

**In celebration of the Italian Research Day in the World,  
the Farnesina presents the first five episodes of “Portraits of women 2 – Science”,  
a series about the innovative and female face of Italy**

*15th April 2022.* More and more women in Italy are working in the field of science, carrying out innovative research and making incredible progress. On the **Italian Research Day in the World**, the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation** is releasing the first five episodes of **Portraits of Women 2 – Science** (to which another five will be added during the year). The project conceived by the Farnesina has been created by **Annamaria Granatello**, President and Director of the Solinas Prize, with production by **Dugong Films** and graphics by **Julia Set Lab**. It is an opportunity to discover the best side of Italy and the latest achievements in science through the voices and the stories of the protagonists of **research, technology and Italian initiative**. The first series (<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8204734>), launched in 2021, and available on the *italiana* portal Vimeo channel, featured the female characters at the heart of cultural life in our Country.

*Portraits of Women 2 - Science* is a window into the future, opening onto the **Italian excellences**, which have been at the forefront of the most innovative scientific studies for years. From **robots inspired by plants** created by **Barbara Mazzolai** (<https://vimeo.com/699394606/b346d59983>), Associate Director for Robotics at the Italian Institute of Technology - IIT, where she is head of the Bioinspired Soft Robotics laboratory, to **Donatella De Pascale's** passion for **marine microorganisms** (<https://vimeo.com/699398601/3ce8cea63c>), First Technologist at the Anton Dohrn Zoological Station and Director of the Department of Eco-sustainable Marine Biotechnology; from interdisciplinary studies between **archaeology, robotics and artificial intelligence** conducted by **Arianna Traviglia** (<https://vimeo.com/699397924/68a083e93d>), Director of the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (CCHT) of the Italian Institute of Technology in Venice, to the machines that study the **biological tissue and fluid dynamics** of our body on which **Simona Celi** (<https://vimeo.com/699394571/eceb0f6260>), Director of BioCardioLab (bcl.ftgm.it) at the Cuore Hospital of the Fondazione Toscana G. Monasterio works; through to the studies on the use of **artificial intelligence** in robotics carried out by **Rita Cucchiara** (<https://vimeo.com/699396887/488caf1593>) Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. This is a multifaceted portrait that inspires women of today and tomorrow, going beyond all the gender stereotypes related to the world of scientific disciplines.

### **The five scientists protagonists of *Portraits of Women 2 – Science***

**Simona Celi**, graduate and Doctor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Pisa. Since her graduation, she has been involved in the characterisation of the cardiovascular system tissues and of fluid dynamics, integrating numerical modelling and experimental methods. In 2008 she founded the BioCardioLab ([bcl.ftgm.it](http://bcl.ftgm.it)) research laboratory at the Cuore Hospital of the Fondazione Toscana G. Monasterio. After a post-doctorate period at Yale University, she returned to Italy and since 2015 she has been managing the BioCardioLab, coordinating its activities and the research group. She also participates and coordinates numerous national and European projects in the field of medicine and bioengineering. Since 2017 she is a member of the executive board of the Italian Chapter of the European Society of Biomechanics and is a lecturer at the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Pisa. Since 2022 she has been a member of the scientific committee of the GISE Foundation for research and innovation in cardiology.

Since 2005, **Rita Cucchiara** has been a Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. She is Director of the AIRI, Interdepartmental Research and Innovation Centre for Artificial Interdepartmental Intelligence and Scientific Coordinator of AlmageLab, a Research Laboratory in Computer Vision, Machine/Deep Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Multimedia of the Department of Engineering "Enzo Ferrari". She is also Scientific Director of the "AI Academy" of Modena, an initiative co-funded by the Emilia Romagna Region for research in Artificial Intelligence and technological innovation in local industries. Her field of research is mainly Artificial Vision and Deep Learning, with over 350 publications on the subject. Rita Cucchiara holds a degree in Electronics (1989) and a PhD in Computer Engineering (1993), both from the University of Bologna.

Since 2019, **Donatella De Pascale** has been Lead Technologist at the Anton Dohrn Zoological Station and Director of the Department of Sustainable Marine Biotechnology. She has participated in numerous European and national projects as a partner and as a Coordinator. Her research mainly focuses on the isolation and characterisation of natural marine products. She has published about 80 articles in international journals. Since 2013, she has been an Independent Evaluator for the European Commission and is part of several international networks and organisations focused on the sustainable exploitation of marine resources for biotechnological applications. For 11 years she was a researcher at the Institute of Biochemistry of Proteins, CNR of Naples. She graduated in Biological Sciences from the University of Naples in 1992 and obtained a PhD in Biotechnology in 2000.

**Barbara Mazzolai** is Associate Director for Robotics at the Italian Institute of Technology - IIT where she is responsible for the Bioinspired Soft Robotics laboratory. She has a degree in Biological Sciences and a

PhD in Microsystems Engineering, and she is a pioneer in the interdisciplinary study of plants and their reproduction behaviour in technological applications. Mazzolai deals with soft robotics inspired by nature. She is responsible for innovative and ambitious research projects, such as the European Plantoid, GrowBot, I-Seed and the last I-Wood with which she won the prestigious funds awarded by the European Research Council - ERC in 2020.

**Arianna Traviglia** heads the Centre for Cultural Heritage Technology (CCHT) of the Italian Institute of Technology in Venice. A researcher at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University (Sydney) from 2006 to 2015, she was also a lecturer in Computer Applications for Archaeological Management and Digital Humanities at Ca' Foscari University, Venice from 2003 to 2019. She has been and is currently Principal Investigator of several projects funded by the European Commission and other international bodies related to the use of technology for cultural heritage. She works as a consultant to the Council of Europe in the field of digital technologies and artificial intelligence for the protection of archaeological heritage. She is part of the Executive Steering Committee of the Computer Applications in Archaeology (CAA) Association and serves as the coordinator of the CDP Foundation's technical-scientific committee.

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**Italiana** ([italiana.esteri.it](http://italiana.esteri.it)) is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation portal dedicated to the promotion of Italian culture, creativity and language. Created to present a new portrayal of our Country abroad, the portal looks at all the different aspects of culture (music, literature, theatre, dance, cinema, visual and performance arts, comics, digital art, design, architecture, history, archaeology, enogastronomy...). The website brings together audio-video productions, in-depth analyses, interviews, competition announcements, opportunities and much more. Updates are also shared via italiana's social media pages and its **monthly newsletter**.

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