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Screenshotting as gestural reframing: Mediated authenticity and Self-remix in youth visual practices¹



Abstract

Lo screenshot è un gesto tecnico ordinario, ma culturalmente decisivo nelle pratiche digitali giovanili contemporanee. Catturando contenuto e interfaccia, registra un'esperienza di schermo situata e funziona al tempo stesso come indice e come archivio personale di autenticità mediata. La registrazione dell'ambiente mediale lo rende inoltre altamente riusabile: circola come frammento citabile o readymade, si presta a riscritture e rimontaggi memetici, inclusi i fake screenshot. L'articolo analizza lo screenshot come gesto di reframing che tiene insieme evidenza documentale e manipolazione ludica, intimità e circolazione pubblica. Attraverso un workshop partecipativo con studenti dell'Università di Salerno, che hanno selezionato, commentato e remixato propri screenshot, lo studio rivela come tali pratiche vernacolari rinegozino l'autenticità attraverso ironia e riuso e siano perciò sintomatiche della cultura schermica contemporanea.

The screenshot is an ordinary technical gesture, yet culturally consequential in contemporary youth digital life. By capturing content together with interface elements, it records a situated screen experience and functions as both evidence and a personal archive of mediated authenticity. As record of the medial context makes screenshots highly reusable: they circulate as quotable fragments or readymades for overwriting and memetic re-assembling, including fake screenshots. This article analyses screenshotting as an act of reframing that combines documentary evidence and playful manipulation, intimacy and circulation. Drawing on a participatory workshop with Master's degree students at the University of Salerno, where participants selected, comment on and remix their own screenshots, The study reveals how such vernacular practices of young people renegotiate authenticity through irony and reuse and are therefore symptomatic of contemporary screen culture.



Introduction: the screenshot as gesture, memory and interface

The screenshot has become a pervasive gesture within smartphone-based visual experience. By capturing content together with interface elements (timestamps, notifications, traces of interaction), it preserves the operational context

¹Although this article is the result of a collaborative project and process, Filippo Fimiani wrote paragraphs 1 and 2, and Paola Lamberti wrote paragraphs 3, 4, and 5; the conclusions reflect the insights of both authors.

of engagement and marks a fragment as worth retaining within a continuous visual flow. Screen capture records a position within the media flow and indexes the technological and material conditions of its entangled appearance. Within the broader shift of the post-photographic practices, the screenshot displaces the indexicality: it does not testify to “what has been” but to a mediated situation. Each capture marks a fragment as potentially meaningful for what Vilém Flusser (1972) called a “surface thought”, within a continuous stream of images. Screenshotting suspends circulation and extracts non-linear fragments of mediated experience as recyclable material.

To capture the screen is already to appropriate a pre-existent image and extract it from its original context. The gesture anticipates reuse: overwriting, recirculation, ironic displacement, or montage. If repetition and remediation are not secondary processes but constitutive conditions of digital image practices, “authenticity” refers to a mediated and performative effect produced through selection, reframing and reuse. The screenshot operates simultaneously as evidential trace and transformable material, oscillating between document and meme (Tanni 2020), readymade and remake.

This contribution investigates how screenshotting functions as a situated practice of everyday self-representation within smartphone-centred environments. Rather than making generational claims, the study examines a specific empirical context: a didactic workshop conducted within a master’s degree Visual Culture course at the University of Salerno, involving thirty-four students. Participants were invited to select own screenshots about relationships, routine study and work management, comment them with very brief texts by a questionnaire, produce re-framings or micro-memes, and discuss all these materials in class.

The qualitative analysis of the empirical materials produced and set by the didactic workshop – screenshots, textual comments, and remix interventions – shows a complex practice of everyday archiving and remix, and a post-ironic self-representation

The paper is organised as follows: section 2 provides the theoretical rationale by focusing on irony and remix as key coordinates for reading screenshot practices within post-photographic and screen culture; section 3 presents the methodological framework and workshop design, detailing the phases of selection, comment, and reframing, as well as the composition of the corpus and analytic procedure; section 4 offers a qualitative analysis of the materials produced by participants, organised around three axes – everyday archiving, irony as mediated authenticity and remix as reframing practice; section 5 discusses the reflective questionnaire as a complementary “listening device” that articulates participants’ own accounts of the gesture and clarifies the situated conditions of the findings. The conclusion

summarises the implications of the study for debates on screenshot culture in visual and screen studies.

The aesthetic grammar of screenshot culture

As Frosh (2023) observes, the screenshot functions as an interface memory – an image that preserves the operational and affective context of digital interaction rather than documenting an external event. The iconic act of capture records not the world but the subject's situated presence within the flow: an "I was here" enacted on the screen's surface.

The screenshot quotes a fragment of mediated experience and makes it available for subsequent gestures such as captioning, forwarding, reusing and remix. A technical operation is a gesture of selection – a way of marking a scrap as potentially meaningful within an otherwise continuous stream. It is within this re-mediated condition that irony emerges as a dominant expressive register. In youth-oriented post-digital practices, screenshotting frequently entails appropriating content that "speaks for me" and irony mediates authenticity by enabling identification with tonal distance, and allowing affective states to be articulated indirectly. As studies on digital post-irony suggest (Fisher 2014; Chateau 2020), authenticity and reflexive distance coexist in an ambivalent way and shape mixed confessional technologies and tropisms (and brands) (Banet-Weiser 2012) of the self: a self-disclosure through quotation, exaggeration, or displacement.

Irony and remix converge as structuring principles of screenshot practices, that oscillate between document, readymade and meme, evidential trac, playful transformation and (post-)ironic remake. In the ordinary and mobile visual culture, the screenshot enables users to negotiate visibility, identification, and self-positioning within the media flow and the existential routines. We will focus on the materials – namely screenshots, text comments and questionnaires and icon-text remixes – produced and discussed in the specific context of the didactic workshop with university students, precisely to analyze how screenshot practices can become explicit objects of reflection, reformulation and re-mediation.

The key point is a meta-operational awareness that emerges when users' material engagement with the screenshot triggers them to reflect on their own voice in relation to indirect self-representational practices. The outcome of this convergence of "re-thinging" and "re-thinking" is the reconfiguration of the users's digital selves (Malafouris 2026).

Methodology and fieldwork

The workshop of the Visual Culture master's course held by Professor Filippo Fimiani at the University of Salerno on the first semester of 2025-2026 involved a cohort of thirty-four master's degree students. It was the institutional setting for our qualitative exploratory study. The researcher's presence in the classroom introduced a dimension of participant observation and research-creation, and the concluding questionnaire submitted to students about their selected screenshot functioned as a tool of a collective and reflexive listening and discussion. The workshop operates as a form of situated verification of our mixed research and didactic action. The theoretical framework presented in the preceding sections about screen culture and memeaesthetics topics and tropisms interacted with the students' practices and their actual productions, selections and presentations of their own screenshots about their routines and lives. The classroom thus became a micro-observatory not for measurement and evaluation but for a reconnaissance and re-enactment. It was a controlled yet permeable space – a *dispositive* between the public and the private, the on-life and the everyday life and, of course, mobile devices and digital media – in which the aesthetic and affective regimes characterising a small group of students' visual experience surfaces in reflexive form and allows another re-mediation of their self-representation.

The workshop brief explicitly oriented participants towards irony and remix practices – it did not, however, produce them artificially or in a hetero-directed way, namely institutional and academic. The screenshots brought by students originated entirely from their real everyday use: no image was created for the purpose of the workshop. The structured brief creates the conditions for disclosure in the workshop set, where the habits already present in participants' visual lives could be named, shared, examined and critically reframed. The brief functioned as a protocol of visibility and speakability, not of invention or creation. This distinction is central to understanding the epistemological status of the empirical corpus: the materials do not document what students do because they were asked to, but what they already do – made visible and legible through a structured process of participated reflection and metapragmatic awareness.

The methodological design draws on research-creation (Chapman, Sawchuk 2012) and visual inquiry (Pink 2021) approaches. Research-creation designates an inquiry in which creative practice and academic research are pursued simultaneously and in interplay: the act of making is not preparatory to analysis but constitutive of it. The students' visual productions – selections, presentations, reframings, remix interventions – are not merely data to be decoded or measured, but performances in which knowledge is actively generated. Visual inquiry, as developed by Pink within

sensory ethnography, treats images not as transparent representations of experience but as active agents in the production of meaning: it attends to the embodied, affective, and relational dimensions of visual practices that purely discursive methods cannot easily access. Together, these approaches informed our workshop, designed to sustain a continuous circulation between observation, creation, and reflection – based on the assumption that visual processes can be understood only by enacting them.

The workshop unfolded in three main phases, each addressing a distinct level in the relationship between subject, image and device. In the first phase (Selection) students were invited to identify, within their personal galleries or everyday smartphone use, a set of significant screenshots in relation to how they represent themselves or engage with digital images. The deliberately open brief encouraged them to reflect on what motivated a particular act of capture: an emotion, an ironic exchange, a conversation, a glitch or a moment of recognition or surprise. In the second phase (Reflection) each participant produced a brief written commentary explaining the choice of screenshots and describing the context in which they had been taken. The goal was to stimulate self-reflection on the screenshotting gesture itself: to understand not only what is captured, and about what the picture was, but why and how. This icon-textual corpus, enabled an exploration of the relation between visual and verbal expression, between experience and discourse (Rose 2016). In the third phase (Reframing) students were asked to produce a remake or reframing of one of their selected screenshots through collage, meme-making, overwriting or other image manipulations. The discursive and shared reflection switched into a re-enactment, into a practice of critical remix: an act of self-appropriation through which the aesthetic and affective logics underpinning the students' self-representation by the selected and commented screenshots could be made explicit.

Throughout the workshop, the researchers were present in a dual role: as silent observers, attending to the dynamics of individual and group work and recording field notes on emerging themes and spontaneous comments; as active facilitators, circulating among participants, responding to questions and contributing to group discussions. These interactions were themselves hybrid in nature – partly guided by the prompt questions displayed in the slides, partly open and exploratory, following the directions spontaneously introduced by students. This observational and dialogic dimension enriched the interpretive corpus beyond the written materials: many of the thematic insights developed in Section 5 first emerged in these informal exchanges before finding written articulation in reflective texts and questionnaire responses.

The final corpus consists of 150 selected screenshots; reflective texts (short descriptions, commentaries, or micro-narratives) and responses to an open-ended questionnaire. All participants were informed of the research purpose of the workshop and provided informed consent in class for the use of anonymised screenshots and textual materials for research and publication purposes.

The analytical phase employed qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006), applied to both textual and visual materials. Interpretive categories derived inductively through continuous comparison among materials, group discussions, and field notes. From a methodological standpoint, the value of this research lies not in the generalisability or statistical representativeness of its findings but in their qualitative thickness and exemplary density as cultural symptoms: the possibility of grasping, through a small and situated sample, the perceptual, affective and linguistic logics driving these participants' visual digital practices.

The educational context introduces specific conditions that constrain the transferability of the findings. Students participated within a Visual Culture master's degree course strongly structured around a shared theoretical vocabulary – memesthetics, authenticity, irony and post-irony, post-photography – introduced in the preceding lectures. This institutional and didactic framework inevitably oriented the reflective and dialogical phases of the workshop; for us, these intrinsic limitations aren't a methodological weakness to be apologised for, but as discursive and epistemological conditions of our specific research to be made transparent.

At the end of the workshop, a short qualitative questionnaire was distributed to all thirty-four participants, with twenty-two students ultimately providing responses, aged between 20 and 25, all enrolled in degree programmes in visual culture and communication. The instrument was designed not as a quantitative survey but as a reflexive complement – a technology of listening (Pink 2021) aimed at allowing participants' awareness of their own visual and techno-gestural practices to surface through verbal language. It included a section of closed questions focused on frequency and context of screenshotting, and a second section of open-ended questions addressing the perception of the gesture of capture and reframing screen images, the relation between irony and authenticity, the boundary between screenshot, document, and meme and any perceptual shifts resulting from the workshop experience.

Analysis: the intimate life of screenshots

The corpus includes thirty-four participants (twenty-two of whom completed the questionnaire) and 150 screenshots with accompanying commentaries and remixes. The materials reveal three recurrent axes: (1) everyday archiving, (2) irony as mediated authenticity and (3) remix as reframing. The following sections analyse these dimensions in turn.

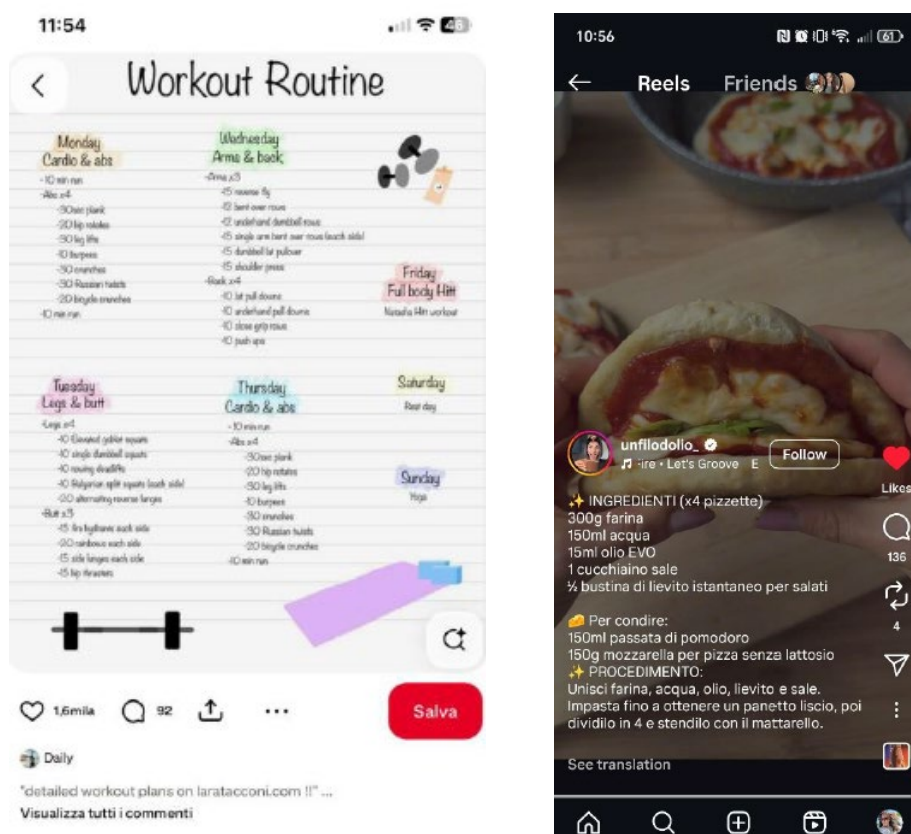


Fig. 1, 2: Pinterest screenshot of a weekly workout plan; Instagram screenshot of a cooking reel with captured caption.

(1) Everyday Screens: visual notes of the connected Self

What is immediately striking, is the centrality of the everyday. Far from being populated by exceptional or spectacular images, the collection of screenshots offers an atlas of what, for these students, is part of the ordinary experience of connected life: medical searches, recipes, workout lists, runway looks, cosmetic products,

memes, and TikTok or Instagram screens captured spontaneously. The focus is on the minimal threshold of personal relevance. This is a crucial point: the screenshot appears as a micro-documentary of the self, more precisely of the “digital self” (Gallese 2026) – one that records not the world, but the subject's situated and technologically mediated relation to the flows that traverse it.

A first group of screenshots concerns what might be called *functional archives* or, with Eco (2009), “practical lists” searches for symptoms (epicondylitis), workout charts, recipes captured from reels or posts, make-up or skincare tutorials, product wishlists, practical notes that students describe as a “quick save”, a “visual memo”, or “the easiest way not to forget”. Several participants, for instance, capture TikTok or Instagram recipes and Pinterest workout charts, annotating them directly and transforming a found image into a personalised document. The screenshot here is an active appropriation: the screen image becomes a working surface.

These screenshots are a socio-pragmatic autobiography, in which dietary habits, bodily concerns, aesthetic ideals, and forms of self-care come to the surface. The subject entrusts their memory not to a delimited form of textuality, but to the act of capturing syncretic fragments of interface – delegating to the screenshotting the task of remembering, while preserving traces of what was eventually felt as meaningful (Montani & Pezzini 2024).

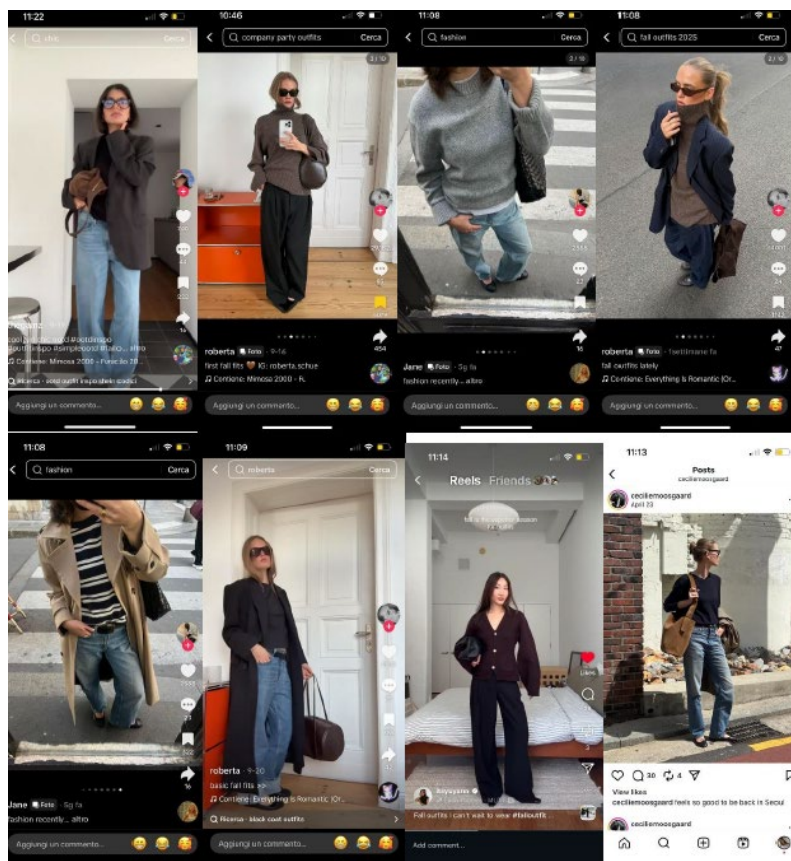


Fig. 3: Composite screenshot of TikTok and Instagram content on everyday outfits.

A second cluster concerns collections drawn from influencer outfit videos on TikTok and Instagram Reels. Students captured frames that isolate looks, styling details, and mirror poses while preserving the visible interface (usernames, likes, icons). The screenshots preserve both the outfits and the visible interface (usernames, likes, comment icons) foregrounding the social environment in which taste circulates.

Here the screenshot functions as a minimal curatorial gesture (Zaho & Zappavigna 2018): pausing, selecting, and saving a frame becomes a way of assembling a personal archive of stylistic references. What is retained is a repeatable grammar of everyday elegance. The influencer's body operates as a model for projection and possible imitation. The saved frame becomes inspiration, reference, and potential self-fashioning.

Some students explicitly juxtapose multiple screenshots of looks or products, making visible the transition from spontaneous capture to intentional editing. What begins as a private habit becomes legible as an amatorial aesthetic practice: selecting, ordering, and assembling screen images structure and turns taste into an explicit, shareable repertoire.

Particularly revealing are the cases in which the functional and aesthetic dimensions intertwine. Screenshots of highlighters, lip glosses, weekly planners, workouts, recipes, or accessories are not merely reminders but visual objects of desire – fragments of an aspirational imaginary internalised and stored by the student. The interface (icons, usernames, insights, likes, "saved by...", time, battery) often remains visible, not perceived as parergon or noise but as part of the meta- and hyper-mediated scene.

A third group of images addresses fragments of public and media discourse: absurd headlines, polarising statements, political comments, or images drawn from sport and pop entertainment. These screenshots do not constitute structured critiques but instinctive crystallisations – «I had to save this headline», «this sentence was too cool». Here, the act of capture functions as a larval sign of dissent, perplexity, a sketch of post-ironic indignation indexed within a personal archive.

The corpus functions as a discontinuous visual diary organised through accumulation rather than narrative coherence. It is a self-portrait built through excess and dispersion – and building some iconic series of distracted gestures of attention (Citton 2017).

Students themselves describe their gestural practice of screenshotting as an almost ritual and irreflexive performance: «I do it without thinking», «it's automatic», «it's the fastest way to...». Yet this naturalisation reveals its cultural depth: what is perceived as obvious is in fact the effect of an internalised visual competence – a

posture toward images in which to save already means to signify and to rescue from disappearance. The everyday gesture, apparently neutral, thus becomes a crucial node for understanding how the students observed inhabits the digital interface – not as passive users, but as subjects who mark, pace, and transform it into a non-linear and fragmented self-narration.

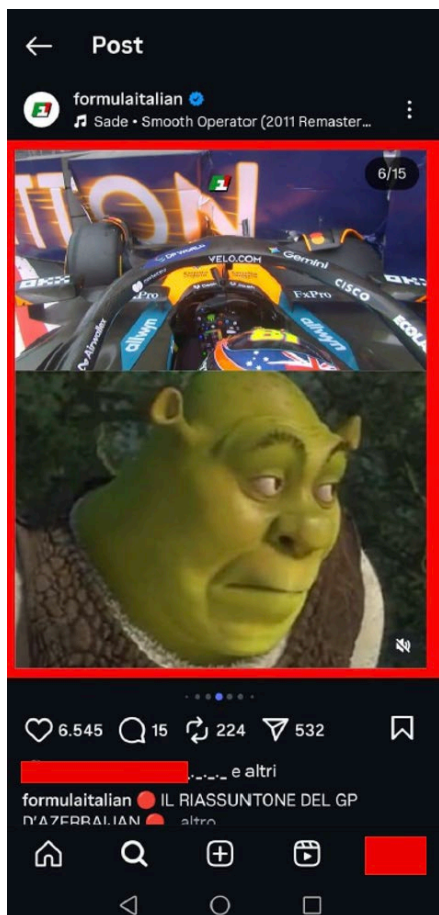


Fig. 4: Instagram screenshot of a meme by @formulaitalian account, juxtaposing Formula 1 images with a reaction shot of *Shrek*.

(2) Irony as a form of authenticity

The second axe reveals the pervasiveness of irony as identity language. In almost all the works produced, the act of screenshotting is accompanied by an ironic comment or reworking – sometimes explicitly declared, more often implicit. Irony emerges in the very form of selection, in the tonal stance through which the subject positions him/herselves in relation to media experience. As affecting filter or bias, irony is a lateral language of self-representation that enables a self-expression without fully disclosure. Many of chosen screenshots depict absurd situations, funny conversations, tropisms, or social media comments revealing involuntary black humour. A screenshot of a chat embeds a message accidentally sent to the wrong

person, accompanied by the caption: «I keep it because it reminds me that I'm an organised disaster». Self-irony here becomes a mechanism of affective and social compensation: what might cause embarrassment in real life is transformed into a self-narrative, a self-indulgent memo, not a mistake to be corrected.

Many participants describe irony as protection and delegation by externalization. One student writes: «I don't like saying how I feel, but I save things that say it for me». Irony operates here as a shielding *dispositif*: allows real emotions – loneliness, anxiety, fatigue, frustration – to be expressed not verbally or through self-produced content, but through found images, which are neither one's own nor attributable to forms of alienation, while maintaining a safe distance from direct vulnerability on multiple levels. This is the typical dynamic of post-irony (Fisher 2014; Chateau 2020) and its affective and semantic ambiguity: one laughs, but in order not to stop telling the truth. The prevailing tone could be described as intimate irony: neither satire nor parody, but a gentle, self-reflexive humour that constructs a sense of community through self- and mutual recognition.

A telling example is a screenshot of a chat message from a friend, «I'm not sad, just tired», with the added caption «my mood 24/7». Preserved and interpolate, a punctual statement by another, becomes a mirroring fragment of self-narration. A similar mechanism underlies the work of a participant who screenshots a meme featuring the protagonist of *Matilda* eating a dessert, captioned «getting myself a treat for making it through another finals season» and reframes it by adding in Italian: «(I studied everything at the last minute) / (I promised myself it wouldn't happen again) / (spoiler: I always say that...)». The student inhabits the meme: personalizing it with a confession that the ironic tone makes possible, but which is neither dramatic nor truthful, nor a sign of radical transformation (Friesen 2017).

Many screenshots draw on already memetic figures – especially the “tired cat” or other existentially distressed animals – selected because they condense unease in a tender and shareable form. As one student noted: «I choose these because they make me laugh and I see myself in them – they're funny and sad at the same time». This affective ambivalence is a defining trait of the corpus observed: self-irony renders emotion shareable by translating it into an indirect and recognisable register. This logic extends to the reframing phase. Another juxtaposes two screenshots – a Pinterest bob cut inspiration and a chihuahua wearing a black wig – using the viral TikTok audio structure «this is what I wanted / this is what I got». In both cases, irony operates as a tropism of shared recognition: the individual saves an image not only for themselves but in anticipation of sharing it, of saying “this is us”.



Fig. 5, 6: Screenshot of the reappropriation of the meme in Fig. 6, with additional textual intervention by the author of the screenshot; Instagram screenshot of a meme composed of two frames from *Matilda*, with original overlaid text by @sendhelp account.

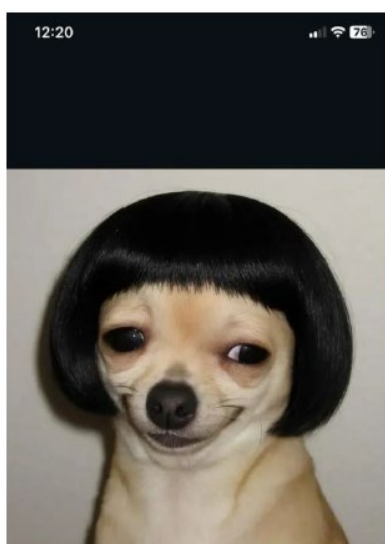
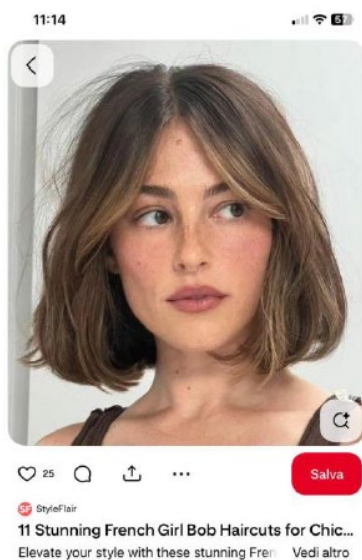


Fig. 7, 8: Composition of two juxtaposed screenshots (Pinterest and an unidentified source), subsequently reused in the construction of the meme in Fig. 8; meme "this is what I wanted / this is what I got," built from the screenshots in Fig. 7.

Another crucial dimension is the role of irony as relational language. Many screenshots depict exchanges with friends or family members, where jokes or misunderstandings become occasions for connection.

Overall, irony functions as a situated strategy for managing visibility and affective exposure in the workshop screenshot corpus. It enables mediated authenticity through quotation, displacement, and playful reframing. As one student wrote: «I take screenshots of things that make me laugh, but really they help me remember how I felt when I saw them». In this formulation, irony becomes emotional memory: a way of preserving affect through indirection and reflective distance.

(3) *Remix as reframing: visual thinging & thinking through digital debris*

Remix is not a technical exercise but a gesture of “surface thought” (Flusser, 2002) and media experience. In the reworking phase of the workshop, screenshotting becomes a process of critical and “creative thinging”, as Malafouris (2026) recently described it, precisely in relation to the emergent digital material things – such as screenshots – and the affective actions and memories they evoke, which provide anchoring devices for “self-bounding”. Captured images are rewritten, recomposed, and recontextualised, and these manoeuvres of reframing make it possible to observe how students conceive of the digital image as interlocking open material, as engaging readymade for reuse and post-production.

The invitation to “rethink (and *rething*) a screenshot” generated a surprisingly heterogeneous corpus of works, yet one marked by a deep coherence: every piece shows that appropriation is a form of interpretation. As we know, in contemporary visual culture, the creative act coincides with the ability to shift meaning – not to create *ex novo*, but to choose, recontextualise, deform and so on. In this sense, the students’ works are fully aligned with what Fontcuberta calls the age of “iconic recycling”, in which every image is already another image – a palimpsest on which to write anew.

Many participants worked through textual overlay: adding a phrase, a title or a single word to a pre-existing screenshot. As one participant wrote at the end of the workshop: «A screenshot is no longer just what I save, but what I manage to make of it afterwards». A telling example is a work in which a student captures a Google search page for “epicondylitis” – originally saved as a functional memo after a physiotherapy appointment, to document and share a diagnosis. In the reframing phase, the same screenshot is recontextualised through a single textual addition: the caption (in Italian) «You are a swimmer but you get tennis elbow:» overlaid on the AI Overview extract. The intervention is minimal yet precise: it does not alter the image but displaces its register entirely, transforming a medical document into a self-ironic

statement. The interface elements – the search bar, the highlighted text, the clinical language of the result – remain fully visible, now functioning not as information but as the raw material of a joke.

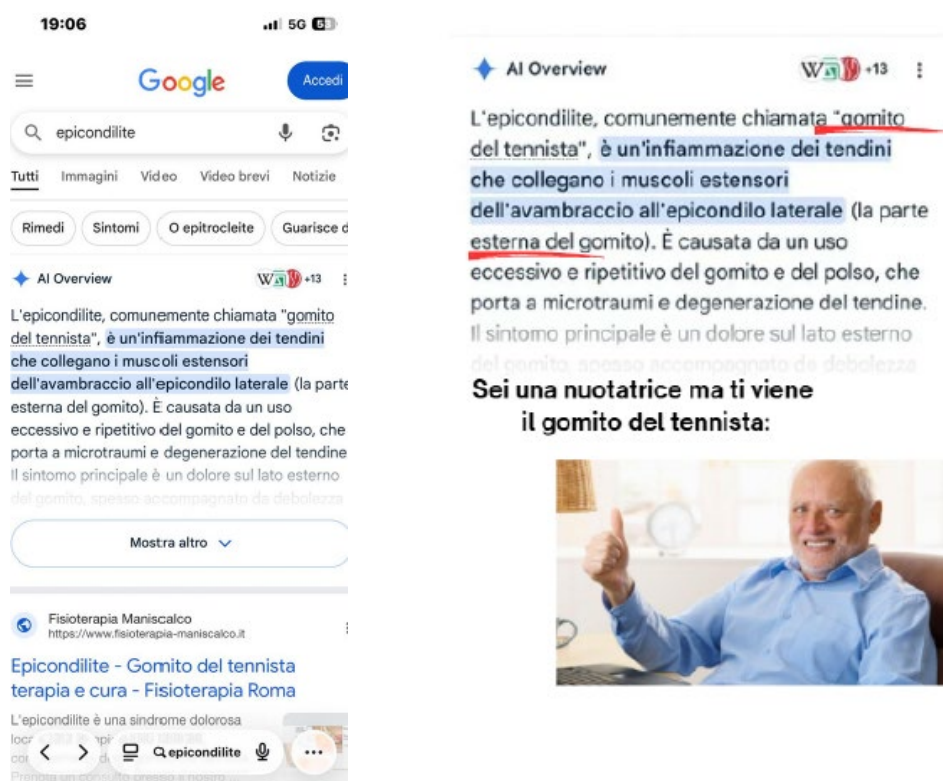


Fig. 9, 10: Google search screenshot for “epicondylitis”; meme built from the screenshot in Fig. 9, with ironic textual overlay.

These minimal interventions reconfigure the legibility of the image, turning everyday experience into a non-linear narratable condition that can circulate among peers (Rawhouser, Symmes & Argiolas 2025). Several works employ digital collage: juxtapositions of multiple screenshots creating short circuits between seemingly distant spheres of the everyday. One participant paired Google search pages – «how to be more productive», «how to sleep better» – forming, in sequence, an involuntary autobiography of fatigue. Another collage juxtaposes screenshots from the official Miu Miu Instagram account – images from the Spring/Summer 2026 runway –with photographs of Italian grandmothers wearing strikingly similar layered aprons. The resulting pseudo-dadaistic meme, captioned in Italian «Miu Miu P/E 2026: / Italian grandmothers since forever:». By this critical gesture, the fashion industry's claim to avant-garde originality is deflated through a simple act of visual resemblance and

comparison. Here remix is not decoration but argument – a way of rethinging and rethinking through images that no written commentary could achieve as efficiently. In all these cases, the power of the collage lies in its curatorial gesture: found material is remounted to say something else.



Fig. 11, 12: Instagram screenshot of a runway image; comparative meme built from the image in Fig. 11, activating an ironic juxtaposition between fashion and everyday imagery.

Other works play with meta-picture: screenshots of screenshots, captures depicting the very act of capturing. One student presents a screenshot of her phone gallery, filled with dozens of miniature screenshots, commenting: «Maybe this is my most honest self-portrait». Here the image becomes *mise en abyme*, pure self-reflexivity and designation of a potential self-recognition and a multiple and fragmented status of an authentic self-representation of oneself. The subject recognises themselves not in content, but in gesture of recollection and screenshotting – the understanding that contemporary visual language operates less through production than through the post-production management of the Self as readymade, however relevant to their identity projects and authentic selves (Kwon & Kyoung-Nan Kwon 2014).

Some works take a more intimate direction. One participant overlaid a message reading «message deleted» with the phrase «not everything I erase really disappears»; another superimposed an Instagram filter reading «this is your best

self» on a phone error message: «Storage almost full». The result is sharp: irony here targets not only the self but the very entanglement of the digital self with the device as representational dispositif. Several participants described the reframing phase as a moment of recognition – «an archive I didn't know I had», «a memory stored without intention» – the point at which the technical gesture transforms into aesthetic and cultural self-understanding. As one student wrote: «After saving so many images, I had forgotten that I can also rewrite them»: the rediscovery of one's own visual agency through everyday digital practices.

From gesture to insight

At the conclusion of the workshop a reflective questionnaire was administered about the practice of screenshotting. The aim was not to collect measurable data, but to activate a double form of awareness of post-productive gesture to emerge through the words of those who perform the screenshotting. The questionnaire does not function as an ancillary stage of the research, but as a dialogical post-production tool device in which participants' reflections become part of the research method itself.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: in the a first one, were part composed of closed questions aimed at assessing the frequency and contexts of screenshot use; in the second one, were three open-ended questions about the screenshotting in relation to three axes of the study – everyday life, irony, and remix. Participants were invited to reflect on the distinction between private and shared screenshots, on the role of irony in the construction of visual selfhood, and to describe any perceptual changes following the workshop experience.

The questionnaire is treated as qualitative material that complements the visual corpus and supports a reflexive reading (Leavy 2017) of screenshot practices. The analysis of responses, conducted through thematic analysis, revealed three recurrent clusters, which directly correspond to the interpretive categories that emerged in the visual works.

The first concerns everyday life as a space of memory: students described screenshotting as a spontaneous yet meaningful gesture – a way to «save something that represents me» or to «keep fragments of my online time». This diffuse archive of micro-captures is not perceived as an aesthetic collection, but as a form of care toward what flows: a visual notebook made of details, conversations, and fleeting emotions (Murray 2008; Leddy 2014; Mavropol 2015)

The second cluster relates to the ironic and relational function of the screenshot. The responses indicate that the sharing of screenshots – particularly in messaging and social contexts – constitutes a distinctive expressive mode within digital youth cultures. Irony here functions not merely as tone or a tropism but as a

language of belonging and protection: a way of speaking about oneself without full exposure, translating affective experience into a communicative form. «When I send a screenshot that makes me laugh, I'm saying how I feel but without saying it directly», wrote one student, effectively capturing this rhetoric of mediated intimacy.

The third theme, which emerged strongly in the final section of the questionnaire, concerns an enhanced aesthetic and critical awareness of the screenshotting gesture. Many participants stated that they had begun to «look at screenshots as images that say something about me» or to recognise them as a form of «indirect self-representation». The workshop thus acted as a revelatory device, making visible what had previously been unnoticed – transforming a technical gesture into a reflective act about themselves and about their digital practices and consumptions.

From a methodological perspective, the questionnaire confirmed that qualitative visual research can operate as a tool for the co-construction of knowledge – a space where theory is tested not through measurement, but through situated verification. Its value lies not in the responses themselves, but in their capacity to return the gesture in its lived, embodied form – as perceptual, relational, and affective act, and as reflexive and meta-operational awareness.

Following Pink's notion of sensory ethnography, the questionnaire functions as a technology of sensitive listening, in which participants' subjectivity becomes material for shared reflection. Ultimately, this section does not simply add an empirical layer to the research, but extends its theoretical dimension: through participants' voices, the reflection on the screenshot as a gesture of attention, irony, and remix is translated into a conscious practice of seeing and making. The gesture is thus returned to its original context – everyday life – but with renewed critical density, revealing how each act of capture is also an act of thinking by rethinking, selecting, and taking position within the contemporary visual ecosystem.

Conclusion

The findings support the central claim of this study: screenshotting operates not as a neutral technical function but as a situated gesture of reframing – an act of selection that suspends circulation, stabilises fragments of experience, and renders them available for reflection and rework. What matters is not what images depict but how acts of capture organise attention, affect, and recirculation within platform environments. Authenticity emerges as a mediated effect produced through ironic positioning and citational reuse rather than direct self-disclosure: post-ironic authenticity is a vernacular mode of self-presentation in which affect is articulated through quotation, tonal displacement, and controlled exposure. Remix further

clarifies this configuration: through reframing, overwriting, and recontextualising, participants convert captured fragments into interpretive acts about their digital selves. The screenshot is an operative practice: it materialises a situated position within the digital environment and renders that entanglement available for articulation and relation.

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