous identity (i.e. the view of witches as exclusively evil) in order to be reborn into another (the new understanding).
- Learn the difference between the various types of magic (sympathetic magic, based on the principle of similarity and contact), storm magic, green magic and ceremonial magic. This leads to social considerations on the rebirth of magic in the contemporary era.
- Question and learn the stylistic features that have characterised the iconography and iconology of witches in art, understanding their origins and meanings.

At the end of the journey, the viewer will not find a monster. They will find a figure that resembles us. A woman who knows.



AN ENIGMA IN EVERY FRAGMENT

This new edition of the exhibition opens up new avenues into the mystery of witchcraft, thanks to works never before exhibited that offer new interpretations and surprising perspectives for study.

Among the most evocative exhibits are the visionary 19th-century prints from the Invernizzi collection dedicated to fortune tellers, rare decks of sibyls and tarot cards from the curator's private collection, and fascinating original objects laden with arcane symbolism, on loan from the Museum of Witchcraft in Turin. The exhibition is completed by paintings and sculptures of rare evocative power, on loan from prestigious names in collecting and antiques, such as Aliprandi Antichità and Arte nel Tempo Pezzini. Each object holds an enigma, a fragment of occult knowledge. Seeing them together in one place is an experience that happens only a few times in a lifetime.

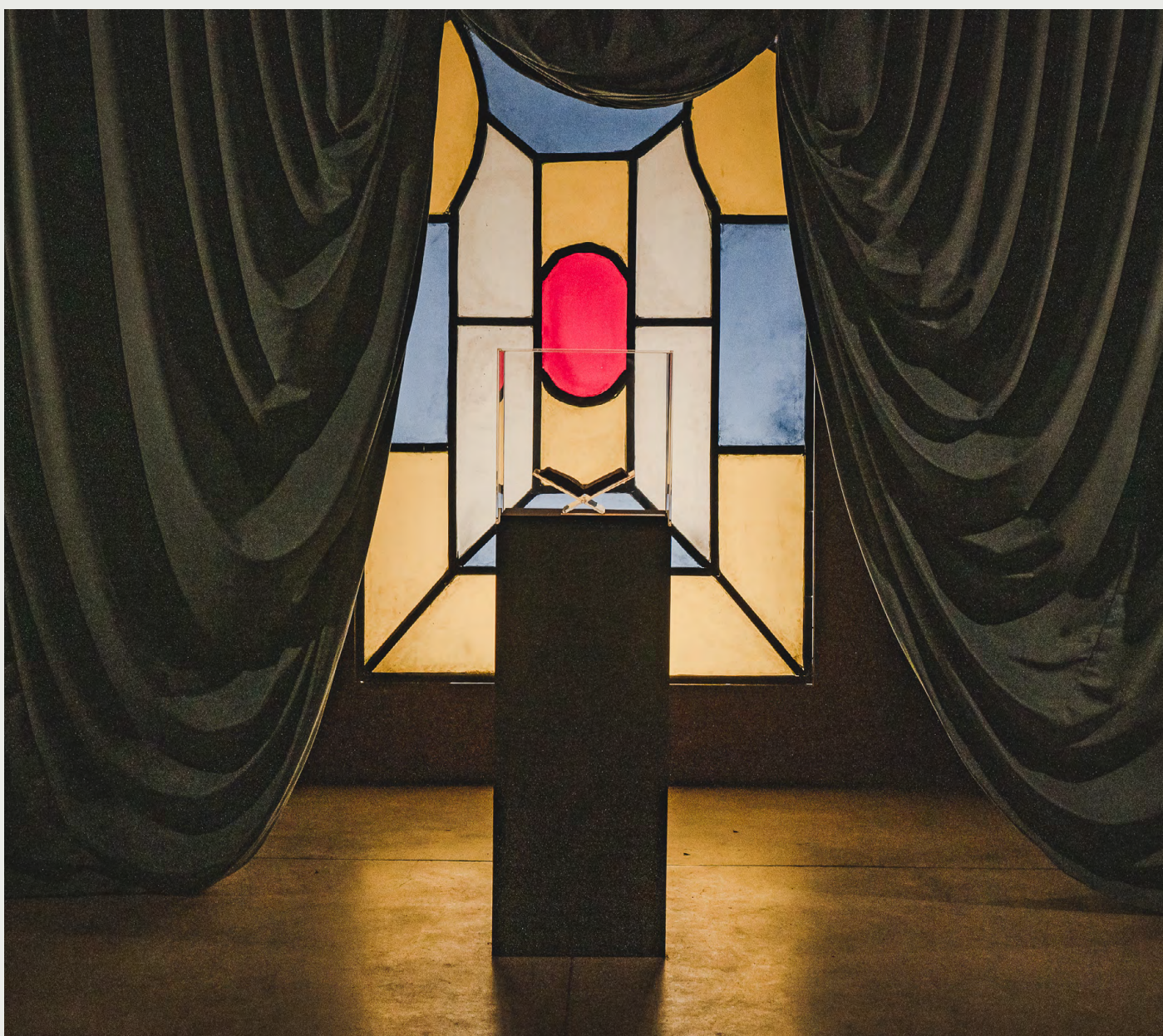


NOT JUST WITCHES

STREGHERIE appeals to a wide and diverse audience: scholars, artists, teachers, students, enthusiasts of history, anthropology and spirituality, or simply those curious to discover a hidden side of female knowledge.

Visitors are invited to symbolically undergo an initiation rite: abandoning the old view of witches as the embodiment of evil, to be reborn to a more authentic and articulated understanding.

As is customary with Vertigo Syndrome, the exhibition will be enriched by side events, meetings, workshops and educational activities that explore the theme of the exhibition in greater depth, with a particular focus on involving schools and universities.





THE CURATOR

Andrea Pellegrino is a journalist, writer and art historian with a degree in Cultural Heritage Sciences. His academic training led him to explore the symbolic and cultural value of works of art, an interest that is intertwined with his innate passion for mystery and esoteric literature. A criminologist by profession (certified by AICIS, the Italian Association of Criminologists for Investigation and Security), he has completed postgraduate studies in Clinical Criminology and Criminal Psychology, which have allowed him to explore the dark corners of the mind and society. He teaches postgraduate courses in Criminology and Investigative Journalism. He is also involved in the study and prevention of crimes related to cultural heritage. He is deputy director of the publishing house Libraio Editore, the publishing project of the historic Liberia Esoterica in Milan, which specialises in esotericism and historical mysteries. Andrea Pellegrino is a prominent figure in the cultural scene, leading conferences and giving lectures that explore the themes of criminology, esotericism and artistic symbolism. He has collaborated, and continues to do so, with national television and radio stations and has written for numerous newspapers, establishing himself as a leading author for enthusiasts of historical enigmas.

THE EIGHT PORTALS



ROOM 1. THE CALL, THE WHISPER IN THE WOODS

This is where the journey begins. The aim is to convey the sacred role that certain women played in ancient times. They were not considered criminals but figures who possessed knowledge that straddled the boundary between the human world and the spirit world. They were true guides, like sibyls, pythias and seers. How were these figures chosen? Did they have a vocation? An inner calling?

The setting evokes the echo of the sacred forest, the shadow of sacred knowledge.

Theme: sacred knowledge

Focus: In this portal, visitors will explore the mythical origins of witches, through oral tales, pre-Christian religions, oracular cults and primordial female symbolism.



Robert Shipster, *The Witches of Endor*, 1797, private collection



John William Waterhouse, *The magic circle*, 19th century, private collection



ROOM 2. THE MIRROR, THE BODY THAT KNOWS

The female body has been the subject of two opposing and conflicting attitudes. On the one hand, devotion and respect, as in the sweetness of the Song of Songs or the concept of the angelic woman in the poetry of the dolce stil novo. On the other, obsession with the sensuality of the female body, considered a receptacle of temptation. The works selected in this room explore the relationship between witchcraft and physicality: sensuality, transgression, menstruation, desire, abortion. Here, art dialogues with feminism and psychoanalysis, presenting the witch as an image of a body that cannot be possessed or regulated. A body that knows.

Theme: the female body between ecstasy and condemnation.

Focus: transgression, eroticism, metamorphosis. Non-conforming identity.



Henry Chapront, Là-Bas, 1924, private collection



Joseph Apoux, Sorcières, 1888, private collection

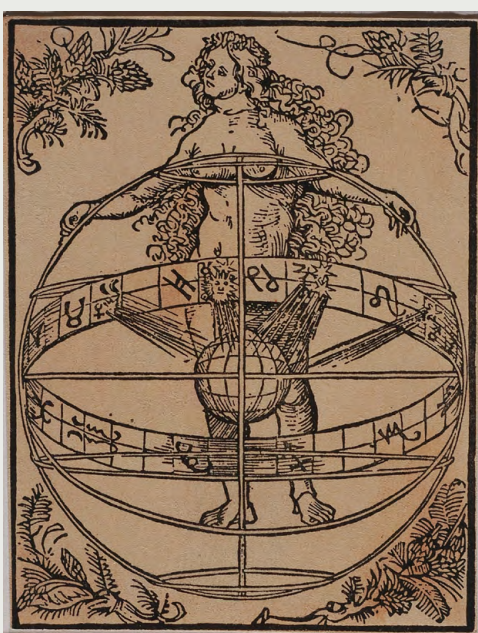


ROOM 3. OBLIVION, HERBS, SILENCE AND LOST KNOWLEDGE

The traditional academic elite has always feared women; the fact that there were female figures who could surpass men in terms of skill and knowledge was unacceptable. Yet witches are also guardians of other knowledge: herbal medicine, midwifery, toxicology. These subjects are deeply intertwined with the magical arts: in this network of correspondences, science and magic begin to dialogue. This section explores the ancestral knowledge passed down by women excluded from academia. The visual works are accompanied by magical-ritual objects, books on folk medicine and knowledge of nature.

Theme: the dialogue between science and magic.

Focus: folk medicine, herbalism, home laboratories, witchcraft as a “heretical” science. Amulets, spells and protection.



Albrecht Dürer, La magia, 1482, private collection



Eugène Le Roux, La preparazione del filtro, 1840, private collection



ROOM 4. THE BRAND, BIRTH OF A NIGHTMARE

Why is knowledge demonised? What does all this have to do with the advent of Christianity? This section analyses the construction of the witch as an enemy: Inquisitorial propaganda, burnings at the stake, torture, regulatory madness. Prints, texts and paintings show the sabbath not as reality, but as a nightmare generated by power. Visitors will learn about the origins of the various topoi, the recurring narrative motifs concerning the iconography of the witch that still characterise the collective imagination today.

Theme: the triumph of ideology over the individual.

Focus: demonisation, inquisition, fear of the feminine.



Francisco José de Goya Y Lucientes, Attempts, 1881-1886, private collection



Léopold Desbrosses, Hille Bobbe, 1876, private collection



ROOM 5. THE RETURN, YOU DIDN'T BURN ME

In the last thirty years of the 1700s, thanks to Enlightenment ideology, the fires of the Inquisition were extinguished and witches, with all the imagery they conjured up, were relegated to the fringes of a world of superstition and ignorance. Yet, a few years later, witches rose from the ashes with a new look, completely reversing their position. In the midst of scientific positivism, the necromancer witch of Endor returned as a medium, acclaimed and studied by scientists, doctors, physicists and writers. Witches regained their place in society and the Sibyls moved from the alcoves of ancient times to bohemian and Victorian salons.

Theme: the return of the witch in a new guise

Focus: how witches changed their appearance, role and reputation.



Auguste Blanchard - the Old, La Cartomante, undated, private collection



Anonymous, Hand to teach the art of palmistry, 1800, private collection



ROOM 6. REBIRTH, THE CIRCLE CLOSES

Today, the witch is reborn as a symbol of resistance, political protest, and reappropriation of the self. This section of the catalogue includes contributions from modern artists, performers, illustrators, and writers who rewrite magical language as a subversive gesture. The witch becomes a figure of struggle, sisterhood, and collective care. A counter-narrative.

Theme: martyrdom and survival

Focus: resistance, dance, transformation.



Leonor Fini, La strega a cavallo della scopa, 80s, private collection



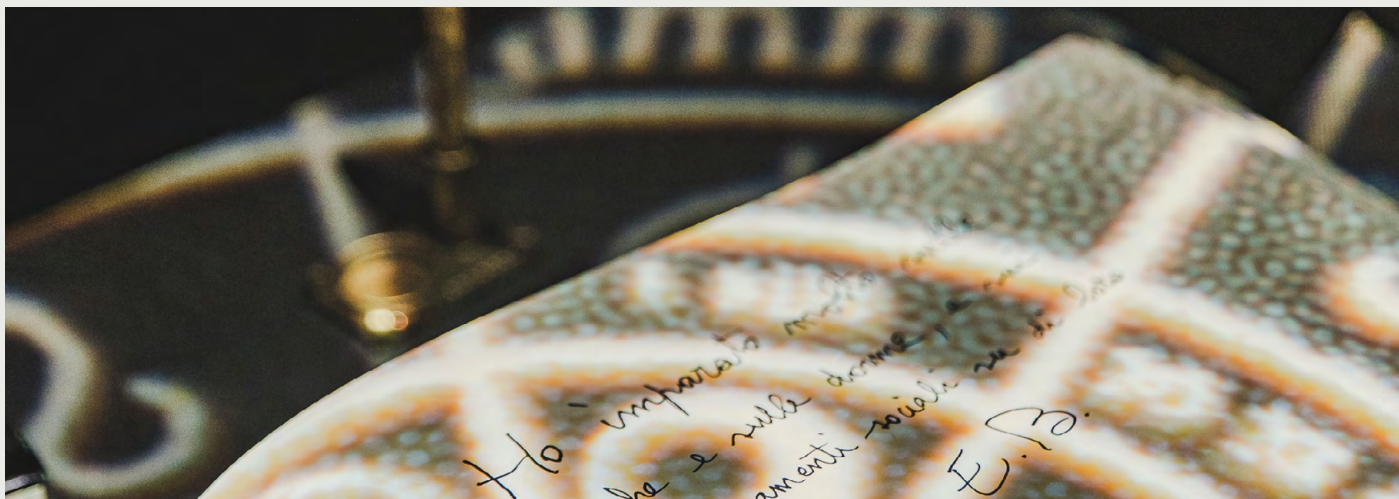
Jo Bressani, Il Maestro e Margherita, undated, private collection



7. TRIAL ROOM

An immersive experience in which visitors participate in a real witchcraft trial. The room, created in collaboration with the State Archives of Modena, is dedicated to a witchcraft trial that took place in 1539. Visitors will sit in the dock and be subjected to a barrage of terrible accusations from the inquisitor and increasingly exhausted responses from the woman on trial, who is willing to confess to obscene acts in order to put an end to the torture.





8. BOOK OF SHADOWS

The exhibition concludes with another immersive room composed of mirrors, lights and a central podium on which rests the Book of Shadows, an essential tool for every true witch, on which to write recipes and spells. Armed with pen and inkwell, visitors are invited to share their thoughts and personal enchantments forever with future visitors.

The room is accompanied by a sound system that makes the experience moving and emotionally powerful.



SPECIAL SECTION

THE RESEARCHER'S SLIDESHOW

The exhibition opens with a study by a witch researcher and a slideshow with photographs and articles recounting various episodes of witch hunts.



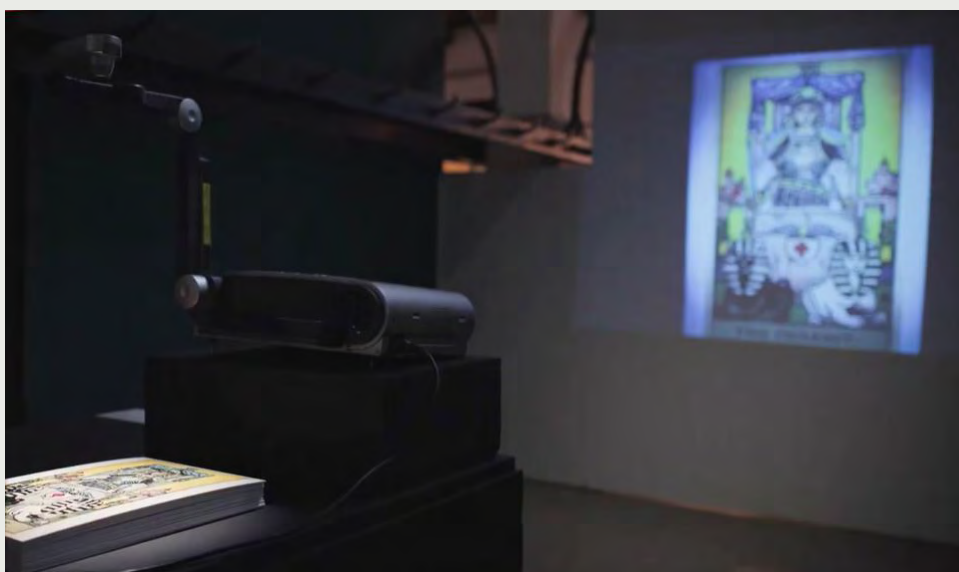
THE SPIRITIST SESSION

A cube furnished like a spiritualist's sitting room and a light that flashes as if to indicate the presence of a ghost



TAROT YOU

The visitor chooses the tarot card that calls to them, then stands in front of the projection and becomes part of the card.



WHAT OUR VISITORS SAY

Transcripts of video testimonials from the latest edition of Stregherie



“ I really enjoyed the exhibition. I liked the fact that it retraced a history made up of many themes that recur frequently and perhaps even today.

Seeing the evolution of the multifaceted representation of women in prints, paintings and objects, as told by others, makes me think back to stories of sisters, but also brothers, who have always been labelled and forced to endure a narrative that was not theirs and that deserves to be heard.

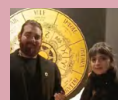
GIADA



“ I really enjoyed this exhibition. We actually come from outside the area, we're not from here and we came especially to see it. I also really liked all the ideas that are actually part of the magic of Northern Europe. It was really interesting, it's a gem, thank you!

I really appreciate that it also served as a tribute to people who are no longer with us. It was wonderful to be able to bring their voices here for a few more minutes. Thank you.

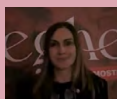
MARIANNA & EMANUELE



“ It is very interesting, unique and moving, like stepping into the heart of history and thinking about what these women went through.

I would also recommend it for children, because it is an alternative way to touch on important pieces of history, seeing what happened, in a way that is not too intrusive.

SERENA



“ I would recommend the Stregherie exhibition because its colours, works and audio make it unique in Italy.

I would recommend it because it gives everyone the opportunity to learn about a world that is completely unknown to most people, and it is very interesting.

CARLA





Technical details

Total number of works:
approximately 200

Curator: Andrea Pellegrino

Exhibition conditions

- all the works are framed
- the exhibition travels in crates
- For private collectors, personalised transport contract
- works available according to exhibition dates

Scenographic installations included:

- Immersive Process Room
- Immersive Mirror Room
- 1 witch statue with base
- The researcher's Slideshow
- The Spiritist session
- Room Taror You
- Children's play room
- Room Audio (ITA, upon request ENG)
- Scenographic apparatus (window, red curtain)

Transportation

From Milan and lenders' premises

Rental conditions

To be paid by the requesting entity:

- Transportation costs
- 'Nail-to-nail' insurance
- Travel and accommodation for the exhibition manager and the curator

Contacts

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WHAT IS VERTIGO SYNDROME?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vertigo S.R.L. is a cultural enterprise operating since 2022, specialising in the conception, design and production of exhibitions and exhibition events in Italy and abroad. The company offers turnkey solutions for public bodies, museums, foundations and cultural institutions, combining scientific content and immersive technologies.

COMPANY DATA

- Company name: Vertigo S.R.L.
- Registered office: Corso Milano 23, Monza
- Legal form: Limited Liability Company
- Year of incorporation: 2022
- Sole Director: Chiara Spinnato (CEO & Institutional Relations)

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Vertigo is involved in the creation of:

- Temporary exhibitions produced in-house
 - Strategic consulting
 - Design of exhibition itineraries for third parties (museums, organisers, public and private bodies)
 - Integrated services: curation, set-up, graphics, transport, technical coordination
- Main clients: private entities (exhibition organisers), public bodies (municipalities, museums), cultural associations, private museums, collectors.

THE VERTIGO SYNDROME BRAND

In just a few years, Vertigo Syndrome has built a highly recognisable brand, focused on an innovative, accessible and engaging cultural offering.

The exhibitions produced by Vertigo Syndrome are aimed primarily at a non-specialist audience, using narrative, visual and technological languages that aim not to bore visitors who may arrive at the exhibition legitimately unprepared for the theme covered.

The scientific content is always rigorous, but conveyed in an experiential, immersive and creative way, going beyond the “classic” model of traditional exhibitions.

This positioning has allowed Vertigo to build its own niche, with a loyal audience (thanks also to a newsletter affiliation of over 51,000 contacts), greater digital virality and interest from public and private entities eager to renew their cultural offerings.





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**“A crusade against the boredom
of art exhibitions”**

www.vertigosyndrome.it