Emanuele Coccia

From agricultural school and medieval scholarship to books, fashion and collaborative art

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Emanuele Coccia is an Italian philosopher who has taught at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS) in Paris since 2011. His route there began in an agricultural school in central Italy and passed through medieval philosophy, legal history and research appointments across Europe. The Life of Plants, first published in French in 2016, brought him an audience far beyond those specialties. His books on images and advertising preceded that breakthrough, while those on metamorphosis and domestic life followed it. These inquiries also connect him to fashion designers, photographers, landscape architects and theatre-makers. He remains a university teacher and historical scholar while also writing the words that other people turn into exhibitions, performances and collaborative books.[1, 2, 3]

One of his most practical descriptions of this working life concerns moving house. Asked by Maremosso what home meant to him, Coccia answered that it was the place where he wrote. Writing was how he tested whether he could inhabit a space: could the friction of pencil against paper produce an idea that surprised him? This was his own account, not an observed daily routine. It nevertheless brings the philosopher into view at a useful scale. Before a home becomes a theory, it has to accommodate a person trying to make sentences.[4]

1. Agricultural school, and the wish to leave

Born in Fermo in 1976, Coccia grew up in Italy’s Marche region and attended the Istituto Tecnico Agrario Garibaldi in Macerata until he was nineteen. The training was in agriculture; it did not make him a research botanist, despite the label sometimes attached to his later public appearances. For five years, plant life and its requirements occupied the center of his schooling.[5, 6]

He did not initially experience this as an enviable head start. In a 2020 interview with Philippe Nassif, he recalled his mother encouraging his older sister toward higher education while deciding university was not for him. Agricultural school felt like a socially diminishing assignment. He remembered a period when even knowing the names of flowers could be embarrassing. His later enthusiasm thus involved recovering knowledge he had once wanted to put behind him, not simply remaining faithful to a childhood calling.[7]

Another early encounter pointed toward a different profession. At fourteen, visiting an architect aunt in Sicily, he discovered Bruno Zevi’s writing. Decades later he could still recall the cover showing Fallingwater. Architecture was an interest before it became a circle of professional collaborators; its eventual appearance in his bibliography was not solely an effect of invitations from the design world.[8]

His family also included a twin brother, Matteo, who died in 2001. The Life of Plants is dedicated to him. This is an important loss in the life, but the dedication does not explain how a particular philosophical argument was made. The published record gives a much fuller account of Coccia’s education and intellectual relationships than of his private grieving.[9, 10]

He studied philosophy, philology and canon-law history in Macerata, Rome, Berlin and Paris, completing his Florence doctorate in 2005. Fellowships took him to Barcelona (2005–06), Frankfurt’s Max Planck Institute for European Legal History (2006–07) and Berkeley’s Robbins Collection (2007). He then joined the medieval-emotions project led by Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy (2007–08). An assistant post at Freiburg’s philosophy department followed in 2008–11, before EHESS.[11]

That itinerary puts libraries, historical languages and legal institutions between the agricultural classroom and the celebrated plant book. It also explains the geography of an apparently Parisian career: Coccia had already made a working life through repeated moves, fellowships and temporary hosts before Paris became his continuing institutional base.

2. Averroes, Agamben and the work of a medievalist

His first major book, La trasparenza delle immagini. Averroè e l’averroismo (2005), asks a question that sounds simple until one tries to answer it: who thinks? Averroes’s account of a common intellect presented a difficulty for traditions that located thought entirely inside individual people. Coccia approached the problem through imagination—the relation between a shared capacity to think and the singular person who supplies images. The Spanish translation, published in 2008, carried an introduction by Giorgio Agamben.[12, 13]

This gives an accessible way into a demanding early book. We ordinarily speak as if a thought belongs to a person in much the same way as a possession. Coccia’s historical material makes that ownership less secure. It does not deny that a particular person thinks; it asks what must exist beyond that person for thinking to happen. The later books would repeatedly return to things that seem secondary to an individual—images, clothes, homes—and ask whether the individual could exist as such without them.

Agamben was an important collaborator. Their Angeli. Ebraismo Cristianesimo Islam (2009) assembled Jewish, Christian and Islamic angelological traditions. The labor was shared with specialists including Mauro Zonta, Olga Lizzini and Samuela Pagani. An anthology of this kind requires the recovery and presentation of texts, rather than just a conversation between two recognizable authors.[14, 15]

With Dragos Calma he studied an unpublished medieval commentary on Aristotle’s Physics; with Sylvain Piron he wrote on Italian intellectual life around 1300. A manuscript shelf mark in the early bibliography tells a different story from the later exhibition invitations: textual scholarship was a substantial part of the preparation.[16]

Nor was his relationship to Agamben simply discipleship. Evan Edwards’s 2024 study begins with Coccia’s 2004 response to State of Exception and follows his subsequent treatment of ordinary, domestic existence. Edwards reads the later work as a sustained alternative to separating life from its forms. That is a scholarly interpretation, not proof that Coccia had planned the entire subsequent career in advance.[17]

The medieval work never disappeared. Hiérarchie. La société des anges (2023) collects essays on the organization of angelic society: rank, participation in divinity and sacred power. Readers arriving through fashion or plants can therefore follow him back into a continuing historical inquiry, rather than into an abandoned first career.[18]

3. Images, city walls and the advertising fellowship

La Vie sensible appeared in French in 2010, in Italian in 2011, and in Scott Alan Stuart’s English translation, Sensible Life, in 2016. Its subject is how things become perceptible. Instead of treating an image only as a picture inside the head, Coccia investigates the medium through which something can appear outside itself.[19, 20]

A mirror helps make the question tangible. The reflected body is not another body behind the glass, but neither is its appearance simply a private mental event. The mirror lets a thing exist visibly somewhere other than where its material body stands. This example is an aid to reading the problem, not a substitute for the book’s account. Once appearance has this consequential role, photographs and garments become more than decoration added to an already complete person.

In Le Bien dans les choses (2013), later translated by Marissa Gemma as Goods (2018), Coccia went out into the city’s commercial images. Advertising addresses people with promises about how to live: what might make them attractive, comfortable, capable or happy. He treats that public address as moral language, even when it takes the form of things for sale. The provocation is not that an advertisement must be truthful. It is that a society’s account of the good life is visible on its walls, and cannot be understood only by reading its philosophers.[21]

This was a research program before it was a route into fashion. At Columbia’s Italian Academy in 2015–16, his fellowship was titled “Iconic normativity: the case of advertising images.” The institutional description explicitly joined images, fashion and advertising to his earlier work on European normativity. His interests were already moving between historical forms of authority and contemporary promises about desirable lives.[22]

The argument also brought him close to commercial spaces where art and commodities are deliberately arranged together. With the writer and curator Donatien Grau, he later studied Carla Sozzani’s 10 Corso Como in Le Musée transitoire (2018). Their subject was the hybrid institution—shop, exhibition space, bookstore—and the changing relations among its contents. The title’s comparison with a museum is a proposition to examine, not a reason to forget that buying an object changes what a shop can display or whom it serves.[23]

4. The plant book he wrote alongside the other work

The book that made Coccia widely recognizable did not arise from a clean professional change of direction. He told Joss Allen in 2023 that he had continued to read about plants while studying philosophy, but had kept the interest largely to himself. While his professional research concerned marketing and advertising, he wrote the plant manuscript in spare time to bring separated parts of his life together. Its reception surprised him: “it exploded in my hands.” Recognition could feel like confinement, because people now wanted the plant philosopher while he was doing other things.[24]

La Vie des plantes. Une métaphysique du mélange appeared at Rivages in 2016, won the Monaco philosophy prize in 2017, and reached English readers in Dylan J. Montanari’s translation in 2018. This sequence matters: English-language accounts can make the book sound like a 2018 intervention, when its French public life was already underway.[25, 26]

The book proceeds through leaves, roots and flowers. Its question is not simply whether people should appreciate plants more. Coccia asks what happens to philosophy if it begins with a being that transforms its surroundings as a condition of living. The leaf gives access to atmosphere; the root complicates a world organized around the human gaze; the flower brings the production of forms into view. In his interview with Johan Faerber, he stresses that living beings help produce the world they inhabit. Environment is not only a container into which life has been placed.[27, 28]

That movement from a small familiar object to a large explanatory reversal helps account for the book’s readability. Readers do not need to begin by mastering a medieval controversy. They can start with a leaf and discover that the apparently passive background of human life is doing indispensable work. The title also connects two parts of his training that institutional departments ordinarily keep apart: plant processes and metaphysics.

The historian of biology Jean-Marc Drouin recognized precisely that conjunction. His 2017 review noticed the book’s opening juxtaposition of agricultural-school memories, the medieval thinker David of Dinant and the plant biologist Karl J. Niklas. Drouin welcomed the clear, attractive philosophical writing but challenged the speed of some generalizations: plants had not been ignored as completely as Coccia suggested; botanical diversity and movement complicated sweeping statements about their way of being. The review leaves a productive tension intact. Coccia’s book can change what a reader notices without every biological claim or cosmic extension being equally secure.[29]

The new audience was not confined to environmental philosophy. An account of living things making their surroundings offered curators, designers and architects a way to reframe their own work. The concrete route from reading to collaboration can sometimes be reconstructed. Landscape architect Bas Smets read the plant book; Philippe Parreno, a friend of both men, helped connect them; a 2018 public conversation at the Chaillot was followed by a bar, dinner and further discussion. By their 2025 interview, they were describing a friendship and a book in progress—not announcing a finished volume.[30]

5. What changes in Metamorphoses

Coccia's next widely discussed book, Métamorphoses (2020), appeared in Robin Mackay's English translation in 2021. The caterpillar and butterfly offer its most graspable problem: one life takes on bodies with radically different shapes, movements and uses of the world. Coccia carries the inquiry through birth, feeding and relations among species, questioning whether a life ever begins entirely from itself.[31]

In the Nassif interview, he connected this subject to an early fascination with insects. The book's force comes from following transformation further than the reassuring language of personal growth: the creature's way of existing can change, rather than merely become an improved version of what it already was.[32]

The expansion was also where critics resisted him. Jean Lacoste placed the book beside the long literary history of metamorphosis, including Ovid. Roger-Pol Droit questioned the leap from continuity of matter to an all-encompassing self. Bodies exchanging material does not, by itself, establish that their experiences or identities are interchangeable. These were objections to the argument's reach, not a denial that its lucid examples made an unusually ambitious metaphysics available to non-specialists.[33, 34]

The book also acquired distinct material lives in translation. In Brazil, Dantes's 2020 Metamorfoses included work by artist Luiz Zerbini and translations by Madeleine Deschamps and Victoria Mouawad. Its launch brought publisher Anna Dantes, the translators, Zerbini and anthropologist Els Lagrou into the conversation. This was more than an Italian-French book being exported unchanged: illustration, translation and a particular publishing community shaped the encounter.[35]

6. Thirty moves, a daughter and Philosophy of the Home

Coccia told Giulia Ossola that Filosofia della casa. Lo spazio domestico e la felicità grew over the course of thirty house moves. Published by Einaudi in 2021, it reached the British Penguin list as Philosophy of the Home in 2023. Moving repeatedly had made him think about what one must arrange, carry, abandon or remake before a building becomes habitable. The project allowed personal experience into the philosophical account without becoming a conventional memoir.[36, 37]

His daughter’s imaginary friend supplied one reported episode. Colette brought the friend to dinner and, noticing her father’s irritation, explained that his inability to see the guest was reciprocal: the guest could not see him either. In recounting it to Maremosso, Coccia described being forced to reconsider the complexity of a child’s way of animating a world. The anecdote became a point of entry into the people, objects and presences that make a home; it was not evidence that every domestic object literally has a mind.[38]

The book’s practical question is what makes life better in a particular place. Geometry cannot answer it alone. In his 2020 interview with Manuel Orazi, conducted while Coccia was taking a walk, he asked why a couple must have one bedroom, or why a household should keep adjusting itself to an inherited plan rather than alter the plan to fit its relationships. Lockdown gave these questions a large public audience, but his interest in the house was already part of an architectural inquiry and an accumulation of moves.[39, 40]

This is also where his willingness to propose connections becomes controversial. In Victoria Camblin’s PIN–UP interview, he argues against making biological genealogy and inherited property the unquestioned basis of living together. Digital platforms suggest that people can coordinate relations beyond the conventional household. Camblin presses on the politics of those platforms rather than accepting their capacity to connect people as proof of their desirability. An app that brings strangers into contact can also sit within a damaging property economy. The conversation makes that disagreement part of the reader’s encounter with Coccia, rather than tidying it away.[41]

The house book joins the earlier work in a specific way: the setting and the objects are ingredients of a life, not scenery around it. Yet it is also a departure in form. The author who spent years among historical texts now lets a child’s remark, an awkward room and the experience of packing supply the pressure that starts an argument. The sources do not supply a fixed writing hour, daily word quota or ideal study.

7. Alessandro Michele: a conversation becomes a book

Coccia met Alessandro Michele through Giovanni Attili, Michele's partner and an urbanist. During lockdown, conversations developed into La vita delle forme. Filosofia del reincanto, published in 2024. Michele described the exchange as companionship and a way of examining why he made things as he did, rather than a planned treatise designed to correct the fashion industry.[42]

Their book contains no photographs. Seven conceptual rooms—including ambiguity, animism, design, Hollywood and twins—give the reader routes through a designer's practice. It also reproduces twenty-two texts accompanying Michele's Gucci shows from 2015 to 2022. Those were written by Michele and Attili, not by Coccia. The distinction matters: the philosopher met a designer who already had an articulate intellectual practice; he did not arrive to supply thought where none existed.[43]

At the French launch in 2025, Michele turned to his coauthor as an example. Coccia's multicolored jacket, conspicuous glasses and sneakers made appearance itself part of the encounter with the learned writer. Michele also described readers of different generations approaching him with the book. A volume without fashion photographs was creating a kind of contact different from the designer's relationship with a luxury brand's customers.[44]

The central proposition is easy to test against dressing: clothes can help make a person someone they could not be through anatomy alone. But the book's affirmative language about transformation does not settle who can afford that freedom, or the labor through which garments are made. In a 2025 El País interview, Coccia criticized luxury groups for maintaining the authority of dead founders and distinguished living designers from the corporations employing them. The distinction is useful, but it does not make a designer's freedom independent of a house's ownership and business decisions.[45]

His classroom work takes fashion to the level of particular objects. The 2025–26 EHESS seminar proposed detailed analysis of ten artifacts—collections, garments, shoes and bags—rather than judgments made from a few fashionable adjectives. This is evidence of a planned teaching method, not an account of what happened in every class. It nevertheless establishes that the object, and how to describe it precisely, belongs inside the inquiry.[46]

8. Writing to Paolo Roversi, publishing with Viviane Sassen

With Paolo Roversi, Coccia chose a slower arrangement. After an initial discussion, the two agreed to continue in writing. A little over twenty letters, exchanged between June 2021 and October 2022, became Lettres sur la lumière (2024). Gallimard published the book with support from Fondation La Poste, a text by Erri De Luca and a foreword by Chiara Bardelli-Nonino.[47, 48]

The dated exchange lets a reader see something more precise than two names on a cover. In a letter of 20 July 2022, Roversi considered how he had come to photography while loving poetry and theatre. On 28 August, Coccia described the photographs as a kind of lyric writing in light. Asked about this by Nathalie Jungerman, Roversi replied in terms of the photograph’s ability to work without words. They could recognize a connection between their crafts while preserving a difference in what each medium needed.[49]

The exchange leaves room for the photographer to answer through a remembered decision rather than a general doctrine. Coccia is an interlocutor, not the author of Roversi’s techniques. The letter format makes that division visible.

Modern Alchemy (2022), with Viviane Sassen, had a different production structure. JBE Books published the bilingual volume with Perrier-Jouët; Agnès Dahan Studio designed it, and Lucas Faugère supplied translation. The design studio records a print run of 10,000 copies, not sales of that number. Here philosophical text meets photographs through a commissioned, designed object supported by a champagne house.[50]

Both books concern images, but they do not have the same economy or working method. A sustained exchange of letters, supported by a literary foundation, is different from a luxury-backed photographic publication. Keeping those arrangements visible makes Coccia’s cultural work easier to understand than calling every encounter an interdisciplinary collaboration.

9. Quercus: giving a tree lines to speak

The most direct way to inspect one of Coccia's collaborations is to read the four-page transcript of Quercus, made for Formafantasma's Cambio project in 2020. It opens: "You probably are surprised to hear me speaking." An oak addresses the human viewer. The voice moves from the body's ability to shed and regrow parts to the wood dispersed through furniture and tools, then ends with tree growth as an archive of climatic change.[51]

The verbal task is dramatic: the tree corrects the person looking at it. Its changing body makes the first-person pronoun strange. This is a human-authored voice; claims about vegetal consciousness belong to the work's philosophical fiction, not findings established by the film.[52]

Formafantasma's Andrea Trimarchi and Simone Farresin describe how they manipulated a LiDAR scan of an oak forest in Virginia. A surveying technology adopted by the timber industry was repurposed for animation. Film scholar Teresa Castro, whom they met while developing the work in October 2019, helped them think through the possibilities and risks of using moving images to represent plants. The production therefore joined Coccia's words to design, technical material and another scholar's account of cinema.[53]

Reading the transcript makes it possible to say what the verbal construction does; it does not license a claim to have experienced the complete installation. Nor should every decision about timing, voice or animation be attributed to Coccia. The published credits establish a collaboration. They do not disclose a complete record of drafts, edits or recording sessions.

This is nevertheless a concrete change in his work. The philosophical reversal has become an address to an audience, with an opening, a sequence and an ending. A sentence must now belong to a speaker. A reader can inspect that transformation without first accepting the book's entire metaphysics.

10. Performers, screens and production teams

In Earthscape, first presented at the Conciergerie in Paris in November 2022, writing was collective. The credits name Coccia, director Frédérique Aït-Touati, Maya Boquet, Esther Denis, Duncan Evennou, Maxime Lévêque and Olivia Ross. Support included Mondes Nouveaux, the Centre des monuments nationaux, Fondation Daniel et Nina Carasso and ENS Paris-Saclay.[54]

The company’s account describes a consequential discovery in rehearsal: a sound-based setting allowed rapid changes of scene, intimate address and actors moving among spectators. Domestic noises could summon a home without constructing its walls. Sound creation is credited to Boquet with Simon Garrette; the original scenic idea to Patrick Laffont de Lojo. This is a reported production process in which Coccia participated, not a method he supplied alone.[55]

For Météores at the Bourse de Commerce in June 2023, the division is narrower: Coccia wrote the text, Aït-Touati directed, and Evennou performed. The thirty-minute work took place in exhibition galleries within the Intempéries program, which Coccia curated. Unlike a book, its public form required another person’s body and the conditions of a particular venue.[56]

The 2022 Triennale Milano project Unknown Unknowns involved a different cluster of jobs. Coccia edited the catalogue; Ersilia Vaudo was the main exhibition’s curator. For Portal of Mysteries, Coccia supplied artistic direction, while Dotdotdot made the video installation and sound, and propp supplied illustration and animation. Eighteen monitors formed a circular setting for an extraterrestrial child’s journey through transformations of matter and life.[57, 58]

These credits do not reveal what happened in every rehearsal or production meeting. They do show that the outputs should not be added to his bibliography as if he had made them alone. The 2021 Heaven in Matter, associated with Faye Formisano’s visual work and Coccia’s voice in Le Fresnoy’s Panorama 23, similarly belongs to a moving-image production with its own makers and medium.[59]

11. Trees in museums, books across languages

The Fondation Cartier’s Nous les arbres ran in Paris from July 2019 to January 2020. Coccia contributed as a scientific adviser; the principal curatorial credits belong to Bruce Albert, Hervé Chandès and Isabelle Gaudefroy. Artists and scientists were joined by Indigenous artists whose work did not originate as an illustration of Coccia’s philosophy. The exhibition subsequently traveled to Shanghai’s Power Station of Art in 2021.[60, 61, 62]

At Kanazawa’s 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, DANCING WITH ALL: The Ecology of Empathy ran from November 2024 to March 2025. Yuko Hasegawa was chief curator, Coccia guest curator, with Ayumi Ikeda and Jin Motohashi as co-curators. Its juxtaposition of art, sensing technologies and different cultural accounts of living relations extended the kind of work a philosopher could do within a museum, while leaving selection and interpretation distributed across a team.[63]

The museum’s description of Kapwani Kiwanga’s Vumbi gives that range a concrete form. In the video, the artist wipes red dust from leaves in Tanzania, revealing green that will soon be covered again. This is a work with a particular place and repetitive action, not a generic illustration of ecological harmony. Its presence prevents the exhibition from being adequately described through one philosopher’s concepts.[64]

The Brazilian connections have another institutional history. Coccia participated in the 2019 Selvagem study cycle, created by Anna Dantes and mediated by Ailton Krenak. Dantes’s work with Huni Kuin collaborators in Acre preceded that meeting and informed her approach to publishing and study. These were existing practices and intellectual relationships into which Coccia entered, not local confirmations of a European theory.[65]

The differences matter because Coccia’s universal language is not always received as an invitation. In his Helsinki conversation with Joss Allen, he argued that ecological problems require binding laws rather than appeals to individual virtue. He restricted contemporary political action to lawmaking and lobbying, rejecting the claim that writing about plants is itself politics. This leaves a tension within his practice: houses and images can organize shared life without their makers participating in legislation. Distinguishing their effects from changing laws does not settle whether cultural work can also be political action.[66]

On naming, Coccia defended a common scientific vocabulary as a way to establish whether people in different places were discussing the same plant. Allen pressed the risk that classification could obscure knowledge carried in local names, uses and histories, including histories of colonial displacement. Coccia distinguished the need for a shared name from the question of choosing it well; he did not defend every existing scientific name. Their disagreement concerned the terms on which knowledge becomes shareable, not simply whether connection is desirable.[67]

12. Garments in an archive, and work with architects

At ITS Arcademy in Trieste, Coccia worked with fashion historian and curator Olivier Saillard on The Many Lives of a Garment, which opened in March 2024. Clothing could be considered through changes of use and status: worn, kept, archived, exhibited. The ITS fashion archive brought experimental designs into the inquiry alongside everyday garments. Saillard’ s knowledge of clothing and display was a distinct contribution, not a practical footnote to the philosopher’ s argument.[68]

Their 2025 Fashionlands: Clothes Beyond Borders continued the partnership. In 2026, EXPOSURE: The Power of Being Seen shifted attention to celebrity styling. Here Tom Eerebout curated the exhibition; Eerebout and Coccia coedited the catalogue, which also includes dialogue involving Saillard. The announced exhibition period is 26 March 2026–3 January 2027. The record supports catalogue editorship, not an inflated claim that Coccia curated the entire show.[69, 70]

Architecture supplies another continuing audience. His 2024 Harvard lecture, “Metropolitan Nature: How Different Species Build Cities,” treated human settlement through associations with plants. A January 2026 lecture at the architecture school in Versailles pursued the relation between cities and ecosystems, using historical ecology and Amazonian landscapes as points of departure. These are documented research presentations, not evidence that his philosophy has itself built a landscape.[71, 72]

The attraction for a practitioner such as Smets is understandable: the plant book changes what counts as an active maker of a place. But the professions remain different. A philosophical account does not specify the right tree for a soil or a maintenance budget. The useful collaboration lies in the meeting of that larger question with decisions a landscape architect must actually make.

13. The working arrangement: teaching, publishing, commissions

Coccia’s continuing institutional position is maître de conférences at EHESS, commonly rendered associate professor in English. Visiting appointments in places such as Tokyo, Buenos Aires, Düsseldorf, Columbia and Harvard are separate from that permanent base. The distinction prevents a list of prestigious hosts from turning into an imaginary succession of full professorships.[73]

The publishing infrastructure is similarly concrete. Rivages’s editor Lidia Breda helped place his French books within a public philosophical essay tradition. Rosaria Carpinelli’s literary agency represents a bibliography that moves among general publishers, university presses and art-book producers. Stuart, Gemma, Montanari and Mackay are part of the English-language career because their translations made different stages of the work available to different readers. First publication does not follow a simple Italian-original/French-or-English-translation sequence.[74, 75, 76]

The available evidence establishes these channels, not his personal balance sheet. It does not disclose his salary, advances, royalties, exhibition fees or the proportion of working time spent on each activity. There is no sound basis for claiming either that luxury work finances the books or that an academic salary alone makes all the collaborations possible.

Luxury patronage is nonetheless part of the documented arrangement. Perrier-Jouët supported Modern Alchemy; Fondation Cartier and the Pinault Collection provided settings for other projects. These institutions can make substantial cultural production possible while also connecting intellectual prestige to private wealth. The profile cannot reconstruct undisclosed contracts or decide from a sponsor’s name how much editorial freedom a collaborator had.[77, 78, 79]

These projects have different working forms. Books emerge from dialogue or dated letters. A film needs a spoken text; a performance may be collectively written; an exhibition demands accurate distinctions between adviser, curator and catalogue editor.

14. The inquiries continuing in 2026

By 2026, the home, medieval society and contemporary forms of attachment remained overlapping subjects. Il continente ignoto. Filosofia dell’amore moderno appeared at Einaudi in March, followed by Traité de l’amour moderne at Climats in April. The new project examines love as something that makes households, material arrangements and social relations, rather than an emotion added to an already completed individual.[80, 81]

Annalisa Ambrosio’s review locates the Italian book’s movement through metamorphosis, the self and different forms of love, with Charles Taylor among its interlocutors. Didier Pinaud’s French review emphasizes a longer historical conversation including Augustine and Dante. These are useful guides to the new books, not a claim here to have read both volumes in full. The trajectory is intelligible beside the house book: once one asks how people arrange a shared life, attachment becomes a question about things, obligations and institutions as well as feelings.[82, 83]

In 2025–26, his Monday teaching paired a seminar on why people live together with one on fashion.[84, 85] His 2026–27 course makes the architectural side unusually inspectable. “Habiter le moderne : projets et expérimentations” is scheduled at Campus Condorcet from October 2026 to February 2027. Its provisional program ranges across modern and contemporary housing, including Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright and later social-housing projects. For the oral examination, students are asked to present at least five projects by five different architects. The syllabus is an announced course, not classroom observation, but it brings the work down to buildings that must be studied and described.[86]

The archival scholar is still publishing on angels; the writer on images is still working with people who make them. Neither activity has replaced the teacher’s work of asking students to distinguish particular buildings, garments and ways of living.

15. A chronology and a way into the work

Period / Work and setting

Period: 1976–1990s
Work and setting: Born in Fermo; agricultural school in Macerata; subsequent philosophical and philological study

Period: 2005–11
Work and setting: Florence doctorate and Averroes book; fellowships in Barcelona, Frankfurt and Berkeley; medieval-emotions project; Freiburg post; Angeli with Agamben

Period: 2010–16
Work and setting: La Vie sensible; move to EHESS in 2011; Le Bien dans les choses; Columbia advertising fellowship

Period: 2016–20
Work and setting: La Vie des plantes and translations; 10 Corso Como book with Grau; Nous les arbres; Métamorphoses and Quercus

Period: 2021–23
Work and setting: House book; Roversi correspondence; Modern Alchemy; Earthscape; Triennale projects; Météores; Hiérarchie

Period: 2024–26
Work and setting: Michele and Roversi books; ITS and Kanazawa exhibitions; landscape lectures; love books; housing seminar

For a first encounter, The Life of Plants supplies the most direct route from an ordinary object into his philosophy; Drouin’s review is a useful companion. Philosophy of the Home brings the argument closer to the author’s movements and domestic experience. Sensible Life and Goods make the later work with image-makers less surprising. The freely available Quercus transcript shows a collaboration at the level of the actual sentences; the Roversi interview makes the choice of letters as a working form visible.

Sources and method

Researched and revised 1 November 2026. This profile uses institutional records, original interviews in several languages, publication and production credits, accessible primary texts, and named critical reception. The complete Quercus transcript was read; no complete-film viewing is claimed. Book discussions draw on the sources specified below, including publishers, excerpts and reviews, rather than implying cover-to-cover access to every title. Retrospective accounts of schooling, family encounters and writing are identified as such. There is no invented daily routine, private motive, financial breakdown or undocumented account of rehearsals and drafts.

1. Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, guest-scholar biography and bibliography. Formation, fellowships, appointments and early scholarship; prospective translation dates checked against publication records.↩
2. École nationale supérieure d’architecture de Saint-Étienne, “Emanuele Coccia,” 8 September 2026. Recent institutional biography confirming the 2005 doctorate, appointments, and 2026 publication.↩
3. Columbia University, Italian Academy, Emanuele Coccia, 2015–16 fellowship record. Research project, earlier appointment, and bibliography.↩
4. Maremosso, interview on Filosofia della casa. Writing and domestic encounters; publication date unspecified.↩
5. Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Rio, Metamorfoses launch, 2020. Schooling and Brazilian publishing networks.↩
6. Joss Allen, interview with Coccia, NO NIIN, October 2023. Plant-book genesis, politics and naming.↩
7. Philippe Nassif, interview with Coccia, Madame Figaro, 13 March 2020. Retrospective account of schooling and philosophical claims about life and consciousness; the latter are not treated here as scientific consensus.↩
8. Manuel Orazi, interview, Domus, 11 July 2020. Architectural reading, domestic questions, publishing and commissions.↩
9. “Emanuele Coccia : ‘Nous sommes tous une seule et même vie’,” Le Monde, 5 August 2020. Biographical reporting on the siblings and intellectual trajectory.↩
10. Coccia, La vida de las plantas, licensed book preview. The dedication records Matteo Coccia, 1976–2001. It establishes a memorial dedication, not a causal explanation of the philosophy.↩
11. Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, guest-scholar biography and bibliography. Formation, fellowships, appointments and early scholarship; prospective translation dates checked against publication records.↩
12. Adriana Hidalgo Editora, Filosofía de la imaginación. Averroes y el averroísmo. Publisher’s account of the argument and Agamben’s introduction; read alongside Columbia’s record of the Italian original.↩
13. Columbia University, Italian Academy, Emanuele Coccia, 2015–16 fellowship record. Research project, earlier appointment, and bibliography.↩
14. Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Olga Lucia Lizzini’s research record; Lizzini, scholarly biography and description of her contribution to Angeli. These identify specialist participation beyond the two general editors.↩
15. Columbia University, Italian Academy, Emanuele Coccia, 2015–16 fellowship record. Research project, earlier appointment, and bibliography.↩

16. Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, guest-scholar biography and bibliography. Formation, fellowships, appointments and early scholarship; prospective translation dates checked against publication records.↩

17. Evan Edwards, "Thinking from the Home: Emanuele Coccia on Domesticity and Happiness," Open Philosophy 7, 2024. A scholarly interpretation connecting the early response to Agamben with later work on domesticity and nourishment.↩

18. Vrin, Hiérarchie. La société des anges, November 2023. Bibliographic record and Rivages publisher's description of the collected essays.↩

19. Fordham University Press, Sensible Life. English publication and conceptual description.↩

20. Fordham / Oxford Academic, Sensible Life, English publication and Scott Alan Stuart credit; the Düsseldorf bibliography records French 2010 and Italian 2011. Its prospective English publication date is superseded by Fordham's 2016 record.↩

21. Fordham University Press / Oxford Academic, Goods: Advertising, Urban Space, and the Moral Law of the Image. English publication in 2018, Marissa Gemma's translation, and publisher's summary.↩

22. Columbia University, Italian Academy, Emanuele Coccia, 2015–16 fellowship record. Research project, earlier appointment, and bibliography.↩

23. Wiley / Polity, The Transitory Museum, Emanuele Coccia and Donatien Grau. Publisher's presentation of the 10 Corso Como study; English catalogue and imprint dates vary between late 2018 and 2019.↩

24. Joss Allen, interview with Coccia, NO NIIN, October 2023. Plant-book genesis, politics and naming.↩

25. Wiley / Polity, The Life of Plants: A Metaphysics of Mixture. English publication record.↩

26. Les Rencontres Philosophiques de Monaco, 2017–18 program. Records the 2017 prize awarded to the 2016 book.↩

27. Polity / Wiley, The Life of Plants, publisher's table of contents. Leaf, root and flower sections; translation metadata checked against the published edition.↩

28. Johan Faerber, interview with Coccia on La Vie des plantes, Diacritik, 3 May 2017. Author's account of the book's philosophical reversal and critique of certain ecological assumptions.↩

29. Jean-Marc Drouin, "Végéter," La Vie des idées, 26 July 2017. Historical and botanical criticism of La Vie des plantes.↩

30. Bas Smets in conversation with Emanuele Coccia, Wallpaper, 10 September 2025. Retrospective account of the introduction, shared interests, and book then in development.↩

31. Wiley / Polity, Metamorphoses, translated by Robin Mackay, 2021. Publisher's account of the book and translation metadata.↩

32. Philippe Nassif, interview with Coccia, Madame Figaro, 13 March 2020. Retrospective account of schooling and philosophical claims about life and consciousness; the latter are not treated here as scientific consensus.↩

33. Jean Lacoste, review of Métamorphoses, En attendant Nadeau, 5 June 2020. Historical placement and critical assessment of the book's extrapolations.↩

34. Roger-Pol Droit, review of Métamorphoses, Le Monde, 29 May 2020. Criticism of the passage from material continuity to an undifferentiated self.↩

35. Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Rio, Metamorfoses launch, 2020. Schooling and Brazilian publishing networks.↩

36. Giulia Ossola, "The domestic space and happiness: an interview with Emanuele Coccia," Salone del Mobile, 20 September 2021. First-person account of thirty moves and the making of the house book.↩

37. Penguin, autumn 2023 catalogue, entry for Philosophy of the Home; London Review Bookshop, publication record, 3 August 2023. The British date precedes some 2024 English-language coverage.↩

38. Maremosso, interview on Filosofia della casa. Writing and domestic encounters; publication date unspecified.↩

39. Manuel Orazi, interview, Domus, 11 July 2020. Architectural reading, domestic questions, publishing and commissions.↩

40. Giulia Ossola, "The domestic space and happiness: an interview with Emanuele Coccia," Salone del Mobile, 20 September 2021. First-person account of thirty moves and the making of the house book.↩

41. Victoria Camblin, "Home Wrecker: Interview with Emanuele Coccia," PIN–UP. Dialogue about domestic institutions, property, kinship, and platform models; proposals are treated as proposals.↩

42. Tiziana Cardini, report and interview on Michele and Coccia's book, British Vogue, 5 June 2024. Source for the introduction through Attili, conversational genesis, structure, and separate authorship of the Gucci show texts.↩

43. Tiziana Cardini, report and interview on Michele and Coccia's book, British Vogue, 5 June 2024. Source for the introduction through Attili, conversational genesis, structure, and separate authorship of the Gucci show texts.↩

44. Le Monde, French book-launch report, 15 June 2025. Source for clothing and reader encounters.↩

45. Interview with Coccia on fashion and luxury groups, El País, 7 November 2025. Critique of the institutional preservation of founders' brands and distinction between designer and corporate management.↩

46. EHESS, “Philosophie de la mode,” 2025–26 seminar record. Identifies Coccia’s institutional position and proposes analysis of ten fashion objects; a course description, not classroom observation.↩

47. Nathalie Jungerman, editorial on Lettres sur la lumière, Fondation La Poste, April 2024. Correspondence dates, publication and support. The original issue is also available as FloriLettres 249.↩

48. Nathalie Jungerman, interview with Paolo Roversi, Fondation La Poste, April 2024. Original account of the decision to correspond; dated letters and Roversi’s explanations of his own practice.↩

49. Nathalie Jungerman, interview with Paolo Roversi, Fondation La Poste, April 2024. Original account of the decision to correspond; dated letters and Roversi’s explanations of his own practice.↩

50. Agnès Dahan Studio, Modern Alchemy, 2022. Primary design and production record naming publisher, patron, translator, format, and print run.↩

51. Formafantasma, Quercus, 2020 transcript. Complete four-page primary text and collaboration credit; reading it is not a claim to viewing the film.↩

52. Formafantasma, Quercus, 2020 transcript. Complete four-page primary text and collaboration credit; reading it is not a claim to viewing the film.↩

53. Teresa Castro and Formafantasma, conversation on animistic cinema, Flash Art Italia. Production context and the use of LiDAR material in Quercus.↩

54. Zone Critique, Earthscape. Primary record of collective writing, direction, performance, production support, and first presentations.↩

55. Zone Critique, Earthscape. Primary record of collective writing, direction, performance, production support, and first presentations.↩

56. Pinault Collection, Météores, 19 June 2023. Text, direction, performance credits, duration, and the surrounding Intempéries program.↩

57. Triennale Milano, Unknown Unknowns: An Introduction to Mysteries, catalogue presentation, 18 November 2022. Catalogue editorship, publisher, design, and exhibition context.↩

58. Dotdotdot, Portal of Mysteries, 2022. Primary production record specifying format, duration, artistic direction, and design and animation credits.↩

59. Le Fresnoy, Panorama 23 educational dossier, 2021, entry on Heaven in Matter. The published project description is distinguished from earlier statements of projects in development.↩

60. Fondation Cartier, Nous les arbres, 2019–20. Exhibition dates, conceptual presentation, and curatorial credits; Coccia’s participation is also documented in the Rio institutional biography and the Domus interview.↩

61. Fondation Cartier, Trees, Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2021. Subsequent institutional presentation of the project.↩

62. Nathalie Jungerman, interview with Paolo Roversi, Fondation La Poste, April 2024. Original account of the decision to correspond; dated letters and Roversi's explanations of his own practice.↩

63. 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, DANCING WITH ALL: The Ecology of Empathy, 2024–25. Primary curatorial credits, dates, participants, and statement of aims.↩

64. 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, DANCING WITH ALL: The Ecology of Empathy, 2024–25. Primary curatorial credits, dates, participants, and statement of aims.↩

65. Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Rio, Metamorfoses launch, 2020. Schooling and Brazilian publishing networks.↩

66. Joss Allen, interview with Coccia, NO NIIN, October 2023. Plant-book genesis, politics and naming.↩

67. Joss Allen, interview with Coccia, NO NIIN, October 2023. Plant-book genesis, politics and naming.↩

68. ITS Arcademy, The Many Lives of a Garment. Exhibition record and collaboration with Olivier Saillard.↩

69. GO! 2025, Fashionlands: Clothes Beyond Borders. 2025 exhibition description and Coccia–Saillard curatorial partnership.↩

70. ITS Arcademy, EXPOSURE: The Power of Being Seen, 2026–27. Separately identifies Tom Eerebout's exhibition curatorship and the catalogue edited by Eerebout and Coccia.↩

71. Harvard, Mahindra Humanities Center, "Metropolitan Nature: How Different Species Build Cities," 20 November 2024. Lecture abstract and event record; not treated as evidence of completed architectural implementation.↩

72. ÉNSA Versailles, "Au-delà des villes et des écosystèmes," event announced for 13 January 2026. Lecture proposal and institutional setting, not a record of architectural implementation.↩

73. École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Saint-Étienne, "Emanuele Coccia," 8 September 2026. Recent institutional biography confirming the 2005 doctorate, appointments, and 2026 publication.↩

74. Manuel Orazi, interview, Domus, 11 July 2020. Architectural reading, domestic questions, publishing and commissions.↩

75. Rosaria Carpinelli Consulenze Editoriali, Emanuele Coccia author page. Bibliography, publication dates, and international publishers; not a disclosure of financial terms.↩

76. Fordham / Oxford Academic, Sensible Life, English publication and Scott Alan Stuart credit; the Düsseldorf bibliography records French 2010 and Italian 2011. Its prospective English publication date is superseded by Fordham's 2016 record.↩

77. Agnès Dahan Studio, Modern Alchemy, 2022. Primary design and production record naming publisher, patron, translator, format, and print run.↩

78. Fondation Cartier, Nous les arbres, 2019–20. Exhibition dates, conceptual presentation, and curatorial credits; Coccia's participation is also documented in the Rio institutional biography and the Domus interview.↩

79. Pinault Collection, Météores, 19 June 2023. Text, direction, performance credits, duration, and the surrounding Intempéries program.↩

80. Einaudi publisher description and bibliographic data reproduced by IBS, Il continente ignoto. Filosofia dell'amore moderno. Italian publication, 10 March 2026.↩

81. Vrin, Traité de l'amour moderne, reproducing the publisher's presentation; see also the September 2026 ENSASE biography for the April French publication.↩

82. Annalisa Ambrosio, "Emanuele Coccia e l'amore moderno," Doppiozero, 21 May 2026. Review of the Italian book's structure, historical argument, and relation between affection and economic life.↩

83. Didier Pinaud, "Un nouveau virus: Traité de l'amour moderne de Emanuele Coccia," Diacritik, 12 May 2026. Contemporary French reception and discussion of historical reference points.↩

84. EHESS, "Pourquoi vivons-nous ensemble ?," 2025–26 seminar record. Source for the planned schedule, assessment, and account of associations as constructed forms with different purposes.↩

85. EHESS, "Philosophie de la mode," 2025–26 seminar record. Identifies Coccia's institutional position and proposes analysis of ten fashion objects; a course description, not classroom observation.↩

86. EHESS, "Habiter le moderne : projets et expérimentations," 2026–27. Published syllabus, provisional project list and assessment; not classroom observation.↩