

E non dono celeste Cristina Lavosi

February 28, 2026 - May 15, 2026

E non dono celeste is Cristina Lavosi's first solo exhibition in Italy. Through film and audiovisual installation, she examines the role of institutions in constructing dominant narratives and legitimising punitive logics. At the core of the project are two new video works developed through workshops and shared creative processes, exploring abolitionism and transformative justice as practices capable of imagining forms of coexistence that move beyond punishment and isolation.

Without offering simple solutions or ideal models, Lavosi presents the reflections and experiences of collectives, activists, and young participants, questioning how to build communities grounded in shared responsibility, listening, and collective facilitation of conflict. Created in collaboration with the collective ULIT, *Cinque lire di stelle* focuses on practices of self-education and conflict facilitation; while *Cos'altro, cos'altro c'è nella città gioiosa?*, inspired by Ursula K. Le Guin's short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas*, engages a group of adolescents in a filmic and performative reflection on utopia, privilege, and sacrifice.

Balancing speculative imagination and collective practice, *E non dono celeste* invites us to rethink the ways we live together, recognising that spaces of trust and justice are not heavenly gifts, but slow and complex processes to be built day by day.

Films realised in collaboration with:

ULIT—Un Limone In Tasca

MaTeMù, youth center of CIES Onlus, Roma, Tamara Bartolini, Michele Baronio, and Sarah Silvagni, Kateryna Berezina, Valentina Bianchi, Marília Breite, Elke De Neve, Tine Deboelpaep, Diane Fleury, Jimena Garcia Vazquez

Exhibition design:

Nicholas Sabena and Riccardo Cenedella

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Textile scenography produced at Off the Grid (Cas-co Leuven)

E non dono celeste
Public Program

March 12, 2026

Open discussion on violence and security apparatuses in dialogue with activists and grassroots organisations in Turin.

March 25, 2026

Costellazioni imperfette

Reading group on texts selected by ULIT.

April 7, 2026

Sogno o strumento?

Workshop on critiques of transformative justice, facilitated by Giusi Palomba.

April 11-12, 2026

Cos'altro, cos'altro c'è nella città gioiosa?

Speculative fiction and zine-making workshop for a society beyond punishment, facilitated by Cristina Lavosi with Spazio Muffa.

April 22, 2026

Costellazioni imperfette

Reading group on texts selected by ULIT.

May 4, 2026

Corpi sulla soglia

Forum Theatre workshop on conflict, community, and safe(r) spaces from feminist and queer perspectives, in collaboration with Qu'ouir.

May 13, 2026

Costellazioni imperfette

Reading group on texts selected by ULIT.

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Through film and audiovisual installation, Cristina Lavosi examines the role of institutions in constructing dominant narratives, legitimising unequal power relations, and imposing norms of living. Her projects often emerge from workshops, field research, and shared creative processes in which authorship is distributed and knowledge is co-produced.

E non dono celeste, her first solo show in Italy, unfolds around two new video works conceived as stages within a broader artistic inquiry – two nodes in a constellation of practices that explore the punitive universe and contemporary visions of transformative justice.

The two participatory films approach, from different perspectives, the speculative potential of imagining and rehearsing new forms of collectivity. Is a world possible in which no one is deemed expendable for the safety and well-being of others? Can we construct alternatives to the still-dominant political and cultural belief that punishment and isolation are the only possible responses to social conflict and violence?

If the State's punitive responses ultimately increase rather than reduce violence, how can this cycle be interrupted? In response to this question, transformative justice proposes a community-based approach to conflict that addresses the root causes of harm. It rejects isolation and individual erasure in favor of shared responsibility.

We are currently living through a period of rising authoritarianism, in which violence is presented as the institutional solution to conflict. Widespread distrust toward possible future political change, however, should not lead us to normalise or passively accept this tendency. This moment calls for new tools to imagine practices of collective self-education and to renew our ways of being together, beginning with radically different forms of dialogue and listening.

Although the abolitionist perspective has historically focused on institutional structures such as prisons, the police, and more broadly state violence, it is important to remember that punitive mindsets are not confined to institutions. They often manifest as internalised processes that infiltrate interpersonal relationships and shape the ways we organise, educate, and socialise. In this sense, the words and images in the exhibition may resonate with our intimate experiences – those moments in which we responded to harm with a desire for revenge and the identification of a scapegoat.

Continuously negotiating her position as artist, participant, director, and facilitator, Lavosi has woven relationships with people who have each, in their own way, been shaped by political and social experiences related to these themes. *E non dono celeste* brings together reflections and practices from collectives and groups engaged in imagining new relational models, redistributing responsibility, and building less hierarchical and more transparent structures – without eliding the frictions, limits, and fallibility inherent to communities themselves. Fully “safe” spaces or pure communities do not exist. Embracing error, conflict, complexity, and uncertainty is an essential part of this long and demanding journey. As with any systemic change, there is always the risk of idealising the process and underestimating the labour and time it requires.

“The Ethics of Solidarity, whose construction must be the work of the oppressed themselves through relentless struggle, is not a heavenly gift: from the sky fall rain, snow, ice – sometimes bombs and rockets – but not magical solutions.”¹

The works in the exhibition retain the imaginative and almost dreamlike dimension of speculative thought, alongside an equally urgent need to remain grounded in the reality of interpersonal relationships, inner work, and reciprocal listening. These reflections extend beyond explicitly political or activist contexts; filtered through individual emotional experience, they also traverse the familial, professional, educational, and care networks that shape our everyday lives.

The video *Cinque lire di stelle* emerges from Lavosi's collaboration with ULIT – a collective of which she is a member, dedicated to independent research, reading, and translation on transformative justice, as well as to collective self-training in conflict facilitation. Situated between documentation of self-education processes and collective film experimentation, the work pays homage to a practice that is often silent and nearly invisible: exercises in listening, mediation tools, and small gestures capable of reshaping relationships.

A recurring element in Lavosi's practice is the use of objects as mediating devices. Whether real or

imagined, these objects sometimes function as filters for critically reading power relations among the subjects in the videos; at other times, as in this exhibition, they become tools that facilitate the constitution and interpretation of community practices as acts of resistance.

In one of the opening scenes, during a *check-in* moment, a participant brings a tuning fork to the group. Its A note serves to attune the voices and atmospheres of *Cinque lire di stelle*. The sound resonates throughout the exhibition, marking the rhythm of viewing and inviting attention to the configurations we assume in space: seated before a screen, gathered around a table for a workshop, standing in a circle to read aloud and listen. The modular seating and display elements, designed by Nicholas Sabena and Riccardo Cenedella, were conceived to accommodate these moments of activation.

The tuning fork metaphorically represents the effort required to build trust, share responsibility, and sustain the relationships that make spaces capable of holding emotion, vulnerability, error, and contradiction possible – spaces where one can be open without the risk of harm. Such spaces are not heavenly gifts, nor do they fall from the sky. They demand an embrace of the slowness of inner processes and the difficulty of human relationships.

In this process, the audiovisual medium has become an accomplice – an instrument for experimenting, working collectively, and shaping thought born of lived experience. An alternative tool through which to interrogate our gaze and the presence of our bodies in space. For ULIT, producing the video also became an opportunity to meet in person for the first time and to continue reading collectively, producing fanzines, translating texts, imagining, writing, and self-training in conflict facilitation. Creative practices from which solid relationships of trust may begin to emerge.

Abolitionism and transformative justice do not simply critique existing structures; they demand the active construction of the world we wish to inhabit, beginning from the most everyday dimensions. This means learning to move through conflict generatively with those close to us, practising sincere apologies, taking responsibility, and supporting one another through processes of healing. It means cultivating a culture of consent and developing the capacity to de-escalate violence as it emerges.

As Mariame Kaba reminds us, “The inability to offer a neatly packaged and easily digestible solution does not preclude offering critique or analysis of the ills of our current system. We live in a society that has been locked into a false sense of inevitability”.² Indeed, it takes a certain degree of trust and radical hope to imagine a world without prisons, in which everyone can feel safe and be educated toward happiness and freedom without judgment. Recent policies and reforms in education and security make such imaginative efforts seem increasingly utopian. Anarchist thought, often associated with abolitionism, radical pedagogy, and utopia, has historically kept this spark alive, despite internal divergences around violence and conflict.

Among the anarchist voices frequently invoked in discussions of speculative fiction, Ursula K. Le Guin stands out for her ability to hold together multiple levels of meaning, from the simple to the complex, creating worlds that unsettle power structures, paradigms, and the mental boundaries of our society.

Lavosi drew inspiration from Le Guin’s short story *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* to create *Cos’altro, cos’altro c’è nella città gioiosa?*, developed together with a group of adolescents and young adults from the MaTeMù community school in Rome’s Esquilino district. The story – presented in the exhibition alongside original workshop notes – depicts an apparently perfect, happy, and prosperous city whose collective harmony depends on the extreme suffering and isolation of a single imprisoned child, kept alive in inhumane conditions. All citizens are made aware of this truth and knowingly accept the moral pact upon which their well-being rests. A few adolescents, unable to live with this knowledge, choose to leave the city without returning. The reader is given no information about where they are going or why.

This open ending became the starting point for a workshop in which participants were invited to grapple with questions of community, utopia, justice, privilege, and oppression: What truly makes a city happy? What is a utopia? Must someone be sacrificed for others to thrive? Why is it so difficult to imagine a place in which everyone – without exception, even those who cause harm – is free? A distorting mirror of a reality already before us, the story speaks of abolitionist visions grounded in the belief that no one is expendable, and in the refusal of the comforting habit of inhabiting the world as it is without asking uncomfortable questions. It speaks of critical utopias – visions of better worlds that reject crystallised and perfect models, embracing complexity, contradiction, and unforeseen consequences along the way.

Conceived and conducted in collaboration with performer Sarah Silvagni and theatre educators Tamara Bartolini and Michele Baronio, the workshop approached Le Guin's themes through shared readings, discussions, theatrical exercises, bodily improvisations, and writing practices. Over the course of a month, the process led to the creation of a collective Super 8 short film, shot directly by the participants, who handled the camera and shared directorial decisions, shaping scenes based on theatrical exercises, personal reflections, and texts written specifically for the audiovisual work.

It is therefore also a work about points of view – about the eyes that see rather than what is seen. A work that seeks, on the one hand, to center the agency of young participants and, on the other, to question the power of the camera to impose narratives and hierarchies of meaning.

Throughout the exhibition period, the space will function as a catalyst for moments of discussion and collective learning for those wishing to delve deeper into transformative justice. A reading group curated by ULIT will be launched, alongside collective reflections on violence and security apparatuses in dialogue with activists and grassroots organisations in Turin. The programme also includes a workshop on the critiques of transformative justice facilitated by Giusi Palomba; a speculative fiction and zinemaking workshop led by Lavosi with Spazio Muffa; and a Forum Theatre workshop developed with Qu'ouïr, addressing conflict, community, and safe(r) spaces from feminist and queer perspectives.

¹ Augusto Boal, *A Estética do Oprimido* (Rio de Janeiro: Garamond, 2008), 17 (author's translation).

² Mariame Kaba, *We Do This 'Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2021), 25.