



Venice
International
University

Venice International University International PhD Academy

Wandering Across Sustainable Terrains and Environments

July 7-12, 2025

Faculty

Professor Susanne Franco (Ca' Foscari University of Venice), Scientific Coordinator
Professor Gabriella Giannachi (University of Exeter)
Professor Annalisa Sacchi (IUAV University of Venice)
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)

Invited Speakers

Ilenia Caleo (Researcher and performer)
Piersandra Di Matteo (Researcher and curator)
Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer)
Professor Francesca Tarocco (Director of Niche, Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Program

Virtual Introductory Session | 2 months before the in-person program

Tasks/bibliography will be shared with the students who will arrive in Venice with a preliminary draft of a project to contribute to the development of a new performance project by choreographer Allison Orr (to premiere in Venice in 2026).

Day 1 | Monday, July 7

9.15 – 9.30 *Registration*

9.30 – 10.45 **Opening & Participants' presentation**
(Venice International University & students)
Introduction to the course and invited speakers
Professor Susanne Franco (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

10.45 – 11.00 *Coffee-break*

11.00 – 12.15 **The 'Trash Project' and other stories of creative collaborations**
Introduction to Community-Based Research Methods
Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer)

12.15 – 13.30 *Lunch*



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- 13.30 – 14.30 **Theories and practices of the Wasteocene: from regeneration to community co-curation**
Presentation and discussion
Professor Gabriella Giannachi (University of Exeter)
- 14.30 – 15.30 **Seminar to prepare for Tuesday morning's ethnography**
*Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer) &
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)*
- 15.30– 17.00 **Presentation of students' research**
Respondent: all available faculty
(Coffee corner)

Day 2 | Tuesday, July 8

- 8.00 – 11.30 **Working session (theory and practice)**
*Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer) &
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)*
- 12.15 – 13.30 Lunch*
- 13.30 – 14.30 **Assembling/performing waste**
Presentation and discussion
Professor Annalisa Sacchi (IUAV University of Venice)
- 14.45 – 15.45 **Venice and the Environmental crisis**
Presentation and discussion
Invited speaker Professor Francesca Tarocco (NICHE, Ca' Foscari University)
- 15.45 – 17.00 **Presentation of students' research**
Respondent: Francesca Tarocco (NICHE, Ca' Foscari University)
(Coffee corner)

Day 3 | Wednesday, July 9

- 9.30 – 10.45 **Recycling our future pastness: choreographic strategies**
Presentation and discussion
Professor Susanne Franco (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
- 10.45 – 11:00 Coffee-break*
- 11.00 – 12.15 **W.A.S.T.E. Writing: ethnography, climate, and urban life**
Presentation and discussion
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch*
- 14.30 – 18.30 **Boat tour in Venice**
*Susanne Franco, Gabriella Giannachi, Annalisa Sacchi,
Katya Wesolowski, Allison Orr*
- 19.00 Social dinner in Venice
(at the end of the tour)*

Day 4 | Thursday, July 10

8.00 – 11.30 **Working session (theory and practice)**
*Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer) &
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)*

12.15 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 15.00 **Less is more. Curating the performing arts: a dialogue**
Presentation and discussion
*Invited speakers:
Piersandra di Matteo (Researcher and curator)
Ilenia Caleo (Researcher and performer)*

15.00 – 16.00 **Students' ongoing project presentation**
Respondents: *Ilenia Caleo (Researcher and choreographer) &
Piersandra di Matteo (Researcher and curator)*
(Coffee corner)

Day 5 | Friday, July 11

8.00 – 11.30 **Working session (theory and practice)**
*Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer) &
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)*

12.15 – 13.30 Lunch

13:30 – 16:30 The faculty is available to provide individual feedback to students and working groups;
Time also available for working groups.

Day 6 | Saturday, July 12

9.30 – 10.45 **Working session (theory and practice)**
*Allison Orr (Researcher and choreographer) &
Professor Katya Wesolowski (Duke University)*

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.30 **Student project: brain and body storming**
*Allison Orr, Katya Wesolowski, Susanne Franco, Gabriella Giannachi,
Annalisa Sacchi*

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

13.30 – 16.30 **Students' final presentation**
*Susanne Franco, Gabriella Giannachi, Annalisa Sacchi, Katya Wesolowski,
Allison Orr.*



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Faculty short bios



Susanne Franco is an Associate Professor in Performing Arts at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, teaching Dance History, Theater History, and Performance Studies. She is the Rector's delegate for the Theatre activities and the delegate of the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage for relations with the CLA (Centro Linguistico di Ateneo). She is a research associate at the CTEL (Centre Transdisciplinaire d'Epistémologie de la Littérature et des Arts vivants: Littérature, Musique, Théâtre, Danse), both at the Université Côte d'Azur. She earned her PhD at the University of Rome Sapienza. Her research interests and publications focus on dance and performance history, dance research methodology, body history, and French, German and North American theatrical cultures. Her essays and translations have been published by Routledge, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Illinois University Press, Larousse, tanzscript, Utet Università, Il Mulino, Bulzoni, L'Epos, Treccani, Costa & Nolan.



Gabriella Giannachi, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, elected Member Academia Europaea, elected Fellow of the Asia-Pacific Artificial Intelligence Association (AAIA), is Professor in Performance and New Media, and Director of the [Centre for Intermedia and Creative Technologies](#) at the University of Exeter, which promotes advanced interdisciplinary research in creative technologies by facilitating collaborations between academics from a range of disciplines with cultural and creative organisations. She has published extensively on the documentation of performative and new media works, on presence and identity creation, and on the construction of a sense of place and the environment. She has a PhD from Cambridge University, where she was awarded a scholarship by her College, Trinity Hall, to research the role of silence in modern European Drama.



Annalisa Sacchi teaches at the Luav University in Venice where she has been directing the Master's degree course in Theatre and Performing Arts since 2017. After receiving her PhD in Theatre Studies from University of Bologna, she carried out post-doctoral research at Queen Mary University of London, the Warburg Institute and New York University. Her project INCOMMON won the European Research Council Grant. Since 2021, she has co-directed the international theater, choreography and performance festival Asteroid Amor in Venice. She directs the publishing series Estetica e Politica della Performance at Bulzoni Editore and INCOMMON at Marsilio Editore.



Katya Wesolowski is a Lecturing Fellow of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. As an anthropologist and dancer, she is interested in the possibilities that embody practices opening up for empathetic ways of being together, constructing and transmitting knowledge, and creating alternative futures. Her research and scholarship move through the African Diaspora, from Brazil to Angola, exploring the ways bodies in movement together can create spaces of radical openness and transformative belonging. Her current project is an interdisciplinary and mixed-method exploration of social and stage dance in the Angolan diaspora.

Invited Speakers short bios

Ilenia Caleo is a performer, activist and researcher. She has been working as an actress, performer and dramaturg in the contemporary scene since 2000, collaborating with various companies and directors. A philosopher by background, she is a researcher at IUAV in Venice and co-founder of the Master of Gender Studies and Politics at Roma Tre. She deals with corporeality, feminist epistemologies, experimentations in performing arts, new institutions and forms of cultural work.



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Piersandra Di Matteo is a performing arts scholar, dramaturge, and curator. She is the artistic director of Short Theatre Festival in Rome (2021-2024). She is a member of the team research project «INCOMMON» at University IUAV of Venice, where she teaches “Curation in Performing Arts”. She has been invited to hold conferences and seminars in international research centres and Universities at Hong Kong, Shanghai, London, Singapore, Montréal, Amsterdam, New York City, Philadelphia, San Paolo, Belo Horizonte, and called as visiting scholar at MESTC/CUNY of New York. She has also developed projects, collaborating with international festivals, theatres and art galleries, and followed artists and performers as a theoretical consultant. Her essays have been published in international magazines, art catalogues, collections of essays and multimedia projects.



Allison Orr, Founder and Artistic Director of Forklift Danceworks, has honed a methodology of ethnographic choreography that engages community members as co-authors and performers in the creation of large-scale civic spectacles. Her dances, which have featured sanitation workers, construction crews, power line workers, and groundskeepers, showcase the virtuosity in everyday movement and share the stories of those whose work sustains our daily lives.

Expanding notions of dance and performer, Allison’s work has been commissioned and funded across the USA, Europe and Japan. She has received numerous awards, including a Dance/USA Social Change fellowship and a US Artist Award, commending her as a leader in contemporary choreography in the USA today. Learn more about Allison and her recent book, Dance Works, at www.forkliftdanceworks.org.



Francesca Tarocco is a Full Professor of Buddhist Studies and Chinese Religions at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice and Visiting Professor of Buddhist Cultures at New York University, Shanghai. She was also Leverhulme Trust Fellow at the University of Manchester and Visiting Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies. Her research interests are in the cultural history of China, Chinese Buddhism, environmental history, visual culture and urban Asia. She is the Director of NICHE, the Centre for Environmental Humanities at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. She is the cofounder and director of the international research initiative [Shanghai Studies Society](http://ShanghaiStudiesSociety.org) and a fellow of the Critical Collaborations Network at the Institute for Advanced Study at New York University.