

Ellipse and Ellipsis  
21.03 - 21.06.2025  
Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation

Acousmonium ODAE, Anthea Hamilton, Gabriella Hirst, Jasper Marsalis,  
Jota Mombaça, Sandra Mujinga, Objects of Common Interest.

Curated by Vittoria de Franchis

*Ellipse and Ellipsis* is a multimedia environment, with the ellipse and the ellipsis as guiding tropes. Both words stem from the Greek noun *elleipsis*, meaning “falling short” or “defect,” and, while shaping astronomical and linguistic contexts, can also serve as metaphors for how we relate to otherness—whether time, a living being, or a fantastical idea.

Johannes Kepler, in his study of Mars’, uplifted the ellipse from a flawed circle to the foundation of celestial choreography. The two focal points constituting the ellipse imply that when at its centre, there is always another core to consider—an inherent alterity that defines its structure. Its returning motion carries rhythm and repetition, but within it also lies the potential for variations that do not emerge from comparison but fluctuations and tensions. The ellipse is relationality and transformation in motion.

An ellipsis marks a pause in thinking, an indicator of potentiality within the discourse. Leaving something unsaid—whether by secrecy, chance, memory lapse, or unpredictability—fosters participation in the narrative process, moving beyond the singular point (of view) to encompass silenced or silent voices. Incompletion or void are also fundamental requirements for creative thinking, as: “Only a message containing something unexpressed, uncertain, or partially indecipherable would break through the threshold of our consciousness demanding to be received and interpreted”.

*Ellipse and Ellipsis* unfolds as a manifesto of possibility and a site for immersive speculation. The works by Anthea Hamilton, Gabriella Hirst, Jasper Marsalis, Jota Mombaça, Sandra Mujinga, Objects of Common Interest, and the Acousmonium ODAE by Neuf Voix form the tonics of a scenography—where repetition, metamorphosis and possibility intertwine— to be deciphered through co-habitation. Elements that typically underpin the structure and organization of a space such as a wall, plants, a chair, a soundtrack, come forth activated and ambiguous.

Skies have long been a symbol of humanity’s quest for understanding—our place in the universe, our boundaries, and our identity as human beings. The *Scrambled Sky* by Anthea Hamilton creates a sliding space suggesting different approaches to reality’s edges and how we relate with them. Sky’s (not) the Limit but an ethereal, conceptual, digital threshold prompting an exercise in imagination—one that, as Hamilton puts it, allows us to “enter the shadowy sensation of culture, where a strange entity becomes open and available to you. But to meet it, you must reach across a void with your whole self, so that it can become concrete.”

- 1 Johannes Kepler, *First Law of Planetary Motion*, 1609.
- 2 Italo Calvino, *Prima che tu dica ‘Pronto’*, 1985.
- 3 Anthea Hamilton in *Questionnaire: Anthea Hamilton*, Frieze, Issue 195, 2018.

Rooted in pre-Enlightenment thought, the ‘Doctrine of Signatures’ suggested that plants were given by God human-like appearances to indicate their medical purpose. *Body Garden* by Gabriella Hirst, is an ongoing series of living installations part of the artist’s exploration of gardens as sites of critique and care. Composed of 25 kinds of plants referencing body parts, treatments and vices through their names and shapes, the piece acts as a mirror for interspecies reciprocity and a door to challenge anthropocentrism. The pots, selected by the artist for their organ and vessel-like forms, amplify the garden’s physical presence. Many of these have been kindly lent by Troy Town’s Hoxton Gardenware, a youth-led not-for-profit ceramic enterprise, located at the site where, in the early 1700s, the nurseryman Thomas Fairchild artificially hybridized plants for London’s nascent horticultural industry.

Sound, as an invisible architect, emerges from the Acousmonium ODAE—a hi-fi diffusion system designed and hand-built by musician Neuf Voix. Inspired by the Acousmonium developed by François Bayle in 1974 for the Groupe de Recherches Musicales (GRM) in Paris, each speaker is calibrated for a particular frequency range. Standing between a minimalist sculpture and an iridescent orchestra, the ten elements of the Acousmonium ODAE play commissioned ‘loop with an open end’ by Jasper Marsalis (21 June–25 April), Sandra Mujinga (26 April–23 May), and Jota Mombaça (24 May–21 June). As the sound pieces unfold through repetition, the materic presence of sound becomes the catalyst for understanding the listening experience as spatial, embodied and ultimately interactive.

A series of lightweight, air-filled structures inhabit the space, merging the oneiric with the technocratic. The *Inflatable Chair* by Objects of Common Interest extends the design duo’s ongoing research on inflatables—born from a desire to break free from the constraints of traditional materials and forms, echoing the utopian ideals of 1960s pneumatic experiments that envisioned air-filled structures as catalysts for radical spatial and social transformation. Realised in biodegradable plastic and designed to follow the natural form of the body in a state of repose, the chairs create an ephemeral landscape that oscillates between permanence and transition. Visitors are invited to contribute to a shifting topography shaped by their intuition, movements, and desires.

*Ellipse and Ellipsis* is the first in a series of contextual exercises curated by Vittoria de Franchis for the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, featuring works from the collection alongside new commissions. The exhibition inaugurates the new visual identity of the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, designed by Nationhood.

Thanks to Emalin, Delfina Foundation, kaufman repetto, Hoxton Gardenware, Troy Town.

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