

Negotiating Borders Through Art

May 15-17, 2026

Bologna



Artistic Mediation in Intercultural Contexts is an international conference exploring the complex relationship between borders and arts mediation through talks, masterclasses, performances, a workshop and an exhibition, held from **15–17 May 2026** at the **Department of the Arts, University of Bologna**.

The conference approaches the **border** not merely as a line of separation, but as a performative and political field where aesthetics, power, and everyday practices intersect. Historically embedded in the regulation of mobility, labour, and belonging, borders operate as technologies that produce social hierarchies and shape cultural representation. They structure not only space but also time, through systems of coordination and synchronisation that organise contemporary life.

From this perspective, the event investigates **arts mediation as a situated practice** that operates both within and against borders. Particular attention is given to the relationship between **self-representation and intercultural mediation**, examining how artistic practices can create spaces of visibility and agency for marginalised subjects while also interrogating the power dynamics embedded in processes of representation and cultural translation.

While maintaining a focus on **theatre and performance**, the conference adopts an expanded notion of performance to explore how borders are enacted, negotiated, and contested across artistic and social contexts.

Bringing together scholars and artists from diverse disciplines, the conference fosters **interdisciplinary dialogue** as a method of mediation capable of engaging plurality, conflict, and negotiation. The programme concludes with a participatory session involving guest speakers and emerging scholars, aimed at identifying new research trajectories at the intersection of **performing arts and border studies**.

PROGRAMME

MAY 15 | Palazzo Marescotti

13.00-14.30 *Welcoming and registration*

14.30-15.00

Salone Marescotti

Welcome Addresses

Riccardo Brizzi (Head of the Department of the Arts)

Opening Remarks

Rossella Mazzaglia (Conference Chair, University of Bologna)

15.00-16.30

Salone Marescotti

Keynote Opening Session

Fugitive Imagination

Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University)

Chair: Sandro Mezzadra (University of Bologna)

16.45-18.45

Salone Marescotti

Parallel Panels

Panel 1: *Decolonizing Artistic Processes*

Pierluigi Musarò (University of Bologna), *It's the End of the World as we Know it. Cosmovisional Justice and Decolonial Narratives*

Aleksandra Jovićević (Sapienza University of Rome), *Decolonizing Europe*

Azadeh Sharifi (Berlin University of the Arts), *Beyond Belonging: Postmigrant theatre, artistic negotiations and nationhood*

Wissal Houbabi (Independent Poet and Performer), *Imperceptible*

Chair: Rosaria Ruffini (Sapienza University of Rome)

Aula Secchi

Panel 2: *Border Imageries*

Paulina Sabugal Paz (University of Bologna), *Performing the Border: Representation, Subjectivity, and Power in Tijuana*

Lorenzo Donati (University of Bologna), *Social Narratives and Documentary Dramaturgy. A Place of Safety. Viaggio nel Mediterraneo centrale by Kepler-452*

Jacopo Anderlini & Luca Giliberti (University of Parma), *A Counterdictionary of the Border: Words and Images from the Central Mediterranean*

Alicja Borkowska (Strefa WolnoSlova Foundation, Warsaw), *Advancing Border: Imperium and the strategies of survival during flight*

Chair: Annalisa Sacchi (IUAV University of Venice)

19.15

Immersive Walking Performance

School of Ghost Fish - Along Invisible Passages

directed by Pietro Floridia, Cantieri Meticci

MAY 16 | Palazzo Maescotti & DAMSLab

9.00-9.15 **Welcoming**

9.15-10.45 **Keynote Plenary Session**

Salone Maescotti ***Family Lines: Autofiction, Migration, and Intersectional Identity in Contemporary Theatre***
Yana Meerzon (University of Ottawa)
Chair: Matteo Paoletti (University of Bologna)

11.00-12.30 **Parallel Panels**

Salone Maescotti **Panel 3: *Blurring Social Borders***
Giulia Innocenti Malini (University of Pavia), *Working with Inner Boundaries: The Social Dramaturgies of Performative Community-Making*
Rita Maria Fabris (University of Bologna), *Border Tales: Bodies, Dances and Boundaries. A Decade of Action-research in Turin*
Ofelia Balogun (Independent Dancer and Choreographer), *Terra Intermedia: Body, Pedagogy & Territory in Motion*
Chair: Aleksandra Jovicevic (Sapienza University of Rome)

Aula Secci **Panel 4: *Relational Performance as Border Crossing***
Giulia Allegrini (University of Bologna), *Dialogic Arts between Mediation, Power, and Solidarity*
Lola Olufemi (Poet and Performer, Goldsmiths, University of London), *This is a temporal landscape, you will find no direction here*
Annalisa Sacchi (IUAV University of Venice), *Scenes of Hospitality. Conversation, Presence, and Relational Performance in DAAR's Living Room Project*
Chair: Elena Lamberti (University of Bologna)

14.00-15.20 **Screening**

Salone Maescotti ***Pinocchio Nero*** (Black Pinocchio)
2005, 80', IT, EN Subtitles

15.30-17.30 **Masterclass (IT)**

Salone Maescotti ***Pensare i pensieri dell'altro*** (Thinking the Other's Thoughts)
Marco Baliani (Actor, Director and Playwright)
Chair: Cristina Valenti (University of Bologna)

17.30-18.45 **Panel Discussion**

Salone Maescotti ***Exposing Structural Borders. An exchange among artists working with embodied visual practices***
Dora Garcia (Oslo National Academy of the Arts), *Buffer zone, gray area, limbo, twilight*
Adelita Husni-Bey (Independent Artist and Pedagogue), *Chiron*: Screening (20') and Talk
Chair: Massimiliano Nicola Mollona (University of Bologna)

20.30 **Urban Dance performance (20')**

DAMSLab ***Figlie della terra di mezzo*** (Daughters of the Middle Ground)
Ofelia Balogun
with the participation of Thiago Dos Santos

21.30	Performance (60')
DAMSLab/Theatre	<i>The Ignorant Master</i> gruppe tag <i>Following</i> : meeting with the company. <i>Chairs</i> : Pietro Floridia (Cantieri Meticci, Bologna), Lorenzo Donati (University of Bologna).

MAY 17 | DAMSLab

9.30-18.00	Exhibition
Hall	<i>HeART of Gaza</i> by Mohammed Timraz
9.30-11.15	Screening
Auditorium	<i>Suppliants of Syria</i> 2024, 105', EN/AR/TR (with subtitles)
10.00-13.00	Workshop
Theatre	<i>Giving Shape to Mobility and Justice</i> Alicja Borkowska
11.15-13.15	Masterclass (EN)
Auditorium	<i>30 years on the frontier. The intercultural theatre practices of Border Crossings</i> Michael Walling (Theatre Director, Border Crossing) Chair: Roberta Gandolfi (University of Parma)
14.15-16.15	Plenary Panel Discussion
Auditorium	Panel 6: <i>Art within Borders</i> Rosaria Ruffini (Sapienza University of Rome), <i>Thinking and Performing Resistance in Camps and Transit Migration</i> Pietro Floridia (Cantieri Meticci, Bologna), <i>Importing Liminality: Participatory Characters, Border Practices, and the Construction of Heterogeneous Communities</i> Marina Barham (Theatre Director, Al Harah Theater), <i>Theatre as Emotional Resistance and Healing. A Voice from Palestine</i> Chair: Rita Maria Fabris (University of Bologna)
16.15-18.15	Participatory Meeting
Theatre	Chair: Giulia Allegrini (University of Bologna)
18.15-18.30	
Theatre	Closing Remarks Rossella Mazzaglia

ORGANIZATION:

High-Degree Course “Artistic Mediation in Intercultural Contexts”
Department of the Arts, University of Bologna

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

Cantieri Meticci
Fondazione Alma Mater
Danza Urbana

CONFERENCE CHAIR:

Rossella Mazzaglia

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Pietro Floridia
Roberta Gandolfi
Luca Giliberti
Elena Lamberti
Sandro Mezzadra
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ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA

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