



*A path crossing the Swiss Italian border next to a dilapidated custom house (Bizzarone, 2020). © Nicoletta Grillo*

# Borderscapes

## PhD seminar

4 February 2021

h 16:00 – 17:30 (CET)  
online

*Presenter*  
Nicoletta Grillo

*Discussants*  
Alice Buoli – Politecnico di Milano  
Luca Gaeta – Politecnico di Milano  
Hilde Van Gelder – KU Leuven  
Xavier Ribas – The University of Brighton

The seminar is part of the PhD research “In/visible geographies”, which develops a theoretical and visual investigation of the Swiss Italian borderscape. The seminar will first discuss a paper on the notion of a borderscape, an emerging conceptualization of borders within the contemporary debate of border studies, focusing on the relation between the term and landscape. The suffix “scape” presents a double meaning, between polity and scenery. On the one hand, “scape” is linked to the verb “shape” and indicates the human space to which man has given shape through everyday life activities and spatial practices such as walking, indicating a piece of land and its associated political community. On the other hand, “scape” is related to the idea of a scene or an open view and its aesthetic representation, denoting the representation of a piece of land, a meaning associated with the birth of landscape painting. This double meaning is explored by considering the painting *The Census at Bethlehem* (1566) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and is subsequently moved from landscape painting to photography in the context of borders. At the end of the seminar, some first results from a fieldwork in the Swiss Italian borderscape will be presented and discussed. This way, the seminar aims to outline a methodological approach to the study of a borderscape as a political and scenic space that is shaped, seen, represented and experienced.

*Double PhD*  
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