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Press release

Festival della Mente | 20th edition

Wonder

Sarzana, 1st, 2nd and 3rd September 2023

Festival della Mente – The Festival of the Mind is the first European festival devoted to creativity and thought processes. This year it reaches its 20th edition and calls upon writers, artists, historians, philosophers and scientists in the squares and theatres of Sarzana (SP) **from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd September**.

Since 2004, the festival has been proposing an integrated vision of culture, enhancing the dialogue between the humanistic and the scientific field, in order to better understand complex realities such as the one we are living today. This year, the reflections, thoughts and dialogues of the speakers will intersect and intertwine on the topic of “wonder”.

The festival is promoted by Fondazione Carispezia and the Municipality of Sarzana, and directed by Benedetta Marietti (<https://www.festivaldellamente.it/en/>).

In addition to the **30 scheduled events**, there will be **26 events for children and kids** curated by Francesca Gianfranchi and focusing on science, technology, art, writing and drawing.

PROGRAMME

Massimiliano Valerii, philosopher and writer, opens the festival with the lecture *The trial of Galileo Galilei: wonder and disenchantment*. The scientific revolution led to discoveries that ignited the conflict between truth and power. Galileo was arrested and condemned to abjuration. Was this an ingenious stratagem of a heroic defender of freedom of thought against all dogma to escape martyrdom and secretly promote human emancipation? This enigma anticipates current questions about the relationship between ethics and the dominance of technology, with the proliferation of technologies that threaten our free will.

Wonder also springs from the dialogue with those who look at the world from a different point of view: children. **Franco Lorenzoni**, primary school teacher and founder of **Cenci's Casa-laboratorio** – a centre for educational trials – in *Educating against the wind* will recount the experiences of teachers who have elevated education to a primary source of democracy, freedom, growth and debate.

Direttrice
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From childhood to adulthood with *The age of wonder*, a dialogue with philosopher **Gabriella Caramore** and immunologist **Antonella Viola** coordinated by radio author **Rosa Polacco**.

The writers **Elena Stancanelli** and **Bernardo Zannoni**, winner of the 2022 Campiello Prize, in *Out of the blue: wandering to find wonder* will talk about adolescence through literature: the middle age, the eternal wonder.

Nobody would think to use the word “wonder” talking about war. The journalist and writer **Francesca Mannocchi** in *Wonder during war: is it possible?* will explain that narrating wonder, in a conflict, means not giving in to the habit of other people's pain.

In the lecture *Wonderfully informed*, **Francesco Costa**, managing editor of *Il Post*, will give us some tips on how to distinguish the false from the true in a world where the sources of information, news and opinions to which we are exposed are soaring.

Wonder towards universe and nature is a feeling that precedes consciousness. During *Matter. The marvellous illusion*, **Guido Tonelli**, physicist at Cern in Geneva, will take the audience on an adventurous exploration of the matter: from the ordinary one (rocks, planets and living beings) to black holes. While astrophysicist **Ersilia Vaudò** will tell stories and secrets of the universe between light and gravity during her lecture *Mirabilis*.

During the event *Wonderful immense sea*, **Sabrina Speich** – physicist oceanographer and chair of various committees on the ocean and climate under the aegis of the World Meteorological Organisation and the UN – will explain how our existence is inseparable from the sea, a sea that is unfortunately rapidly changing.

The writer and physicist **Paolo Giordano** will hold the event *Wonder between nature and knowledge* investigating the fragility of man's fascination with the natural world during a time in which dramatic environmental crises are unfolding.

The Spanish theoretical physicist and neuroscientist **Nazareth Castellanos** will take the audience on a journey through the body to discover its amazing impact on neurons and our mind during the lecture *Discovering our mind through the wonders of our body*.

During the event *Generative AI and the Wonder of Human Intelligence*, the insights from **Gerd Gigerenzer**'s cognitive psychology and heuristics research will meet the critical perspectives from **Veronica Barassi** in the anthropology of artificial intelligence.

The psychoanalyst **Massimo Recalcati** comes back to the festival with a double event. The first one, entitled *The trauma of loss and the working-through of a bereavement*, explains the mechanisms triggered after the loss of a loved person. In the second lecture, *Wonderful nostalgia*, Recalcati will juxtapose the concept of mourning with the one of nostalgia, both of which are linked by the experience of absence.

In the meeting *Dreams as neuro-wonder*, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst **Vittorio Lingiardi** will guide the audience on a dreamlike journey suspended between myth and dream, mind and brain.

The writer **Alessandro Zaccuri**, protagonist of the meeting *Learning wonder from literature*, suggests to think about the experience of reading as a journey to recognize the other, the unknown, the unexpected that has always been part of our existences.

Erika Fatland, Norwegian anthropologist and writer, in dialogue with the Italian writer **Alberto Riva**, in the meeting *The wonder of wanderlust*, will talk about the wonders of travelling.

The relieving experience of walking and imagining will be experienced during the event *The Humble Beauty of Ditches and Majesties* with an exceptional guide: the writer and critic **Alberto Rollo**.

From literature to art with **Martina Mazzotta**, art historian, in the event *Wunderkammer: Art, Science, Wonder. From the Renaissance to today*.

Wunderkit, five objects for creativity: a special interview with architect and illustrator **Carlo Stanga** explaining his personal kit of "mirabilia", curated by **Giulia Capodieci**.

Once again, this year, the three events held by the writer and scholar of ancient thought **Matteo Nucci** are highly anticipated. How does wonder drive human beings to philosophical research? In the first lecture Nucci will answer this question starting from the Plato's *Republic*. The second lecture embraces the oldest poem in our literary tradition, *The Iliad*. A deep analysis of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez concludes the trilogy. Wonder, the narrative engine of the South American author's work, is fueled by continuous and decisive anticipations capable of enthraling the reader and transporting him to another, magical dimension.

The historian **Alessandro Barbero** is once again among the guests of the festival with the lecture *1204: The Crusaders Discover Constantinople*.

This year "ApprofonditaMente" section returns with two events. The first one starts with the docufilm "Un altro domani" ("Another tomorrow"), directed by director and screenwriter **Silvio Soldini** and co-written with **Cristiana Mainardi**, screenwriter and producer. The film investigates the depths of emotional relationships to understand how violence generates and how it can be prevented. The viewing of the film will be followed by a dialogue also with **Alessandra Simone**, Chief of Police of the province of Savona, and **Beatrice Fraschini**, a member of UNAVI - Unione Nazionale Vittime (National Union of Victims).

The second event is about the topic of prisons. The meeting *Wonder inside* will be attended by journalist and writer **Marianna Aprile**; **Enrico Casale**, actor and director, curator of the national prison theatre project "Per Aspera ad Astra" at La Spezia prison; **Maurizio Careddu** and **Cristiana Farina**, scriptwriters of the Italian TV series *Mare Fuori*, produced by Rai Fiction; **Gianluca Guida**, director of the Nisida Juvenile Penal Institute.

Each day will end with performances, live music and readings. The singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist **Chiara Civello** will hold the live performance *I am what I am*, spacing between jazz and pop music, along with **Dario Bassolino** on keyboards, **Stefano Costanzo** on drums and **Ameen Saleem** on bass and double bass.

In homage to the writer Azar Nafisi, **Cinzia Spanò**, actress and playwright, proposes *Reading Lolita in Teheran*, a concert-reading with excerpts from Nafisi's novel, interspersed with original compositions performed by **Roberta Di Mario**, composer, pianist and artistic director of music festivals.

Wild Bestiary. Illustrated Reading will see **Massimo Zamboni** on stage in a journey discovering creatures that are changing the natural side of our country. The reading is accompanied by a video exploring the works of Stefano Schiaparelli and by a background music composed by Zamboni himself and Matteo Maragno.



On Sunday, the reading-event *We, the Sceptics* will feature the poet and essayist **Antonella Anedda** and the music duo **BLASTULA.scarnoduo**. A music performance of Anedda's collection "Historiae" in which the voice of **Monica Demuru**, vocalist, actress and playwright, merges with the traditional and occasional percussive instruments of percussionist and composer **Cristiano Calcagnile**.

Tickets: on <https://www.festivaldellamente.it/en/> and at the ticket office of **Impavidi Theatre** in Sarzana

Facebook: @festivaldellamente | Twitter: @FestdellaMente | Instagram: festival_della_mente |
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Press Accreditation: see the Press Area on <https://www.festivaldellamente.it/en/>

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