Curriculum vitæ

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Research Interests

Category theory and everything about it.

Current position   2020 | –

1 | **Postdoctoral fellow**   Jan 2020 | now 🇪🇪
Tallinna Tehnikaülikooli Küberneetika Instituut | Tallinn

Past positions   2016 | 2020

1 | **Postdoctoral fellow**   Jul 2019 | Dec 2019 🇵🇹
Centro de Matemática da Universidade de Coimbra | Coimbra

2 | **Postdoctoral fellow**   Sep 2018 | Feb 2019 🇩🇪
Max-Planck-Institut für Mathematik | Bonn

3 | **Postdoctoral fellow**   Mar 2017 | Apr 2018 🇨🇿
Masarykova univerzita | Brno

4 | **Postdoctoral fellow and Assistant Professor**   Sep 2016 | Nov 2016 🇨🇦
University of Western Ontario | London

Education   2008 | 2016

1 | **Ph.D. in Mathematics**   Oct 2012 | Jun 2016 🇮🇹
SISSA | Trieste
thesis: *t-structures on stable ∞-categories* : *2005.14295*

2 | **M.Sc. in Mathematics**   Oct 2010 | Jul 2012 🇮🇹
Università degli studi di Padova
thesis: *Orlov reconstruction theorem*

3 | **B.Sc. in Mathematics**   Jan 2008 | Jun 2010 🇮🇹
Università degli studi di Padova
thesis: *Monads and Beck's theorem*

Publications

1 | Bicategories of automata, automata in bicategories · w/G. Boccali, A. Laretto, S. Luneia |
2303.03865 | accepted for ACT2023

We study bicategories of (deterministic) automata, i.e. how automata $E \leftarrow E \otimes I \rightarrow O$ organise as the 1-cells of a bicategory $\mathbf{Mly}_{\mathcal{K}}$, drawing from prior work of Katis-Sabadini-Walters, and Di Lavore-Gianola-Román-Sabadini-Sobociński, and linking their bicategories of 'processes' to a bicategory of Mealy machines constructed in 1974 by R. Guitart. We make clear the sense in which Guitart's bicategory retains information about automata, proving that Mealy machines à la Guitart identify to certain Mealy machines à la K-S-W that we call fugal automata; there is a biadjunction between fugal automata and the bicategory of K-S-W. Then, we take seriously the motto that a monoidal category is just a one-object bicategory. We define categories of Mealy and Moore machines inside a bicategory $\mathbb{B}$; we specialise this to various choices of $\mathbb{B}$, like categories, relations, and profunctors. Interestingly enough, this approach gives a way to interpret the universal property of 'reachability of a state' as a Kan extension and leads to a new notion of 1- and 2-cell between Mealy and Moore automata, that we call intertwiners, related to the universal property of K-S-W bicategory.

2 | Completeness for categories of generalized automata · w/G. Boccali, A. Laretto, S. Luneia |
2303.03867 | accepted for CALCO2023

We present a slick proof of completeness and cocompleteness for categories of F-automata, where the span of maps $E \leftarrow E \otimes I \rightarrow O$ that usually defines a deterministic automaton of input I and output O in a monoidal category $(\mathcal{K}, \otimes)$ is replaced by a span $E \leftarrow FE \rightarrow O$ for a generic endofunctor $F : \mathcal{K} \rightarrow \mathcal{K}$ of a generic category $\mathcal{K}$: these automata exist in their 'Mealy' and 'Moore' version and form categories F-**Mly** and F-**Mre**; such categories can be presented as strict 2-pullbacks in **Cat** and whenever F is a left adjoint, both F-**Mly** and F-**Mre** admit all limits and colimits that $\mathcal{K}$ admits. We mechanize some of of our main results using the proof assistant Agda and the library `agda-categories`.

3 | Profunctor optics, a categorical update · w/B. Clarke, et al. |
2001.07488 | to appear in Compositionality

Profunctor optics are bidirectional data accessors that capture data transformation patterns such as accessing subfields or iterating over containers. They are modular, meaning that we can construct accessors for complex structures by combining simpler ones. Profunctor optics have been studied only using **Sets** as the enriching category and in the non-mixed case. However, functional programming languages are arguably better described by enriched categories and we have found that some structures in the literature are actually mixed optics. Our work generalizes a classic result by Pastro and Street on Tambara theory and uses it to describe mixed V-enriched profunctor optics and to endow them with V-category structure. We provide some original families of optics and derivations, including an elementary one for traversals that solves an open problem posed by Milewski. Finally, we discuss a Haskell implementation.

4 | Escrows are optics · w/F. Genovese, D. Palombi |
2105.10028 | to appear on JFT

We provide a categorical interpretation for *escrows*, i.e. trading protocols in trustless environment, where the exchange between two agents is mediated by a third party where the buyer locks the money until they receive the goods they want from the seller. A simplified escrow system can be modeled as a certain kind of *optic* in a monoidal category $\mathcal{M}$ (e.g., the category of sets with cartesian product); escrows can be regarded as morphisms of a category $\mathcal{E}(\mathcal{M})$, with the same objects of $\mathcal{M}$, and where the hom-objects are $\langle X, Y \rangle = \mathsf{Opt}_{\mathcal{M}}(\left[\begin{smallmatrix} Y \\ X \end{smallmatrix}\right], \left[\begin{smallmatrix} X \\ Y \end{smallmatrix}\right])$. When X is a comonoid and Y is a monoid in $\mathcal{M}$, $\mathcal{E}(\mathcal{M})(X, Y)$ is a monoid in **Set** (or in the base of enrichment chosen to model one's specific problem), acting on the set of optics $\left[\begin{smallmatrix} B \\ B \end{smallmatrix}\right] \rightarrow \left[\begin{smallmatrix} X \\ Y \end{smallmatrix}\right]$. Moreover, we define a map

$$\lhd : \langle Y, X \rangle \times \mathsf{Opt}(\left[\begin{smallmatrix} Y \\ X \end{smallmatrix}\right], \left[\begin{smallmatrix} B \\ B \end{smallmatrix}\right]) \rightarrow \mathsf{Opt}(\left[\begin{smallmatrix} Y \\ X \end{smallmatrix}\right], \left[\begin{smallmatrix} X \otimes B \\ Y \otimes B \end{smallmatrix}\right])$$

having action-like properties. This has the following interpretation: the object B acts as an intermediary in a transaction between X and Y, modeled by an escrow in $\langle Y, X \rangle$.

5 | Differential 2-rigs · w/T. Trimble |
2103.00938 | Applied Category Theory 2022
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6 | Fibrational linguistics II: language acquisition · w/F. Genovese, C. Puca |
2201.01136 | Applied Category Theory 2022
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7 | Fibrational linguistics I: first concepts · w/F. Genovese, C. Puca |
2201.01136 | Applied Category Theory 2022
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8 | Accessibility and presentability in 2-categories · w/I. Di Liberti |
1804.08710v4 | Journal of Pure and Applied Algebra | doi:10.1016/j.jpaa.2022.107155

We outline a definition of accessible and presentable objects in a 2-category $\mathcal{K}$ endowed with a "KZ context", that is to say a pair of lax-idempotent monads interacting in a prescribed way; this perspective suggests a unified treatment of many "Gabriel-Ulmer like" theorems, asserting how presentable objects arise as reflections of generating ones. We outline the notion of "(Gabriel-Ulmer) envelope" for a KZ context, sufficient to concoct Gabriel-Ulmer duality. We end the paper with a roundup of examples, involving classical (set-based and enriched), low dimensional category theory, and a perspective for future work, rooted in higher category theory and homotopy theory.

9 | A Categorical Semantics for Bounded Petri Nets   w/F. Genovese, D. Palombi |
2101.09100 | Applied Category Theory 2021
We provide a categorical semantics for bounded Petri nets, both in the collective- and individual-token philosophy. In both cases, we describe the process of bounding a net internally, by just constructing new categories of executions of a net using comonads, and externally, using lax-monoidal-lax functors. Our external semantics is non-local, meaning that tokens are endowed with properties that say something about the global state of the net. We then prove, in both cases, that the internal and external constructions are equivalent, by using machinery built on top of the Grothendieck construction. The individual-token case is harder, as it requires a more explicit reliance on abstract methods.

10 | Coends of higher arity   w/E. de Oliveira Santos |
2011.13881 | Applied Categorical Structures | doi:10.1007/s10485-021-09653-x
We specialise a recently introduced notion of generalised dinaturality for functors $T : (\mathcal{C}^{\mathrm{op}})^p \times \mathcal{C}^q \to \mathcal{D}$ to the case where the domain (resp., codomain) is constant, obtaining notions of ends (resp., coends) of higher arity, dubbed herein (p, q)-ends (resp., (p, q)-coends). While higher arity co/ends are particular instances of "totally symmetrised" (ordinary) co/ends, they serve an important technical role in the study of a number of new categorical phenomena, which may be broadly classified as two new variants of category theory. The first of these, weighted category theory, consists of the study of weighted variants of the classical notions and construction found in ordinary category theory, besides that of a limit. This leads to a host of varied and rich notions, such as weighted Kan extensions, weighted adjunctions, and weighted ends. The second, diagonal category theory, proceeds in a different (albeit related) direction, in which one replaces universality with respect to natural transformations with universality with respect to dinatural transformations, mimicking the passage from limits to ends. In doing so, one again encounters a number of new interesting notions, among which one similarly finds diagonal Kan extensions, diagonal adjunctions, and diagonal ends.

11 | A Categorical Semantics for Hierarchical Petri Nets   w/F. Genovese, J. Herold, D. Palombi |
2102.00096 | Proc. of GCM, 2021 Springer | doi:10.4204/EPTCS.350.4
We show how a particular flavor of hierarchical nets, where the firing of a transition in the parent net must correspond to an execution in some child net, can be modelled utilizing a functorial semantics from a free category - representing the parent net - to the category of sets and spans between them. This semantics can be internalized via Grothendieck construction, resulting in the category of executions of a Petri net representing the semantics of the overall hierarchical net. We conclude the paper by giving an engineering-oriented overview of how our model of hiearchic nets can be implemented in a transaction-based smart contract environment.

12 | Nets with Mana: A Framework for Chemical Reaction Modelling w/F. Genovese, D. Palombi |
2101.06234 | *Graph Transformation*, Proc. of ICGT, 2021 Springer. | doi:10.1007/978-3-030-78946-6_10
We use categorical methods to define a new flavor of Petri nets which could be useful in modelling chemical reactions.

13 | Functorial semantics for partial theories   w/I. Di Liberti, et al. |
2011.06644 | Proc. ACM Program. Lang. 5, POPL, 2021. | doi:10.1145/3434338
We provide a Lawvere-style definition for partial theories, extending the classical notion of equational theory by allowing partially defined operations. As in the classical case, our definition is syntactic: we use an appropriate class of string diagrams as terms. This allows for equational reasoning about the class of models defined by a partial theory. We demonstrate the expressivity of such equational theories by considering a number of examples, including partial combinatory algebras and cartesian closed categories. Moreover, despite the increase in expressivity of the syntax we retain a well-behaved notion of semantics: we show that our categories of models are precisely locally finitely presentable categories, and that free models exist.

14 | Triangulated factorization systems and *t*-structures   w/S. Virili |
1705.08565v3 | *Journal of Algebra* | doi:10.1016/j.jalgebra.2019.12.021
We define triangulated factorization systems on triangulated categories, and prove that a suitable subclass thereof (the normal triangulated torsion theories) corresponds bijectively to t-structures on the same category. This result will then be placed in the framework of derivators regarding a triangulated category as the base of a stable derivator.

15 | Categorical notions of fibration   w/E. Riehl |

Fibrations over a category *B*, introduced to category theory by Grothendieck, encode pseudo-functors $B° \rightsquigarrow$ **Cat**, while the special case of discrete fibrations encode presheaves $B° \to$ **Set**. A two-sided discrete variation encodes functors $B° \times A \to$ **Set**, which are also known as profunctors from *A* to *B*. By work of Street, all of these fibration notions can be defined internally to an arbitrary 2-category or bicategory. While the two-sided discrete fibrations model profunctors internally to **Cat**, unexpectedly, the dual two-sided codiscrete cofibrations are necessary to model *V*-profunctors internally to *V*-**Cat**.

16 | Hearts and towers in stable infinity-categories w/D. Fiorenza, G. Marchetti |

We exploit the equivalence between t-structures and normal torsion theories on a stable ∞-category to show how a few classical topics in the theory of triangulated categories, i.e., the characterization of bounded t-structures in terms of their hearts, their associated cohomology functors, semiorthogonal decompositions, and the theory of tiltings, as well as the more recent notion of Bridgeland's slicings, are all particular instances of a single construction, namely, the tower of a morphism associated with a *J*-slicing of a stable ∞-category **C**, where *J* is a totally ordered set equipped with a monotone $\mathbb{Z}$-action.

17 | A standard theorem on adjunctions in two variables

We record an explicit proof of the theorem that lifts a two-variable adjunction to the arrow categories of its domains.

18 | A Fubini rule for ∞-coends

We prove a Fubini rule for ∞-co/ends of ∞-functors $F : C^{op} \times C \to D$. This allows to lay down "integration rules", similar to those in classical co/end calculus, also in the setting of ∞-categories.

19 | Homotopical Algebra is not concrete w/I. Di Liberti |

We generalize Freyd's well-known result that "homotopy is not concrete", offering a general method to show that under certain assumptions on a model category *M*, its homotopy category ho(*M*) cannot be concrete. This result is part of an attempt to understand more deeply the relation between set theory and abstract homotopy theory.

20 | Sober Ontic Structural Realism and Yoneda lemma

abstract at the *Triennial conference of the SILFS*, Bologna

A note on why the Yoneda lemma prevents to take too strong a position towards the non-existence of relata (*radical* ontic structural realism posits that only relations exist).

21 | Coend calculus

A survey of the most striking and useful applications of *coend calculus*. This is a revised version of 1501.02503v4. After having given a series of preliminary definitions, we characterize co/ends as particular co/limits; then we derive a number of results directly from this characterization. The last sections discuss the most interesting examples where co/end calculus serves as a powerful abstract way to do explicit computations in diverse fields like Algebra, Algebraic Topology and Category Theory. The appendices serve to sketch a number of results in theories heavily relying on co/end calculus.

22 | t-structures are normal torsion theories w/D. Fiorenza |

We characterize t-structures in stable ∞-categories as suitable quasicategorical factorization systems. More precisely we show that a t-structure **t** on a stable ∞-category **C** is equivalent to a normal torsion theory $\mathbb{F}$ on **C**, i.e. to a factorization system $\mathbb{F} = (E, M)$ where both classes satisfy the 3-for-2 cancellation property, and a certain compatibility with pullbacks/pushouts.

PREPRINTS

1 | Rosen's no-go theorem for regular categories

The famous biologist Robert Rosen argued for an intrinsic difference between biological and artificial life, supporting the claim that 'living systems are not mechanisms'. This result, understood as the claim that life-like mechanisms are non-computable, can be

phrased as the non-existence of an equivalence between a category of 'static'/analytic elements and a category of 'variable'/synthetic elements. The property of a system of being synthetic, understood as being the gluing of 'variable families' of *analytica*, must imply that the latter class of objects does not retain sufficient information in order to describe said variability; we contribute to this thesis with an argument rooted in elementary category theory. Seen as such, Rosen's 'proof' that no living system can be a mechanism arises from a tension between two contrapuntal needs: on one side, the necessity to consider (synthetically) variable families of systems; on the other, the necessity to describe a syntheticum via an universally chosen analyticum.

2 | Functorial Erkennen w/D. Dentamaro |
http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/18519/

We outline a 'formal theory of scientific theories' rooted in the theory of profunctors; the category-theoretic asset stresses the fact that the scope of scientific knowledge is to build 'meaningful connections' (i.e. well-behaved adjunctions) between a linguistic object (a 'theoretical category' $\mathcal{T}$) and the world $\mathcal{W}$ said language ought to describe. Such a world is often unfathomable, and thus we can only resort to a smaller fragment of it in our analysis: this is the 'observational category' $\mathcal{O} \subseteq \mathcal{W}$. From this we build the category $[\mathcal{O}^{op}, \mathrm{Set}]$ of all possible displacements of observational terms $\mathcal{O}$. The self-duality of the bicategory of profunctors accounts for the fact that theoretical and observational terms can exchange their rôle without substantial changes in the resulting predictive-descriptive theory; this provides evidence for the idea that their separation is a mere linguistic convention; to every profunctor $\mathfrak{R}$ linking $\mathcal{T}$ and $\mathcal{O}$ one can associate an object $\mathcal{O} \uplus_{\mathfrak{R}} \mathcal{T}$ obtained *glueing* together the two categories and accounting for the mutual relations subsumed by $\mathfrak{R}$. Under mild assumptions, such an arrangement of functors, profunctors, and gluings provides a categorical interpretation for the 'Ramseyfication' operation, in a very explicit sense: in a scientific theory, if a computation entails a certain behaviour for the system the theory describes, then saturating its theoretical variables with actual observed terms, we obtain the entailment *in the world*.

3 | Categorical Ontology I w/D. Dentamaro |
http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/17136/

The present paper approaches ontology and metaontology through mathematics, and more precisely through category theory. We exploit the theory of *elementary toposes* to claim that a satisfying "theory of existence", and more at large ontology itself, can both be obtained through category theory. In this perspective, an *ontology* is a mathematical object: it is a category, the universe of discourse in which our mathematics (intended at large, as a theory of knowledge) can be deployed. The *internal language* that all categories possess prescribes the modes of existence for the objects of a fixed ontology/category. This approach resembles, but is more general than, fuzzy logics, as most choices of E and thus of Ω_E yield nonclassical, many-valued logics. Framed this way, ontology suddenly becomes more mathematical: a solid corpus of techniques can be used to backup philosophical intuition with a useful, modular language, suitable for a practical foundation. As both a test-bench for our theory, and a literary *divertissement*, we propose a possible category-theoretic solution of Borges' famous paradoxes of Tlön's "nine copper coins", and of other seemingly paradoxical construction in his literary work. We then delve into the topic with some vistas on our future works.

4 | On the unicity of formal category theories w/I. Di Liberti |
1901.01594v1

We prove an equivalence between cocomplete Yoneda structures and certain proarrow equipments on a 2-category K. In order to do this, we recognize the presheaf construction of a cocomplete Yoneda structure as a relative, lax idempotent monad sending each admissible 1-cell $f : A \to B$ to an adjunction $\mathbb{P}_! f \dashv \mathbb{P}^* f$. Each cocomplete Yoneda structure on K arises in this way from a relative lax idempotent monad "with enough adjoint 1-cells", whose domain generates the ideal of admissibles, and the Kleisli category of such a monad equips its domain with proarrows. We call these structures "yosegi". Quite often, the presheaf construction associated to a yosegi generates an ambidextrous Yoneda structure; in such a setting there exists a fully formal version of Isbell duality.

5 | Localization theory for derivators
1802.08193v1

We outline the theory of reflections for prederivators, derivators and stable derivators. In order to parallel the classical theory valid for categories, we outline how reflections can be equivalently described as categories of fractions, reflective factorization systems, and categories of algebras for idempotent monads. This is a further development of the theory of monads and factorization systems for derivators.

6 | Recollements in stable ∞-categories w/D. Fiorenza |
1507.03913v2

We develop the theory of recollements in a stable ∞-categorical setting. In the axiomatization of Beilinson, Bernstein and Deligne,

recollement situations provide a generalization of Grothendieck's "six functors" between derived categories. The adjointness relations between functors in a recollement D^0, D, D^1 induce a "recollée" t-structure $t_0 \uplus t_1$ on D, given t-structures t_0, t_1 on D^0, D^1. Such a classical result, well-known in the setting of triangulated categories, is recast in the setting of stable ∞-categories and the properties of the associated (∞-categorical) factorization systems are investigated. In the geometric case of a stratified space, various recollements arise, which "interact well" with the combinatorics of the intersections of strata to give a well-defined, associative $\uplus$ operation. From this we deduce a generalized associative property for n-fold gluing $t_0 \uplus \cdots \uplus t_n$, valid in any stable ∞-category.

TALKS

1 | **A few remarks on the fibration of algebras**   Dec 2022
video | ItaCa 2022, Pisa

2 | **Differential 2-rigs**   Jul 2022
video | Applied Category Theory 2022, Glasgow

3 | **Fibrational linguistics**   Jul 2022
video | Applied Category Theory 2022, Glasgow

4 | **Towards a formal category theory of derivators**   Nov 2021
video | Invited speaker | New Directions in Group Theory & Triangulated Categories

5 | **Differential 2-rigs**   Sep 2021
Speaker | CT20→21 - Genova

6 | **Functorial semantics of partial theories**   Apr 2021
Speaker | Seminari di logica Torino-Udine

7 | **On the unicity of the formal theory of categories**   Dec 2018
Lectures on 1901.01594 | ULB - Bruxelles

8 | **Accessibility and Presentability in 2-categories**   Nov 2018
Two-lecture series on 1804.08710 | Università degli studi di Torino

9 | **Homotopical algebra is not concrete**   Sep 2017
Contributed talk | *British Topology Meeting* | Leicester

10 | **The formal category theory of derivators**   Sep 2017
Speaker | *Some trends in Algebra* | Prague

TEACHING & ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES, AWARDS

1 | 💼 Award for *Researcher of the Year* 2021   2021

2 | 🎓 ITI9200 - Introduction to Category Theory   Jan | May 2020−23
A course on basic category theory; at the course webpage you find a diary of the lectures and study material.

3 | 💼 Organiser of ItaCa Fest   2020 | now
An online webinar aimed to gather the community of ItaCa.

4 | 💼 appointee for Adjoint school 2019   Mar 2019 | Jun 2019
A webinar and online applied Category Theory reading course. The project name is *Traversal optics and profunctors*. Led to the development of arXiv:2001.07488.

5 | 💼 PSSL 103 - Brno   April 2018
    I have been one of the organizers of 103rd Peripathetic Seminar on Sheaves and Logic.

6 | 🎓 Elements of Finite Mathematics   Autumn 2016
    Techniques of counting, probability, discrete and continuous random variables.

7 | 💼 appointee for Kan Extension Seminar I   Jan 2014 | Jul 2014
    A webinar and online Category Theory reading course.

Supervision of students

1 | 🎓 supervisor and coadvisor for PhD in Computer Science   *student: A. Laretto*
    After a long and fruitful collaboration, A. Laretto applied for a Ph.D. in Tallinn University of Technology. I
    couldn't be happier to have him as a student.

2 | 🎓 mentor for the SIGPLAN-M   *mentee: A. Laretto*
    The SIGPLAN Long-Term Mentoring Committee (SIGPLAN-M) organizes an international long-term men-
    toring program for programming languages researchers.

3 | 🎓 supervisor and coadvisor M.Sc. in Mathematics   *student: M. Roselli*
    Categorical linguistics | (tentative)

4 | 🎓 supervisor for M.Sc. internship at TalTech   *student: T. Massacrier*
    From combinatorial species to general differential 2-rigs

5 | 🎓 supervisor and coadvisor M.Sc. in Mathematics   *student: G. Sorgente*
    Formal theory of promonads | (tentative)

6 | 🎓 supervisor and coadvisor B.Sc. in Mathematics   *student: G. Ronchi*
    Adjoint Functors | amslaurea.unibo.it

Other activities

1 | Sparse skills
    I like the art of crafting books and drawing maps; this is not unrelated to my love for Mathematics. I am
    a pretty decent TeXnic (I maintain this CV through a github repo whence you can steal the code, if you
    ask politely). I became a relatively frequent contributor of agda-categories. Agda is…well, pain. I like
    languages, natural and artificial (mi ŝatus verki vortaron al matematiko, kun terminoj el teoria kategorioj;
    mina õpin eesti keelt, aeglaselt; jeg liker Norsk, men jeg liker Maria Franz mer); again, this is not unrelated
    to my love for Mathematics.

2 | *Directeur des systèmes d'information* @ 'Les Presses Insoumises'.
    I have participated to the craft of the cover of the first edition of the Grimoire of Commutative Algebra by
    Lorenzo Ramero.

3 | Freelance consultant @ PlantingSpace
    I conduct research oriented towards categorical probability theory and implementations thereof.

4 | Reviewer for
    zbMath, AMS Math. Rev.