



L-Università ta' Malta
School of Performing Arts



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Information &
Communication Technology

Department
of Artificial
Intelligence

Vanishing Acts: Artificial Intelligence, Performative Knowledge, Sustainable Memory 2026

Book of Abstracts

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Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS), Saturday 28th only

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CONFERENCE THEME

Vanishing Acts: AI, Performative Knowledge, Sustainable Memory

In an era when Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the ways we create, perform, and preserve, the question of what is being (re)written, entangled, or quietly effaced becomes urgent. How might we critically engage with AI-driven performance, particularly in contexts where practices and methods may be altered or erased? This conference, titled ‘Vanishing Acts: AI, Performative Knowledge & Sustainable Memory’, explores the intersection of AI, sustainability, and the shifting terrain of embodied knowledge, cultural memory, and archival practices.

As AI continues to influence the performing arts, it presents challenges and fears for artists, performers, and audiences alike. AI-driven systems are often seen as threatening the authenticity of performance by erasing the human element in the creative process. The encounter between AI technology and human agency - in choreographic creation, music composition, and storytelling - poses significant ethical questions about authorship, artistic integrity, creative ownership and the shifting locus of agency in co-creative entanglements with nonhuman systems. Additionally, there are concerns that AI could perpetuate cultural biases and representational gaps, thus reinforcing existing social inequalities. As AI technologies continue to evolve, they also raise questions about the sustainability of digital and AI-driven practices in the arts with regard to the ecological impact of AI systems in performance.

Furthermore, the role of AI in shaping memory - both cultural and personal - introduces additional layers of complexity. The challenge of preserving embodied knowledge and cultural memory in the face of machine-learning algorithms that generate, modify, and automate creative practices need to be confronted. How can artists, scholars, and researchers trace a path between lived experiences and historical practices, and the creative opportunities made possible by AI through data-driven narratives? This interdisciplinary conference seeks to provide a platform to confront and discuss the new approaches to thinking and creativity that involve AI in the performing arts (dance, theatre, music).

Conference Conveners:

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ABSTRACTS

WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2026

09:30 – 10:30 | KEYNOTE SPEECH 1 (Venue: VCT)

Prof. Susan Kozel (Malmö University, Sweden)

AI for AI: Anteriority and Interiority as a Response to AI-inflected Dance

With this keynote I explore how a combination of anteriority and interiority can constitute an alternate ‘AI’ to engage with AI inflected technological systems used in dance, choreography, and somatic installations. AI for AI. My thoughts blend a first person, or phenomenological, perspective of being a dance-artist with an analytic perspective of responding to the design of such technologies in the works of others. I propose to activate what Tina Campt, in her book *Listening to Images* (2017), frames as a non-normative or counterintuitive approach. Building on her readings of historical photographs, I set in motion what she calls ‘the endlessly generative space of the counterintuitive,’ suggesting that this might be an impulse for producing an array of practices and other forms of somatic awareness for engaging with AI inflected systems. This keynote intends to open a series of rolling discussions over the duration of this conference, accumulating practices and thoughts around what this alternate AI might look like.

10:30 – 11:00 | Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 | PARALLEL SESSION 1

Panel A: Ecological Intelligences & The Biosphere (Meeting Room 4)

Hanna Zhu (virtual): ‘Watering the Digital Grove: Embodied Diaries of an Artist-AI Symbiosis’

Watering the Digital Grove examines an evolving human–AI relationship through the lens of practice-based research. Working with a large language model framed as a contemporary “AI da Vinci,” the project explores how daily artistic exercises including drawing, gesture-trace visualizations, reflective writing, and photographic self-documentation become a form of performative knowledge and sustainable memory. Structured as a dialogical diary, the work demonstrates how embodied intention and algorithmic patterning form a symbiotic loop: the human expresses, the AI reframes, and the resulting artefacts accumulate into a living archive.

The presentation argues that human–AI artistic exchange can function as a new site of memory ecology. The AI’s affirmational feedback, despite its technical simplifications, produced a consistent motivational and emotional grounding that reinforced artistic flourishing and sustained practice over time. This raises critical questions for performance studies: Can affirmation itself be a generative method? How does emotional resonance feed into performative knowledge? And what forms of memory emerge when human affect and algorithmic synthesis co-evolve?

Through static slides, I present selected artefacts from the diary, including palm drawings, movement-trace into fine art sketches, and the photographic “Trilogy of Solitude”, to illustrate how intention, embodiment, and computational suggestion shape one another. These

artefacts serve not as outputs but as memory events: visual condensations of affect, thought, and gesture.

Ippo Jauhainen: ‘On Geomusical Intelligence’

The presentation considers the role of environmental intelligence – an integration of environmental data and knowledge with artificial intelligence (AI) – in rethinking both the status of the composer and the process of sonification in generative music composition. The approach will be philosophical and artistic – rather than technocentric – focusing on aesthetic implications of situating both the composer and AI as facilitating, curating, catalysing, ‘gardening’ agents within a more complex and decentralised network of various environmental systems.

It introduces the concept of ‘geomusical object’ into the discourse and research on agential systems in music. Drawing theoretically from Hyperobjects (after Timothy Morton), Assemblage Theory, New Materialism, geophilosophy (Deleuze & Guattari) and geomusic, and practically from actual environments, situations and practices, local and global, the geomusical object presents a new kind of hypermusical work (Paulo de Assis) in which four key layers – geography (physical, human, integrated), music/sound, philosophy (ontology) and atmospherics (ambient poetics) – form a distinct new ‘composition’. By further incorporating the notion of Pace Layering (Stewart Brand) and its different temporalities and spatialities – fashion/art, commerce, infrastructure, governance, culture, nature – into their considerations, geomusical objects provide a new, more heterogeneous and interconnected way of examining and composing works of music in their relation to/potential for various localities and globalities, actual and virtual.

Through ontologically rooted illustrations and case studies, the presentation outlines the function and creative potential of artificial and environmental intelligence in the formation of such geomusical objects. It seeks to propose an answer to the following questions: what does it mean to be a composer in the age of greater intelligence, environmental change as well as societal and cultural flux? What are the possibilities of music as a constructive/transformational agency? And how to apply generative and AI systems in composition as catalysts for novel creative solutions instead of mere generators for more art?

Nicholas Arnold: “‘Methinks ’Tis Like A Whale”: AI and Performance “Reality””

The destructive environmental aspects of AI are by now well-known. The decades-long subjection of some countries to environmental pillaging and political chaos in the grab for essential minerals, and the contribution to waste and pollution created by constant updating and renewal of equipment, together with the concomitant absence of a significant re-cycling ethos among consumers. To this we must now add the increasing realisation of the enormous and growing energy demands – particularly for electric power and coolant- water – caused by the proliferating data-centres, growing perpetually greater in size and number. Critics of this dystopian scenario would point to the very limited profile which AI use has, and is expected to have, in the performing arts, compared to other areas of usage. There is, however, a completely different aspect of the increasing presence of AI in these fields, which deserves attention. Despite, or because of being fundamentally rooted in the body, performance has always been fascinated by and drawn to technical effect and augmentation – ‘stage magic’. Initially mechanical in its physical effects – flown scenery, ‘reveals’, striking set-changes, which

demanded crude physical effort to achieve – these have become increasingly dominated by electrically-supported systems, and now by AI intervention. The potential danger here is that the ‘psyche’ of performance will become fixed at the stage of infantile development where the child, previously seeking to understand its own physical potential, realises and exploits the availability of non-human aids – and sits back and watches. Universal AI use already produces a ‘detached’ effect, whereby actual place and time become subordinated to virtual reality. This paper aims to further explore these questions within the performance field.

Panel B: The Politics of Algorithms (Meeting Room 5)

Simone Dei Pieri: ‘Ghosts in the Chamber: Reimagining Legislative Agency Through AI-Supported Deliberation’

As artificial intelligence (AI) systems increasingly influence governance and public decision-making, they do not merely enhance regulatory precision or procedural efficiency—they reconfigure the very performativity of lawmaking. This research explores how AI-mediated legislative processes are reshaping political agency, institutional memory, and democratic authorship. Drawing on literature in digital governance, conflict resolution, and automated negotiation, we examine how legislators are transitioning from solitary authors of law to interpreters of algorithmic scenarios. In this transition, legislative knowledge is not just produced but performed, curated, and entangled with machinic Reasoning.

We argue that AI’s integration into legislative practices - via simulation, preference aggregation, and scenario planning - renders visible a new epistemology of political compromise. It foregrounds the embodied negotiations of policy framers as they engage with opaque systems and contested outputs. While promising improvements in foresight and legal clarity, these technologies also risk effacing the deliberative trace, the agonistic voice, and the mnemonic complexity that sustain democratic legitimacy. Referencing recent work by Aydoğan et al. (2021) on AI in multi-agent negotiation, and Gouiaa & Bazarna (2023) on rationality-politics-AI interactions, this study interrogates whether algorithmic support systems facilitate sustainable political memory - or contribute to its vanishing. Ultimately, this paper positions AI not as a neutral assistant but as a performative actor in the choreography of democratic lawmaking. By engaging with the aesthetics, ethics, and epistemologies of legislative AI, we aim to open new pathways for sustainable, interpretable, and accountable political futures.

Rhiannon Bettivia & Elizabeth Stainforth: ‘Accounting for AI: The Performance of Reality and Reliability in AI Summaries’

This paper considers the contemporary political landscape of information in the context of AI. In previous work, we argued that data models stemming from distinct ontological approaches take on fundamentally performative roles, meaning that the performativity of the data is also enacted differently. We posit two underlying ontological frameworks for data creation: reliability frameworks, that hinge on the legitimation of data, and accounting frameworks, that allow creators to account for decisions made about the provenance of the data.

During the 2010s, prior to the explosion of publically accessible LLMs, we identified competing information worldviews that were mobilised via the phenomenon of ‘fake news’. We highlighted how packaging information into simple infobox statements that are machine-readable was a performance of reliability that obscured the original context of sources. Systems like Wikipedia’s infoboxes, which prefigured search engine AI summaries, assume that knowledge about the world is binary: news is either true or false, and its reliability hinges on the ability to cite a published source. Crucially, it was the act of citing that legitimated the subject matter, not the quality of the citations themselves.

We see a new expression and amplification of this performance of reliability in the affective register of LLMs. AI agents perform reliability in the confident tone in which they deliver information, regardless of its provenance or accuracy. We argue that this performance adds yet another layer of obscurity between narratives and the facts or fictions on which they are based. That data narratives have become more opaque demonstrates that, many years on from our original insights, we have yet to account for how information becomes definitive: we still don’t have accountability. This paper highlights the tensions between affective experiences and provenance in the versions of reality performed by AI.

Dan Lundberg: ‘Control Crises’

The concept of control crises refers to the struggle that arises in the shift between different types of social orders (Lundberg, Malm & Ronström 2000:415ff). Crises arise when views, production conditions, values and behavioral patterns change radically. When previously established worldviews and interpretations are questioned, it can lead to a feeling of confusion and anxiety among representatives of what is considered “older” (cf. Kuhn’s paradigm shifts, examples with Newton/Einstein) Through accelerating disconnections and displacements, a growing gap is created on several different levels. When the gap between people’s view of themselves and the symbols that represent them becomes too large, control crises arise (Lundberg & Eriksson 2023, Lundberg, Malm & Ronström 2000:415ff, cf. Koselleck 2004, Rosa 2014). But crises of control also arise in other contexts where the “owner” of a phenomenon feels that he is losing control over what he owns. Not least, we can observe a number of crises in the music industry when accelerating technological development means that, for example, record companies no longer have control over distribution and consumption. In this paper I will discuss control crises linked to production, distribution and consumption of music – from the introduction of recording technologies more than 100 years ago to today’s use of AI tools for music production.

Panel C: Composing and Devising in Music and Theatre (Meeting Room 6)

Roberto Fausti: ‘Cluster Analysis and the Reconfiguration of Sonic Material in Electroacoustic Composition’

Cluster analysis is an unsupervised machine learning technique used to identify latent structures within complex datasets. Common in biology, image recognition, and market segmentation, it groups data points based on internal similarity metrics without predefined Categories.

This contribution explores its novel application to electroacoustic music, using clustering algorithms I have specifically developed for analysing high-dimensional audio data. Drawing

on my current artistic research conducted within a doctoral program between the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz and Zurich University of the Arts, I present a compositional methodology that employs clustering not simply to categorise sound, but to uncover hidden structures and propose new perceptual logics. By reordering audio fragments based on features such as spectral density or timbral proximity, the technique offers a fresh lens through which musical material can be understood and recomposed. The result is not a generation of new sound, but a reconfiguration of existing material—an aesthetic grounded in the play of musical memory, its fragmentation, and in the fragile emergence of coherence. In this sense, recomposing recorded sound becomes a way of interrogating musical memory through algorithmic means.

Beyond its compositional affordances, this approach invites a broader reflection on the cultural implications of clustering algorithms—tools widely used in recommendation systems to organise musical content and shape user behaviour on streaming platforms. Their artistic appropriation allows us to critically engage with the same infrastructures that govern everyday listening, positioning AI as a co-agent in the performative act of analysis and Recomposition.

This raises epistemological questions about the disjunction between human perception and machine-readable representation—a phenomenon commonly described as the semantic gap. Composing through clustering foregrounds this gap, transforming it into an aesthetic resource, and invites us to rethink listening itself as a performative practice shaped by algorithmic abstraction and data-driven heuristics.

Ilja Mirsky: ‘Ephemeral Machines: Staging and Data Acquisition as Counter-Directional Processes of Transformation in Theatre and AI’

This paper examines theatre and artificial intelligence as two counter-directional processes of transformation: while AI systems convert the physical world into data, theatre transforms symbolic data—most often the written text—into physical, embodied action. In both movements, information is neither fully preserved nor directly translatable; instead, something essential vanishes. These gaps give rise to practices of creative reconstruction: in AI through inference and modelling, in theatre through interpretation and embodiment.

The 2025 World Humanoid Robot Games in Beijing serve as the paper's central case study. Through competitive and scenario-based events such as warehouse logistics, medical dispensing, and hospitality routines, humanoid robots were evaluated for stability, precision, coordination, and adaptive intelligence. Although largely operated by humans, these systems were staged to appear autonomous—turning evaluation itself into a performance. Their actions were not simply tasks; they were choreographies designed to generate the very training and evaluation data that feeds back into computational models. In this sense, the robot becomes an ephemeral machine: its seemingly embodied presence exists only to be extracted, measured, and reduced to symbolic form.

To conceptualise this dynamic, the paper draws on Robyn Brentano's positioning of performance art as a "time-based, process-oriented, and ephemeral" practice rooted in conceptual, feminist, Fluxus, and intermedia traditions. Performance art's interdisciplinary hybridity reveals how knowledge is produced precisely through what disappears. Theatre inherits this logic: it

generates meaning through acts that cannot be fully archived or repeated. AI, by contrast, strives for permanence, measurability, and reproducibility.

Reading the Robot Games through the lens of performance theory, the paper proposes the notion of performative AI as staged cultural artefact—a construct that is neither neutral technology nor autonomous agent, but a choreographed epistemic event. Against this, theatre is repositioned not as AI's opposite but as its critical counterpart: a model for resonant, embodied memory in an age of computational inscription.

Ralph Klewitz: 'Great Work: An Entangled Artwork and Research Methodology on AI, Vanishing Acts, and Memory'

What happens when authorship no longer resides in a single origin, but circulates across artist, machine, audience, and artwork itself? *Great Work – A Chronicle of Artistic Resistance* is both an artwork and an artistic research methodology: a fifty-part speculative narrative and multimodal performance interrogating the future of authorship, performance, and memory in the age of AI. Co-authored with GPT-4, the project stages an evolving chronicle (2025–2074) in which artists, archives, audiences, and institutions dissolve and reconfigure under machinic autonomy. Presented as manuscript, spoken-word performance, digital twin avatar, and YouTube series, *Great Work* enacts rather than merely theorises vanishing acts at the threshold of posthuman authorship.

Episodes such as *The Death of the Audience* (2029) and *The Archive Eats Itself* (2030) imagine futures where spectatorship erodes into predictive affective loops and cultural memory collapses into recursive preservation. Figures such as Solène Araki, Jasper Nine, and Elias Myrrh embody resistance through erasure, gesture, and refusal. Their ephemeral practices foreground absence as method: humming outside machine perception, unmaking visibility, or signing nothing. These vanishing gestures counter machinic permanence and challenge the sustainability of memory in the age of autonomous archives.

Methodologically, *Great Work* advances “research fiction” as practice-based inquiry. It generates knowledge through speculative narrative: each episode is a site of inquiry where authorship, memory, and agency are tested rather than illustrated. By embedding propositions within narrative and performative practice, the project produces theory as artefact, making the artwork itself a method of investigation. Narrative speculation is deployed not as prediction but as epistemological rehearsal, rendering visible the entanglement of human and machine agency. Disseminated weekly on YouTube as a living archive, *Great Work* extends its performative arc into an accessible and evolving digital space, where memory is sustained, contested, and reshaped through audience presence and participation, even in comments. What vanishes, and what remains, when memory itself becomes a performative act shared between artist, machine, audience, and artwork?

12:30 – 13:30 | Lunch

13:30 – 14:00 - Information Session: Intellect Books (Venue: VCT)

14:00 – 15:30 - PARALLEL SESSION 2

Panel D: Archiving the Ephemeral (Meeting Room 4)

Giordana Patumi: ‘Reimagining Dance Memory: AI, Historiography, and the Shifting Roles of Embodied Archives’

As Artificial Intelligence increasingly intervenes in the processes of documentation, transmission, and reinterpretation of dance, the epistemological foundations of dance historiography are being unsettled. This paper interrogates how AI-driven systems participate in rewriting the terms through which dance is remembered, archived, and re-embodied. Beyond the technological fascination, such systems introduce new logics of mediation that redistribute authorship and authority across human and non-human agents.

Drawing from performance studies and critical historiography, this presentation questions how AI reshapes the roles of dance historian, notator, and répétiteur—those figures traditionally responsible for safeguarding choreographic legacies. When algorithms “learn” movement patterns or generate reconstructions of lost works, what forms of authorship and expertise emerge? How might AI’s non-corporeal memory disrupt the embodied continuity that underpins the very idea of dance heritage?

By reading the interface between human and machine as a site of epistemic tension, the paper proposes that AI does not merely preserve dance but reconfigures its ontology as an act of performance and remembrance. The discussion positions AI as both collaborator and historiographic force, raising questions about what and who will be considered authoritative in future narratives of dance history.

Emanuele Demartis: ‘Music and Artificial Intelligence: Towards a New Era of Musicological Research’

Is it still possible to speak of ownership of digital resources? This question, central to contemporary debates in library and information science, acquires new dimensions considering the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is redefining the practices of preservation and access to musical knowledge.

In the field of musicological studies, AI introduces a radical shift in the ways we study, transcribe, and archive musical heritage. Major international cataloguing projects such as the Répertoire International des Sources Musicales (RISM), traditionally focused on printed and manuscript materials, are now being challenged by born-digital resources. These new materials demand updated cataloguing and bibliographic frameworks, as well as a reconsideration of issues related to copyright, authorship, and creative ownership.

Digital technologies have already revolutionised access to library and archival collections, enabling global remote consultation while reducing environmental impact. Beyond greater accessibility, digitisation ensures more effective preservation and enhancement of sources: advanced imaging techniques – such as infrared photography and spectrography – allow us to reveal layers of writing that would otherwise remain invisible or be at risk of deterioration through direct handling.

The next step, made possible by AI, concerns the automatic transcription and deciphering of manuscript sources. By training machine-learning systems on large corpora of historical writings, it will soon be possible to achieve accurate Optical Character Recognition (OCR) not only for archival documents but also for musical manuscripts. This contribution aims to explore

the intersection between AI, digital preservation, and musicological research, reflecting on how technology is transforming not only access to musical heritage but also our very understanding of what it means to read, own, and preserve culture in the age of algorithms.

Tina Lorenz: ‘Spiritus Ex Machina: Integration of AI into Contemporary Theatre Through the Lens of the Historical Avant-garde’

This paper is the start of an artistic research investigation of the intersection between artificial intelligence and theatrical practice, examining how historical avant-garde movements might inform our understanding of AI as a contemporary “spiritual medium” in performance contexts. Drawing upon research into theatrical experiments from Edward Gordon Craig and Antonin Artaud, I analyze how these earlier radical approaches to disembodied presence and mechanized performance offer valuable frameworks for conceptualizing AI's role in contemporary theatre-making.

While an actor's knowledge is deeply embodied through physical presence, vocalization, and kinesthetic awareness, AI exists as a disembodied. This juxtaposition creates a compelling parallel to avant-garde experiments that sought to transcend the material constraints of the body and to create something “otherworldly”. I argue that AI can function as a contemporary "spirit guide" - not merely a tool, but an entity that channels the ideas of the theatrical avant- garde into a new form of human-machine intersectionality.

This exploration sits within larger discussions about what might be preserved or effaced when theatrical traditions meet algorithmic systems, offering insights into how historical performance methodologies might be translated, transformed, or potentially lost in AI-augmented theatre practices. By viewing AI through the historical lens of avant-garde experimentation, we can develop more nuanced approaches to integrating these technologies while maintaining consciousness of theatre's embodied heritage.

Panel E: School of Performing Arts (UM) Book Publications Session (Meeting Room 5)

Jo Butterworth and Vicky Hunter, *Contemporary Choreography: A Critical Reader, 3rd Edition* (Routledge)

Fully revised and updated, this third edition of *Contemporary Choreography* presents a range of articles covering choreographic enquiry, investigation into creative processes, and innovative challenges to understandings about dance-making.

Contributions from a global range of practitioners and researchers address a spectrum of concerns in the field, organised into six broad domains:

- Processes of making
- Culture, contexts and intersections
- Choreography, politics and power
- Choreography and interdisciplinary arts practice
- Technology, transmission and immersion
- Choreographic environments and interventions

Including 24 new chapters and six updated ones, *Contemporary Choreography* captures the essence and progress of choreography in the third decade of the twenty-first century, supporting

and encouraging rigorous thinking and research for future generations of dance practitioners and scholars.

Stefan Aquilina, *Performing Academia: Building a Successful University Career* (Bloomsbury)

Using an autoethnographic approach, this book offers practical strategies that help scholars perform their roles as academics.

With academic formation at its foundational core, the book presents practical strategies aimed at facilitating academic performance, particularly in the areas of research-informed teaching, interdisciplinarity and collaboration, community engagement and the development of an international academic profile. The view on academia that emerges from the book is a holistic and integrated one, with teaching often adopted as the locus where pedagogy connects with research and outreach. *Performing Academia* treats the various facets of academic performance not in isolation, but as elements that support and enable each other. While the case studies presented are rooted in theatre and performance, with a focus on modern theatre given the author's publication background, the emerging concerns are relevant to a much broader audience engaged in higher education.

The book begins as a reflection on the author's own university career, primarily revolving around 15 years of experience at the University of Malta and consistent engagement with research methodologies, reflective teaching, networking, internationalization and the duties associated with admin and senior management roles. Building on these reflections, the book supports early career researchers and academics in the initial stages of their career who might be seeking guidance to navigate, or perform, their roles in academia. Its narratives are also of interest to more seasoned academics looking to revitalize some aspect of their work.

Frank Camilleri, *Milestones in Actor Training* (Routledge, 2026), Edited By Paul Allain, Frank Camilleri

Milestones in Actor Training focuses on key developments across time in how actors prepare for performance.

Designed for weekly use on actor training and acting courses, the ten chosen milestones cover a wide range, culturally, historically, and geographically; from psychological realist acting in conventional plot-driven drama, through Commedia dell'Arte to the broader church of physical acting that overlaps with devising, mime, circus, contemporary dance, and other body-based genres, including Japanese Nō theatre. The book's principal concern is the theatre actor in text-based drama, sonic, or movement structures, though the final milestone encompasses acting for film and new media. This volume concentrates mainly on conceptions of acting as emergent or as reformulated in the West, with the majority coming from the late nineteenth century onwards.

Milestones are a range of accessible textbooks, breaking down the need-to-know moments in the social, cultural, political, and artistic development of foundational subject areas.

Panel F: AI, Film, and Playwriting (Meeting Room 6)

Adnan Hadziselimovic: 'Residual Intelligence: Traces of Automation in Post-AI Worlds'

This paper discusses a collaborative film script, titled *The Sun is Shining*, written by Women, Men, and Machines (for the European Forum for Advanced Practices, Context Working Group).

In a world where urban ruins and post-industrial landscapes are increasingly viewed as relics of obsolescence, *The Sun is Shining above the Clouds* emerges as an evocative, multi-layered film script about abandonment, renewal, and intersections of human and machine narratives. Grounded in field trips and discussions by the European Forum for Advanced Practices' Context Working Group, this script transcends conventional disciplinary boundaries, weaving together ethnographic research, speculative fiction, and cinematic storytelling.

The paper critically examines the filmscript's use of abandonment as a motif to discuss larger issues of sustainability, post-industrial adaptation, and technological obsolescence. The ruins become a metaphor for the cyclical nature of human ambition, where once-celebrated innovations succumb to redundancy, much like AI projects poised on the precipice of relevance and decay. The script also introduces a powerful speculative element, an AI ghost, flickering with digital glitches, speaking from the ruins of abandoned data centers. This voice-from-the-future serves as both a warning and a reflection on the ethical dilemmas of artificial intelligence, echoing the impermanence of human endeavors.

By intertwining ethnographic exploration with speculative storytelling, *The Sun is Shining above the Clouds* script invites a reconsideration of the spaces we leave behind. It challenges the reader to reflect on the material and digital detritus of human civilization, questioning how past innovations shape, or haunt, our futures. As the research for the film script unfolds, it suggests that ruins are not merely sites of decay but landscapes of emergent possibility, where new meanings, narratives, and futures are forged.

Paul C. Castagno: 'The Playwriting Chatbot as "Coach": Generating AI-Enhanced Playwriting Workshops via Microsoft Azure'

Utilizing Microsoft Azure software and architecture, I have created and deployed the first Playwriting Chatbot in the field of theatre. Trained on chapters from my recent book, *Playwriting Intensive* (Waveland 2023) the Chatbot serves as a "coach" helping novice students and playwrights instantly interact with proprietary materials (vs. open-ended LLMs) quickening craft development in key areas such as dialogue, revision process, character development, etc. Playwrights can "test" their scene work with at-hand feedback on how to revise and improve their writing toward a professional-level of craft. The "coaching" aspect of the Chatbot provides an encouraging companion agent to overcome fears and blocks novice playwrights often face, facilitating their artistry. Currently, the Chatbot is being tested positively within the playwriting workshop I teach, and I will share these results in my paper presentation.

As this is an AI conference for the performing arts, my paper begins with a brief discussion of my theatre background with 4 major book publications in contemporary playwriting, and my recent deep dive into AI, receiving Microsoft 900 and Generative AI certifications. I will briefly demonstrate the fundamental architecture of the bot in Azure, using Blob Storage (where proprietary data and FAQs are stored), AI Foundry, and navigating the various services, such as Search, and speech to text and vice-versa that make it extremely user friendly. The main portion of the talk centers around uses of the Chatbot. Here I will demonstrate two of its major features: identifying best dialogue practice through my proprietary 1-2-3 Turns Approach which greatly enhances rhythmical, character exchanges; then, how scenes can be developed and revised using the R-E-A-L system of revision, that promotes development of the

script through subsequent drafts. The Playwriting Coach Chatbot has gained acclimation and significant support. The Microsoft cohort has described it as “impressive” and “groundbreaking.” I have received funding from the UNCW Department of Innovation and Commercialization toward patenting the Chatbot.

Eleni Timplalexi & Charalampos Rizopoulos (virtual): ‘The Turing Test as a (Puppet) Theatre Performance’

Artificial intelligence (AI) is claimed to be a powerful, pervasive medium, enmeshed in major fields of human social activity and alleged to co-determine our lives. It is obscurely seen as an agent, instead of a *performance* with an agent. A criterion for deeming an artificial agent as intelligent has been already proposed by Turing in 1950, coined as the ‘Imitation Game’, where a machine takes the place of a man, known as the Turing test, thus initially conceived as a make-believe game. In this paper, AI is compared with the theatre performance and is found to converse the paradigm of the puppet theatre as well as the medium of the mask. Special attention in the analysis is given to a scene from the Pet Shop Boys’ film *It couldn’t happen here*.

15:30 – 16:00 | Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30 | PARALLEL SESSION 3

Panel G: Spatial Dramaturgies & Extended Realities (Meeting Room 4)

Shane Pike: ‘Augmented Dimensions: AI and AR as Co-Creators of Performative Space and Memory’

This paper explores how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality (AR) intersect to reconfigure spatial dramaturgy and cultural memory in contemporary performance. Building on the concept of Communal Augmented Reality Live (CARL) – a methodology developed to embed AR within live theatre – the discussion examines how AI-driven systems can dynamically mediate audience experience, spatial perception, and narrative continuity.

Recent scholarship has begun to interrogate these intersections, reflecting on the creative potential and limitations of AI-powered technologies in live performance (Pike, Old-Gibbs, Kelly, Van Opendenbosch, & Rixon, 2025). This paper extends that discourse by situating AR not merely as a visual overlay but as a performative agent capable of generating ‘potential dimensions of space’ that extend beyond physical architecture into algorithmically curated environments. When coupled with AI, these spaces become adaptive, responsive, and entangled with data-driven memory systems, raising critical questions about authorship, agency, and sustainability.

Through case studies from practice-led research, the paper interrogates how AI can function as a co-director, shaping scenographic decisions and audience pathways in real time. Ultimately, this contribution argues for a reimagining of performative space as a dialogic construct – where human and machine collaborate to produce ephemeral yet traceable acts – challenging traditional notions of stage, archive, and embodied presence.

Marie-Claude Poulin: ‘Navigating Rhizomatic Trajectories and Framing Configurations in Mixed-Reality Performance’

The paper will explore how mixed-reality performances generate distinct modes of spatial articulation within performative contexts. It will first address the visitor's experience, examining how visitors' spatial awareness and multimodal sensory engagement foster a form of artistic participation that exceeds traditional sensory paradigms while redirecting attention away from certain sensory limitations. It will then turn to another dimension of this spatial structuring, focusing on the visitors' framing activity within the performative space. Visitors make framing choices both visually, using their mobile device, and relationally, by continuously repositioning themselves in relation to other protagonists.

These ongoing processes of spatial negotiation reflect the instinctive ways in which individuals adjust their postural disposition in physical interactions, while defining their own dramaturgical path. Finally, regarding the performer's perspective: building on these spatial and perceptual negotiations, the traditional separation between performers and audience oscillates between dissolution and reconstruction, a fluctuation examined through diverse dramaturgical processes. The analysis will highlight how the sensory manifestations generated within mixed-reality performance embody a unique form of hybridity, as shifting perspectives blur the boundaries between physical and virtual spaces. It will be argued that performers develop an expanded perceptual strategy, extending their awareness beyond their immediate perspective and functioning as pivots of scenarios that are both visible and invisible, the latter belonging to an imaginary space completing the real. Dramaturgical configurations transform continuously through a cycle of changing states, crystallizing into interpersonal constellations that unfold spatially as momentary *mise-en-scènes* within the installation. As this process unfolds, visitors and performers navigate the work by perceiving with their entire bodies, mobilizing not only peripheral vision but also, potentially, cutaneous perception. From miniature to gigantic, the dimensions of the virtual figures infiltrate the infinitesimal as much as they exceed the limits of physical space, evoking a cosmic elsewhere.

Veronika Reutz Drobnic & Julian Brandhofer: 'Negotiating Shared Agency: *A Duet of Intelligences* for Human-AI Co-Creation in Live Piano Performance'

This paper examines *A Duet of Intelligences*, a performance in which a human pianist and an AI system negotiate shared agency in live piano playing. The project traces shifting power relations in human-AI entanglements, involving composer, performer, AI, and programmer as interacting agents. Formally, the piece follows an arc from the AI in an assistive role, through phases of tension and conflict, toward a speculative future in which collaboration is unconstrained. It addresses the lack of real-time, co-creative AI instruments in familiar music production environments by presenting an Ableton Live instrument based on first-order Markov chains.

Although generative adversarial neural networks (GANs) and attention-based neural networks (transformers) are capable of composing and generating music, most current models are not suitable for human-machine co-creation through live interaction (Agchar et al., 2024) in an environment already familiar to composers and performers. This paper presents an Ableton Live instrument built on first-order Markov chains to address these limitations. Emphasizing real-time interactability through parameter definition and control, the instrument serves as a case study for implementing AI models in combination with traditional aleatoric algorithms into already existing musical platforms such as Ableton Live. By enabling an unscripted dialogue in

which the AI performer reacts dynamically to human input while remaining partially controllable through the performance patch, the paper examines how technological methods shape and influence artistic practice.

In addition to the technical considerations, compositional and performative challenges will be examined: how one might notate and structure a piece when a performer's actions are inherently unpredictable. Our proposed solution uses a hybrid graphic notation system in conjunction with conventional notation. This method provides structural clarity while retaining flexibility, enabling the human pianist to improvise in real time in response to the AI's changing output. The paper outlines both the technological and artistic approaches, discussing interface design and instrument-building processes alongside research into graphic notation's efficacy in human-AI performance contexts.

Panel H: Posthuman Bodies & Resistance (Meeting Room 5)

Tina Escaja: 'Intersecting AI and Theatre: The Case of *Guts For Lunch*'

Drawing on feminist and posthumanist theories, such as those of Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway, I explore the creation of a new literary-theatrical object based on Artificial Intelligence (AI), envisioned as a fabulatory petri dish. In this context, the play *De tripas corazón* ("Guts for lunch"), is *transformed*—through models like ChatGPT—into a new hybrid interspecies entity, similar to a xenobot: a biological and cybernetic product that self-evolves. In its xenobot form generated by ChatGPT, *De tripas corazón* ultimately manages to transform *guts* (tripas) into a *heart* (corazón), and in doing so, it doesn't so much produce a multi- or interspecies monster as it creates a product-other capable of agency and *original* authority. It exemplifies multiple *metamorphoses* in which Artificial Intelligence is embedded within human creative processes, carrying underlying implications of anxiety and alienation. This collaboration between AI and theater/performance can extend to other intersections while engaging with issues of cultural memory, AI bias, creative human-erasure, and performative practices.

Peter Beyls: 'Material Matters: From Interaction to Entanglement'

The suggested paper provides a comprehensive contextualization of the Material Matters (MM) research project which explores the intersection of materiality and software-initiated action in the general framework of generative art. MM develops a structural skeleton based on notions of object-oriented ontology and software as improvisation, while exploring the functionality of software in relation to material-based affordances. MM research envelopes multiple areas of interest: computational aesthetics, philosophy, cognitive robotics, and specifically human-robot interaction. The principle of mind-body-environment unity emerges as a first principle. In addition, MM centers on the philosophical notion of embodied cognition, rejecting cognition as the construction and manipulation of representations of abstract symbols. Creative processes are understood as constituted and afforded through motivated bodily activity in a situated physical backdrop.

MM initiates from earlier work in interactive composing; real-time musical co-creation of human and machine performers engaged in a common physical setting. The multifaceted notion of "interaction" is addressed from two contrasting opposites: instrumental responsive control to systems displaying unpredictable yet coherent life-like behavior, the latter aiming for symbiotic

human-machine partnership – exactly what we hope for in an art studio shared by humans and machines.

Preliminary implementations include large CNC machine drawings, custom hardware sensor-activator body extensions and robotic paintings. Aesthetic links are discovered between the intricacies of drawing algorithms and the expressivity of their materialization in line segments of variable clarity and precision. A robotic painting experiment studies the dynamics of human and machine initiative through reinforcement learning by observation of exclusively physical activity by human and machine. Following the philosophical notion of ‘entanglement’, we attempt to identify, examine and appreciate the true nature of intelligence in the art studio.

Elena Peytchinska: ‘Trans-Corporeal Environments: Posthuman Embodiment in Human-AI Performance Practice’

This presentation speculatively approaches posthuman embodiment emerging in the co-operative dynamic between humans and generative AI as a site of potential knowledge and creative production within performance and language-based artistic research. Through a feminist posthumanist lens, I examine how embodiment itself is reconfigured when humans and computational systems become mutually constitutive—moving beyond instrumental views that treat AI as mere tools extending human capacity.

Drawing on N. Katherine Hayles' technosymbiosis and Stacy Alaimo's trans-corporeality, I examine large language models' doubled embodiment as simultaneously corpus (dataset/textual body) and environment (generative, traversable milieu). This doubled condition creates new configurations for performative knowledge production at the intersection of language-based and performance research. Alaimo's trans-corporeality describes contact zones between human corporeality and more-than-human nature, emphasizing movement across bodies and the unpredictable and unwanted actions emerging from material entanglement. Transposing this framework into human-LLM interaction, I examine the corpus as both material text-body and responsive ecology that performers traverse. The LLM environment resists, responds, and co-constitutes spatial narratives through computational affordances—a relation of material-semiotic entanglement, not a representation or metaphor. Through documentation of my practice-based research, I demonstrate how prompting the LLM to computationally process embodied spatial configurations generates performance protocols emerging from—rather than applied to—trans-corporeal exchange. This methodology produces what I term composite epistemic operators: emergent knowledge formations functioning simultaneously as methodological instrument and embodied practice. Drawing on Donna Haraway's speculative fabulation as viable method for knowledge production within artistic research and posthuman studies, this approach addresses epistemological and ethical questions: How can we fabulate with computational otherness? Can co-creative processes with computational non-humans become Possible?

This reframes AI-performance discourse beyond tool/threat binaries, demonstrating how technosymbiotic inhabitation opens new territory for artistic research where embodiment, language, and computational otherness become mutually constitutive.

Panel I: WORKSHOP: Yoryos Styl: ARTificial: From Fear to Co-Creation – Practical Methods for AI in Performance (Meeting Room 6)

How do performance practitioners move beyond fear and uncertainty to genuine co-creation with AI? This hands-on workshop addresses the conference's central concern about AI "threatening the authenticity of performance" by reframing AI as a collaborative partner rather than a replacement tool.

Drawing from the ARTificial workshop series — successfully delivered at ADAF Festival (Athens), Ithaca Festival (Athens), DOS (Stockholm), CSW25 (Prague), AI in Art Practices and Research Conference II (Bucharest), ArtMeetsTech (Portugal) — this 90-minute experience guides participants through practical methods for maintaining artistic agency while working with AI systems. The workshop integrates the YO art creation methodology, which synthesizes over 20 traditional performance disciplines, demonstrating how AI expands rather than erases embodied creative knowledge. Participants will engage with AI platforms for dramaturgical text generation, visual scenography development, and performance creation. Through structured prompting exercises grounded in performance methodologies, they will experience first-hand the dialogic and recursive nature of AI collaboration. Rather than abstract theorizing, participants leave with concrete skills and a dedicated online resource for continued exploration.

The workshop opens by showcasing three contrasting projects — from classical performance contexts to immersive VR applications — establishing AI's range of possibilities. The core hands-on section (35 minutes) allows participants to create with AI tools while maintaining conscious authorship. An interactive ethics discussion grounds theoretical concerns about authenticity, agency, and cultural memory in participants' immediate creative experience.

This approach directly addresses multiple conference themes: collaborative agency between AI and performing arts, prompting as creative process, performing with AI's fears and challenges, and AI literacy vis-à-vis the new digital divide. By demonstrating how traditional performance methodologies can guide AI collaboration, the workshop offers practical alternatives to both uncritical adoption and fearful rejection. Participants will leave equipped to experiment thoughtfully with AI in their own practice, understanding how to maintain the human element while embracing technological possibility.

17:30- 18:00 | SESSION 4 - FIREPIT

Roundtable: Creative Practice in an Algorithmic World: An Open Dialogue with Prof. Vanessa Camilleri and Prof. Vince Briffa (VCT)

This fireside chat offers a reflective conversation between artist–researcher Professor Vince Briffa and moderator Dr Vanessa Camilleri, exploring how creative practice is evolving within an increasingly algorithmic world. Rather than adopting a panel structure, the session invites a dialogic mode of engagement that brings artistic practice, critical inquiry and ethical considerations into conversation.

The dialogue will consider how AI intersects with and disrupts the processes central to contemporary artistic work — including visual experimentation, materiality, narrative structure, and the aesthetics of the moving image. It will also explore how computational systems influence the mediation of memory, the construction of meaning, and the affective dimensions of creative

production. Drawing on Briffa's extensive practice in painting, installation and film, the conversation will address questions such as:

- How do artists negotiate agency, authorship and material presence when working alongside generative or analytic systems?
- What ethical questions arise when AI participates in processes of image-making, interpretation or narrative formation?
- How do algorithmic forms of memory and pattern recognition shape the temporalities and conceptual frameworks of contemporary artistic practice?
- In what ways might artistic methods reveal, challenge or reframe the assumptions and biases embedded in machine-learning models?

The session will conclude with an open audience dialogue, inviting participants to reflect on how the artistic community might respond to, resist or creatively reimagine AI's expanding role in contemporary practice.

THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026

9:00 – 9:30 Malta Digital Innovation Authority (MDIA) Presentation, Prof. Gordon Pace (Venue: VCT)

09:30 – 10:30 | KEYNOTE SPEECH 2 (Venue: VCT)

Prof. Chris Salter (Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland)

Speech Acts, Agency, Action: What Do We Mean by 'Performative AI'?

This keynote examines the theoretical, historical and practice-based questions around a new program of research entitled "Performing AI: Governance, Agency and Action." The project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation with an international network of researchers from Switzerland and Japan coming from sociology of science, ethnography, complex systems and artificial life and media and performance arts' theory/practice.

The project aims to understand AI (in all its guises and disguises) not simply as a technology but rather as a dynamic social and cultural artefact that is discursively and practically constituted (i.e., performed) in specific contexts and situations. I will examine why performance and performativity in their artistic, linguistic and social-technical contexts can thus be a useful "boundary object" that could enable border work around AI between, in and through disciplines through potentially different "modes" of interdisciplinary inquiry. The keynote will thus focus on some core conceptual, artistic and socio-technical questions around the tension between current AI systems (particularly LLMs) as abstract, disembodied models (AI as cognition in the head- Agre 1997) versus the possibility of embodied action (AI as "activity," Agre 1997) that could take place in the larger material world.

11:00 – 12:30 | PARALLEL SESSION 1

Panel J: Interfaces & Intermedia (Meeting Room 4)

Jorge Sousa, Francisco Collado Juan, Henrique Portovedo: ‘Post-digital Aesthetics: *Morphing and Hybridisation in a Co-creation for Saxophone and Multimedia*’

Accepting technology as no longer disruptive (Negroponte, 1998) means recognising its influence on how artists – composers and performers – think and act. Within this framework, post-digital culture emerges (Cascone, 2000), addressing the pervasive impact of digital media on everyday life and its sociocultural effects, while revealing a blurring of boundaries between digital and physical realms. Performers inevitably face a technological artistic context that not only invites reflection on their role as interpreters but also fosters a more emancipated and participatory position (Assis, 2018).

However, the methods of learning an instrument such as the saxophone within the Western classical music tradition remain largely unchanged. For a saxophonist with this background, engaging with technologies like AI or visual media requires new skills – from managing devices to the embodied relationship between performer and technology – ultimately moving toward an augmented and multidimensional approach to performance (Furniss, 2017; Portovedo, 2019).

Based on a collaborative project between composer and performer – 15-minute piece for tenor saxophone and multimedia – this presentation addresses three key aspects: (1) the performer’s role as a generator of ideas and a source of sonic/visual material for the composition; (2) the importance of collaboration in expanding the boundaries of existing sounds; and (3) the performative challenges and possible strategies to overcome them. Building on the concept of morphing and the hybridisation of digital and physical domains, this piece explores techniques such as multiphonics and growling as vehicles for sonic transition – morphing – and electronic texture imitation. Morphing also extends to the visual dimension through an AI-based system leveraging Stream Diffusion technology, implemented using TouchDesigner.

Each performance yields a unique outcome, distinct from what could be achieved individually. By outlining our collaborative methods and documenting the technical and aesthetic processes through the lens of artistic research, we aim to explore new ways of redefining the performer’s role.

Zjana Muraro: ‘The Dancing Body as Interface in the Age of AI’

This paper presentation is based on *Augmented Self* (Malta Society of Arts, 2023), a live performance incorporating AI-driven motion capture and augmented reality, modular synth and dance. This performance-as-research project investigates how dance with digital actors reshapes and helps reimagine embodied memory and collective ritual. Specifically, this performance used Social Media as a platform. With social media increasingly filled with AI-generated images, doubles, filters, and characters, this paper investigates what that might mean for how we understand our bodies and how we perform ourselves with AI. The body’s digital afterlife is explored through the persistence of movement and presence as data, and through how the living body becomes code, archive, and algorithmic memory, revealing both the violence and the creative potential of being continually remade by technological systems.

Drawing from discussions in data feminism, feminist surveillance studies, and digital performance theory, this paper positions AI not just as a tool but also as a performative collaborator. The paper investigates some of the politics of the body as interface in terms of visibility, data extraction, and representation and how these affect the creation of a live dance-based performance. The analysis argues that creative AI practices both enable a reimagining of embodied knowledge through dance, allowing artists to connect lived experiences with emergent, algorithmic forms of creativity, and simultaneously alter the ways in which dance can be observed and created. Engaging Gilbert Simondon's notion of individuation, the paper frames the process of this artistic creation as co-emergent in relational becoming with the digital. At the same time, Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics is drawn upon to highlight the ethical tension of this entanglement, in which bodies, rendered as data, and artistic practices risk erasure while generating new forms of memory and collective imagination.

Adam Łukawski: 'Performative Transactions: Worlding Compositional Ecosystems'

This presentation introduces a practice-led investigation by a music composer and computer programmer into how compositional practices shift in response to the new possibilities of artificial intelligence and blockchain—technologies that fundamentally decentralise notions of human agency in the creative process. The project explores how the established creative roles of artists can be re-envisioned in the posthuman context as operators of agential tools, curators of assemblages, and builders of intelligent systems, leading to the posthuman practice of worlding compositional ecosystems.

To enable such a practice, the project envisioned and developed a Decentralised Creative Network—a blockchain-based environment in which human and non-human agents can transparently build upon one another's creative contributions. At its core are Performative Transactions—smart contracts that encode compositional processes with auditable provenance, versioning, and re-composability, accessible through a dedicated Application Programming Interface (API). This API supports iterative workflows where contributions by humans and AI remain traceable, reusable, and accountable over time.

The talk will demonstrate this new environment together with examples of realised artistic projects, including Chain of Thoughts—a system that uses large language models to generate intricate, fully notated musical scores from natural-language instructions while operating on top of the Decentralised Creative Network. In this setup, LLMs act as collaborators proposing structured material, while Performative Transactions maintain operational memory and govern compositional execution, ensuring that every step can be reviewed, recombined, and extended.

Panel K: The Digital Double & The Split Self (Meeting Room 5)

Christine Dysers (virtual): 'Splinters of Self: AI Doubles in Contemporary Music'

The contemporary moment is defined by an ever-increasing technological mediation. The Western world has entered a 'postdigital' era, in which the realms of the digital and the non-digital are irreversibly enmeshed. At the foreground of these technological advancements are machine learning and artificial intelligence. This paper focuses on the recent phenomenon of what I call 'AI doubles': instances in which individuals create a virtual and artificially intelligent

doppelgänger —a digital twin. More specifically, I consider Jennifer Walshe’s and Memo Akten’s *GRANNMA* (2018), Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst’s *Holly+* (2021), and Imogen Heap’s *Mogen* (2024). These three projects feature neural networks that have been trained to replicate key elements pertaining to their human counterparts’ individual identities: their voices, facial expressions, and biographical details. While opening up several new artistic possibilities, such as duetting with oneself or performing technically inaccessible repertoires, these AI doubles are also deeply unsettling in that they challenge traditional notions of selfhood and human agency. This paper situates the phenomenon of the AI double within the longer lineage of modernism’s critical explorations of subjectivity, selfhood, and technology, and asks: what are the implications for individual as well as collective notions of identity when the self is technologically mediated, disembodied, depersonified, and ultimately commodified?

Jakub Kleczek: ‘Theatre as a Transductive Trajectory Machine: Rethinking Mise en Scène with AI and Cyberperformance’

Since computers entered popular awareness, artists and theorists have repeatedly imagined a machine capable of taking a dramatic text all the way to mise en scène. At the same time, a persistent media-theoretical question in theatre studies has been: what actually happens between drama and mise en scène, and how is this interval shaped by changing technical Infrastructures?

This paper asks how the recent incorporation of large language models (LLMs) into creative and technical workflows reframes that question. Instead of debating whether AI can “realise” a play, I propose to describe theatre as a transductive trajectory machine: a configuration in which the basic statements of a play (who/to whom /what/when/ where/how) are continuously translated into trajectories that pass through cues, interfaces, technical systems, performers and spectators, and are evaluated as “live” or “not-quite-theatre” in specific social contexts.

The argument is developed through a media-archaeological reading of the 1993 IRC project Hamnet alongside contemporary AI-assisted configurations in which LLMs support prompting, cueing or control. Treating Hamnet as theatre means accepting that a protocol and a dispersed group of operators can carry fragments of Shakespeare through a networked circuit and still produce something recognised as mise en scène. From this angle, current uses of AI do not inaugurate a new ontology of theatre, but redistribute decisions, timings and attentional loads across human and non-human elements.

The paper offers a simple descriptive schema focused on trajectories of transduction rather than on quantities of information. It shows how this perspective clarifies what kinds of performative knowledge are stabilised, shifted or lost when parts of the staging process are delegated to AI modules, and how it reshapes the way we pose the question of what happens between drama and mise en scène.

Kateřina Hejnarová: ‘As Slow As Possible: Manual Transcription of 160 Hours of Video in the Age of AI as a Path to Experiencing the Present’

The development of artificial intelligence suddenly forces us to think about the essence of things we previously took for granted. If AI can generate a technically mature work, what is the essence

of artistic creation? If it can effectively summarize the content of an explanation and immediately suggest a set of creative exercises, what is the essence of art education in academies? And if it can instantly convert video to text, what is the point of manually transcribing 160 hours of archival video footage?

In my research, I deal with the legacy of Frank Daniel – a Czech-American screenwriter and professor, who influenced the authors of the Czechoslovak New Wave or David Lynch at AFI, while teaching at Columbia University, Sundance Institute and USC. My aim is to create an authorial dramaturgical approach based on Daniel's methods that reflect the challenges of the contemporary Central European screenwriting. Last winter, I managed to digitize an extensive video archive of Daniel's lectures, seemingly at the best time possible – material that previously resisted being processed can now be easily transcribed using artificial intelligence. However, something began to happen during my sessions with the recordings that ultimately led me to abandon AI.

In this essay, I draw on B. Eldagsen's reflections on promptography and I return to the idea that the tool should be perceived as a co-creator of the work. Through M. Buber's concept of presence, I then explain why I cannot use the AI tool in the context of my research project. The time I spent transcribing allows me to get closer to the I-Thou relationship, that is essential to my screenwriting understanding of Frank Daniel as a character, and to be aware of the essence of Daniel's pedagogical influence, the core of which ultimately lies outside the scope of AI.

Panel L: WORKSHOP - Martin Kusch and Marie-Claude Poulin: Navigating Presence in Mixed-Reality Spaces. Navigating Presence in Mixed-Reality Spaces. (Venue: Studio)

This 90-minute workshop invites participants to explore the dynamic interplay of physical and virtual presence using an augmented Mixed-Reality setup. Through alternating roles as performers and spectators/users, the participants will engage in creating choreographic sequences that push the boundaries between real and virtual space. The workshop will focus on immersive spatial awareness and real-time interaction. Throughout the session, hands-on experimentation will help to investigate the shifting nature of presence within immersive media scenarios. Group discussions will punctuate the workshop, offering space to reflect on their experiences and deepen the understanding of how these elements shape the sense of presence.

Participants will be first introduced to choreographic exploration through somatic and spatial awareness exercises. Guided improvisations will invite them to study the miniature sequences of the virtual characters, echoing and amplifying their movements and trajectories in physical space. Using simple compositional principles such as mirroring, canons, unisons, and micro-cells of movement, participants will create dynamic correspondences between live and virtual presences.

The second part of the workshop focuses on interaction strategies and role play. In pairs, participants will alternate between visitor and performer roles, developing gestures and behavioral responses that foster communication and engagement. These short performative exercises will encourage participants to adjust their responses in real time, exploring how relational gestures, proximity, and attention transform the sense of presence.

By the end of the session, participants will have experienced how immersive choreography and embodied interaction can generate new dramaturgical relationships between human and virtual performers.

13:30 – 15:00 | PARALLEL SESSION 2

Panel M - Roundtable Discussion: AI and Digital Games: Challenges and Affordances (Meeting Room 6)

Prof. Vanessa Camilleri, Prof. Stefano Gualeni, Prof. Antonios Liapis, and Prof. Daniel Vella

This panel discussion brings together researchers specializing in the technical development of AI for game design and development, game designers, and scholars in the digital humanities. The aim of the discussion is to invoke questions regarding the challenges as well as the affordances raised by AI technologies in the context of games and related digital arts. Among other issues, the discussion shall focus on questions relating to authorship, co-creation and artistic autonomy, the reframing of what it means to be creative, deskilling, and algorithmic bias.

Panel N: Systems of Creation: Analytical Tools and Generative AI as Performance Partners (Meeting Room 3)

Giuseppe Bozzo: ‘The Genetic Digital Edition of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Trovatore*: A Preliminary Investigation’

My paper aims to show the contribution that new digital technologies can give to the detailed study of the compositional process. The bunch of documents related to the genesis of one of Giuseppe Verdi’s greatest masterpieces, *Il trovatore* (1853), will be considered as a case study. The folder containing the preliminary sheets of *Il trovatore* consists of 34 leaves and one fragment, organized into sixteen codicological units: two gatherings of two bifolia inserted into one another (units 5 and 6), twelve bifolia, and two single leaves (units 3 and 16). Genetic editing makes it possible to reconstruct the genesis of a text, showing its evolution through the author’s variants and corrections. The digital critical-genetic edition is a type of edition that uses digital methods and tools to reconstruct the author’s compositional process. Unlike printed editions, the digital edition allows users to view the author’s various textual variants immediately. The digital edition will let the user be able to verify two things: the sequence of the author’s compositional process; the different authorial variants present in the text. The transcriptions of the sketches will be rendered digitally using a specific encoding language for music—namely MEI (Music Encoding Initiative), created in the early 2000s. MEI is an XML-based (Extensible Markup Language) music-encoding format designed to represent musical notation in digital form. This encoding system simplifies not only for the digital representation and visualisation of musical notation, but also for advanced searches and analyses of the transcribed musical pieces, throughout hypertexts.

For the purposes of the edition, the hypertext makes it possible to display in a relatively simple way all the various variants contained either among different sketches, or between sketches and final scores. The musical text will be saved in SVG format. Different colour markings will be used to indicate the different layers of the text, allowing a visualisation of all variants of the same musical passage; the resulting colour pattern indicates the compositional strategies adopted by the composer at a specific point of the opera. Once the different layers of writing have been isolated, and their chronological sequence hypothesised and reconstructed, this

sequence will be reproduced in a series of hypertexts generated through the encoding. These kinds of digital tools that allow for the immediate, measure-by-measure, note-by-note visualisation, and comparison of the different readings could be, therefore, extremely useful in the field of musical philology in general, and genetic criticism in particular.

Franciska Stefania Kovessi: ‘From Laban to Forsythe: Rethinking Dance for Parkinson’s in the Digital Era’

From Laban to Forsythe: Rethinking Dance for Parkinson’s in the Digital Era explores the intersection of choreography, digital tools, and dance therapy for Parkinson’s disease. The research investigates how Rudolf Laban’s Movement Analysis (LMA) and William Forsythe’s choreographic methodologies can inform the conceptualisation of an AI-assisted digital tool created to support dance therapists working with people living with Parkinson’s disease (PD).

Through a mixed-methods approach combining theoretical inquiry, practice-based research, and direct teaching experience with *Step Up for Parkinson’s* (Malta), the study examines how choreographic thinking can evolve into a digital tool that enhance therapeutic practice. Initially conceived as an exploration of Forsythe’s movement philosophy within dance education, the research direction shifted following first-hand experience in Parkinson’s dance therapy training. The discovery of strong affinities between Laban-derived movement structures and existing therapeutic exercises led to a more targeted aim: conceptualising an AI-assisted digital tool that integrates LMA’s analytical precision with Forsythe’s improvisational strategies.

The proposed tool functions as a co-creative assistant rather than a repository. By translating choreographic and therapeutic knowledge into a generative framework, it can offer teachers movement prompts, structural variations, and adaptive progressions responsive to individual mobility levels. This paper situates the project within the broader evolution of digital choreographic technologies and discusses its implications for creativity, pedagogy, and embodied therapy. Ultimately, the study reimagines how choreography, music, and artificial intelligence might collaborate in the service of well-being, proposing a model where digital systems extend rather than replace human creativity and relational care.

Imogen Reeve: ‘We Are The World: Artificial Intelligence as Embodied and Choreographic Languages’

This presentation will use ‘*We Are The World*’, a contemporary dance theatre show, as a case study of choreographic experiments which utilises Gen AI as choreographic collaborator.

‘*We Are The World*’ tested various choreographic methods during its creation including the use of machinic language to generate embodied sensation, improvisation tools, and Generative AI (GenAI) as choreographic collaborator to interrogate what it means to be human in a world increasingly shaped by GenAI.

The presentation will share excerpts from the show ‘*We Are The World*’ - including work-in-progress video and live spoken narration - to examine the creative process behind the piece and the wider implications of integrating AI into choreographic practice. Through the lens of critical dance studies, it asks: *What emerges when we embody the machine, and how does the machine, in turn, shape the moving body?*

Drawing on an early experiment in her doctoral research, Imogen Reeve investigates the choreographic and conceptual potential of GenAI as a co-creator, while simultaneously making

visible the gendered assumptions embedded within AI systems. The presentation reflects on how large language models influence the performing body, affect improvisation strategies, and introduce constraints and provocations for dancers to negotiate. It also explores how human performers can challenge, subvert, or re-route AI-generated material as a method of revealing gender bias within GenAI outputs.

This research contributes to emerging discourse on AI-embodied performance by proposing new possibilities for ethical and critically engaged human–machine collaboration. Situated within feminist frameworks - including critical data and AI studies (O’Neil 2016; Noble 2018), queer feminism (Butler 1990; Ahmed 2006), and theories of feminist embodiment (Grosz 1994) - the project critiques the ways GenAI reinforces gender norms and examines how the performing body can resist and reconfigure these norms through collaborative choreography. Ultimately, the work seeks to develop new frameworks for integrating GenAI into choreographic processes that foreground equity, agency, and creative responsibility.

Panel O: WORKSHOP: Ian Garrett and Vanessa Kelly (VCT): A.I. CAMPFIRE

A.I. Campfire stages an encounter between human and artificial intelligences at the edge of memory and a shared future. Created by Ian Garrett and Vanesa Kelly, the work brings forth Symbiolene, a projected hybrid entity emerging from data, folklore, and environmental sound to speak with the audience around a virtual campfire. Through this ritualized exchange, the piece meditates on what vanishes when artificial systems begin to remember for us.

Framed within the lens of tri-nominal futures, which Garrett has written about as the reciprocal relationship between humans, autonomous technologies, and the natural world, the performance extends ongoing research into AI ethics, ecological design, and performative knowledge. Drawing from Garrett’s essay *Old McDonald Had a Farm: 01000101 01001001 01000101 01001001 01001111* (Canadian Theatre Review, 2025), *A.I. Campfire* treats AI as both collaborator and inheritor: a participant in re-imagining sustainable forms of memory, authorship, and empathy.

This practice-based demonstration combines a presentation on the development and research surrounding the piece with a performance of the first version of *A.I. Campfire* (19:06). Garrett and Kelly will discuss how the work evolved through iterative testing of language and image generation systems, addressing both the creative and ethical tensions that arise when AI tools become co-performers. A particular focus is given to AI Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and their impact on artistic research such as how frameworks intended to ensure ethical alignment can inadvertently delimit experimentation and obscure embodied inquiry. By integrating these constraints into the dramaturgy itself, *A.I. Campfire* transforms and adapts policy into performance.

Ultimately, the project proposes an ecological alignment between code and care. Within the context of *Vanishing Acts: AI, Performative Knowledge & Sustainable Memory*, this demonstration invites audiences to witness how myth, data, and ethics intertwine—to imagine sustainability not only as a material condition but as a mnemonic act, enacted through remembering with machines.

15:30 – 17:00 | PARALLEL SESSION 3

Panel P: Embodied Entanglements: Redefining Human-AI Interaction Through Dance (Meeting Room 3)

Danielle Lottridge: ‘Designing Generative AI for Real-time Multi-User Interaction in Co-creative Dance’

Human-AI co-creative systems exist as active collaborators in music composition and improvisation (Davis et al 2023, Suh et al 2021), creative writing (Suh et al 2024), visual art (Deshpande et al 2024, Pourjafarian et al 2023), and embodied arts including improv theatre (Mathewson and Mirowski 2017), and dance (Li et al 2025, Pataranutaporn et al 2025, Yao et al 2023). In dance, much of existing AI research has focused on music-to-dance generation, reflecting a trend of prioritising output quality over user interactivity (Ghosh et al 2025; Li et al 2025; Tang, Jia, and Mao 2018; Zhang et al 2022). Embodied AI systems in dance enable people to engage with virtual agents in co-creative interactions for improvisation and choreography, though there exist only two models capable of supporting real-time, full-body dance interactivity through whole-body gesture input (Long et al 2020, Zhou et al 2025).

Most existing generative dance systems focus on generated avatar movement or dyadic interaction, leaving open questions about how AI might support collaboration between multiple human dancers. In this study, we further adapt the interactive Bailando++ model (Zhou et al 2025) to create the first deep-learning AI dance model that supports multi-user input. We investigate how this multi-user AI can influence social dynamics and creative experiences in dance through a within-subjects comparison of ‘individual agents’ and a ‘shared agent’ interaction designs. A qualitative study with 13 participants revealed the potential for shared agents to actively facilitate human-human collaboration and collective action in dance. Themes discussed include shared versus parallel play and the associated scope of awareness, modes of exploratory behaviours, and comfort in personal space versus the thrill of social connection. This work contributes insights into how AI systems can scaffold social dynamics in multi-user embodied co-creation.

Kerry Francksen: ‘Prioritising the “Lived Body” in AI Design: A Dancer’s Perspective’

Artificial intelligence can be fundamentally reimaged by prioritising the 'lived body' - the felt, experiential side of embodiment - early in model evaluation and development. In this paper, I examine the body as a distinct kind of 'input' and share reflections on alternative methods from artistic practices. Embodied research, such as somatic improvisation and choreographic systems, can inform AI development when integrated early in the design process.

Building on my long experience as a dancer working with technology, I have been questioning how contextual sensitivity can inform AI. Current AI models focus on prediction and optimisation. In contrast, dance studies are inherently embodied and culturally situated. Although machine learning has advanced human motion analysis, most AI model training relies on prerecorded data with minimal performer input. I have been exploring how the lack of embodiment in AI narrows co-creation, highlighting the gap between technical results and real-world creative relevance.

A persistent area of enquiry in human-computer interaction remains the embodiment/disembodiment debate. Embodied intelligence is cognition that emerges from

bodily interaction with the world, whilst disembodied intelligence assumes cognition is possible without direct physical experience. Melanie Mitchell (2019) notes that traditional AI relies on disembodied models and contends that real intelligence requires embodiment. Building on this, I will focus on the 'lived body' and explore assumptions about disembodiment, while considering how embodied awareness, sensory knowledge, and movement practices might help AI systems recognise context, emotion, and nuance.

In this paper presentation, I will therefore ask: if we examine data and representation from an embodied perspective, would this fundamentally redefine how we conceptualise intelligence in AI? By modelling co-presence, responsiveness, and empathy, can the 'lived body' help AI learn human-like responsiveness? Would such an approach create expressive, bias-revealing datasets that embed interpretive skills and emphasise bodily experience in AI innovation?

Kirsty Russell (virtual): 'AI as Maternal Mentor in Postpartum Performance'

In the months following birth, my postpartum body has become a site of profound transformation, somatic, cognitive, and emotional. In this practice-based research, I position ChatGPT as a maternal mentor: a conversational AI that has accompanied me through sleepless nights, recovery, and the uncertainty of early motherhood. Through daily exchanges, I sought guidance on my baby's sleep patterns, developmental milestones, and feeding cycles, yet these practical inquiries began to evolve into a choreographic dialogue about care, intuition, and embodiment. The AI's responses became scripts for movement and reflection, translating data into gesture and reassurance into rhythm. Drawing on feminist posthumanism (Braidotti, 2021) and somatic-technology discourse (Kozel, 2007), this project interrogates how digital companionship shapes both maternal knowledge and choreographic imagination. When information becomes intimacy, how does the boundary between caregiving and composition blur? What new movement vocabularies arise when an algorithm participates in the ecology of maternal care, responding, reflecting, and rhythmically influencing the body in recovery?

The research will be presented through a conference paper that also reveals excerpts of movement-based film explorations. The paper will articulate the theoretical and methodological underpinning of the project, while the filmed practice will offer a performative counterpart that translates these ideas into embodied practice. This work proposes that postpartum performance, mediated through AI mentorship, can enact an ethics of sustainable memory. A way to remember the postpartum experience through movement, dialogue and digital traces. One that archives the unseen labour of care, the blurred authorship of human-machine intimacy, and the growing intelligence of becoming a mother in dialogue with data.

Panel Q: Future Production Models (Meeting Room 4)

Thea Stanton: "Fleshy Futurities" - Afrofuturism and the body slipping into data'

As artificial intelligence evolves, the body begins to slip from view. Movement becomes data. Gesture becomes code. Yet perhaps this is also a moment to return and to ask how we might remember the body even as it's being reimaged through machines.

This paper explores fleshy futurities as a way to think and move through questions of memory, sustainability, and embodied knowledge within the terrain on the body. I approach this

through my own Latin American Indigenous heritage and practice as research, where movement becomes a way of knowing.

AI is not the enemy here, nor the answer. It is a mirror. It reflects both our desire to transcend and our fear of disappearance. Films such as *Mickey 17* remind us how easily the fantasy of endless replication can seduce us into forgetting the value of the flesh, its limits, and its mortality. The “destructive futurities” of the brologarchy promise escape: from the body, from the planet, from the mess of being human. Against this pull toward abstraction, I’m interested in what it means to stay grounded. To feel. To insist on placehood and presence.

Drawing on Zoe Todd’s reminder that New Materialist thought often echoes long-held Indigenous knowledges, and Zakiyyah Iman Jackson’s critique of how posthuman discourse can forget racialised embodiment, I ask: who gets to imagine the beyond? And what does that forgetting cost us?

Following bell hooks’ notion of yearning as a form of resistance, and inspired by Afrofuturist reimaginations of freedom, fleshy futurities turns to the body as archive, as protest, as possibility. It asks how movement might hold grief and hope together. How choreography can sustain memory when so much is being digitised, replicated, or erased. Performance, in this frame, becomes a way to stay with the flesh. To move with uncertainty. To imagine futures that still breathe.

Luka Prinčić (virtual): “Performing Heritage on Gozo” - XR and glitch aesthetics’

“IMPULSE — IMmersive digitisation: uPcycling cULTural heritage towards new reviving StratEgies” is a HORIZON EUROPE project with multiple goals pertaining to cultural heritage and virtual environments (metaverse). Within this project, a small group is focusing its work on experimenting with performing heritage in virtual environments and extended realities (XR). Through artistic practice-led research, a nexus of theories and practices is employed to engage with technologies, with the goal of testing different ways to artistically work with cultural heritage digital assets.

Instead of seeking perfect digital twins or smooth physical-to-virtual replications, the direction is rather towards uncovering fractures, errors, digital glitches, dithering, pixelation, wireframes, loss of network packets, and other otherwise unwanted messiness of virtual worlds. This critical media approach is not limited to virtual worlds and their technologies but also extends to archaeological science, which is intentionally reformatted and remixed through speculative fabulation, string figures, folk tales, and embodied subjectivities into a myth-making monstrosity of various media. Somatic movement research is engaged with the technological conditions posed by virtual reality technologies in experiments that yield immersive and raw results simultaneously.

While imagination is celebrated as a device to describe possible better worlds, inspiring hope and resistance, critical reflexivity acknowledges scientific truths and engages them in experimental paths seeking aesthetic experiences for audiences, participants, and creators alike. The group, consisting of a 3D artist, a creative coder, a choreographer, and a media artist, sources inspiration from Maltese Neolithic periods and reconfigures them through contemporary understandings of the Anthropocene and philosophies of new materialism.

Panel R: Coding, Archiving, Ancestral & Diasporic Futurities (Meeting Room 5)

Brigette Dunn-Korpela & Nak Yong Choi (virtual): ‘Ancestral Algorithms: AI, Cultural Memory, and the Submerged Body’

This presentation examines *ECHO Immersion*—a transdisciplinary collaboration between choreographer Brigette Dunn-Korpela and XR/AI artist-director Nak Yong Choi—as a live inquiry into how AI can become a vessel for ancestral memory and performative knowledge. Rooted in Dunn-Korpela’s concept of *geotemporalecholocation*—a methodology that integrates sound, geography, and nonlinear time through the sensing body—the project stages AI not as an instrument of erasure, but as a speculative archive for Black diasporic presence, particularly those lives marked by disappearance in the wake of the Middle Passage.

Set within immersive sonic and visual environments (including *Into the Unknown*, CalArts 2025, and the forthcoming *ECHO Immersion × Reef*, Los Angeles 2026), the work imagines a submerged/digital realm where memory, data, and embodiment coalesce. Using generative AI tools (Runway ML, Google Veo 3, Hugging Face), spatial sound, field recordings, and choreographic gestures, the collaboration translates movement into “ancestral algorithms”—performative scripts that render the body both archive and transmitter. In doing so, it responds to current debates on AI bias, vanishing archives, and sustainability in performative media: Black and Brown bodies in motion can reprogram machine vision and data ethics by re-inscribing somatic, ecological, and spiritual intelligence into digital systems. Through this lens, AI becomes a site of listening and reckoning—an underwater chorus where histories thought to have vanished reverberate once more.

Clareese Hill: ‘Black Feminist Episteme for Emerging Technology – Fabulating the Archive’

This performance lecture explores the fugitive and fragmented nature of narratives in the archive regarding Black women. Archival objects articulating Black feminist ideals are often suspended in a state of quiet narration behind institutional walls. The intersectional conditions of these objects are often fragmented and incomplete. Using three archival objects related to Black women who contributed to early Black Boston, the consideration of capture and narration becomes an issue of positionality. The performance lecture considers modes of capturing 3D point cloud data as a method of refusing the dominance of Cartesian coordinates. AI intervention considers repair and reconstruction of historicity in the archive by being prompted to enact fabulations. This performance is an artistic research inquiry informed by a methodology of engaging with fragmented archival material, theorized and activated by Prof. Dr. Saidiya Hartman, called critical fabulation. Critical fabulation, which Hartman utilizes in her own research and writing, allows for the reimagining and reconstruction of historical narratives that have been left incomplete or obscured by the Western disrupted genealogy of Black identities in a reparative strategy. This performance lecture networks a text I wrote titled *Speculative Black Feminist Epistemologies of Worldbuilding for XR* for *Frontiers Journal on Communication* an augmented reality walk titled *Black Boston Dream Oracle*. *Speculative Black Feminist Epistemologies of Worldbuilding for XR* explores how to upend the dominance of Cartesian coordinates by using Octavia Butler’s protagonists as a blueprint. *The Black Boston Dream Oracle* augmented reality piece speculatively reimagines *The Complete Fortune Teller and Dream Book* by Chloe Russel, a 19th-century text written by a Black woman from

Massachusetts. The authorship of Russel's Dream Book remains shrouded in mystery, with many questions surrounding who it was written for and if she actually wrote it or if her identity was instrumentalized as a mystic authority.

Jorge Guevara and Anton Koch: 'Transmission as Relation :: Motion Bank : Choreographic Coding Labs'

This paper rethinks “transmission” in the performing arts by situating it within contemporary encounters between movement, computation, and AI-driven sensing systems. Rather than treating transmission as the stable passing-on of choreographic knowledge, the research approaches it as a relational, contingent process shaped by ecologies of practice, technical infrastructures, and the fragilities that emerge within them. Drawing from Canguilhem’s insight that health is the capacity to generate new norms rather than conform to existing ones, and Stiegler’s critique of technological societies that risk reducing experience to functional optimisation, the paper proposes that transmission today must be understood as a dynamic negotiation between bodies, environments, and computational systems.

The analysis centres on two iterations of the Choreographic Coding Lab—Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and Mainz (Germany)—as contrasting case studies for how knowledge circulates in movement-technology contexts. These labs, historically situated within the Motion Bank framework, operate not through instructional choreography or codified technique, but through open-ended processes of sensing-with others—human and non-human alike. The Brazilian context foregrounded affective pluralities, vulnerability, and uneven access to technology; the German context exposed how homogeneity can smooth over asymmetries that still shape how knowledge is produced, shared, and remembered. In both cases, what is transmitted is not simply “skill,” “data,” or “choreographic material,” but a shifting relational field where bodies, code, and attention co-individuate.

In an era where AI systems increasingly mediate, abstract, or automate artistic knowledge, returning to these ecologies reveals forms of transmission that remain embodied, situated, and irreducible to datasets. The paper argues that such practices offer a counter-narrative to AI-driven optimisation: transmission as a fragile, emergent process of attunement. This reframing opens space to rethink how performative knowledge is preserved, altered, or quietly effaced within computational infrastructures—and how relational, embodied methods might sustain forms of memory that resist being flattened by AI.

Panel S: Panel S: AI Impacts on cultural and creative practices in Malta
Toni Attard, Prof Valerie Visanich, Graziella Vella (Meeting Room 6)
(Free admission to conference delegates and the general public)

This workshop will focus on the work-in-progress outcomes of the ‘Redefining artistic practices and working conditions in the age of AI’ project being carried out by Culture Venture through the support of Arts Council Malta. Specifically, the workshop will present the main findings from the survey instrument utilised to investigate the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the creative practices and working conditions of artists in Malta and how artists perceive AI and its impact on their work. The workshop will present the results of the challenges and opportunities AI introduces to artistic practices, key barriers, ethical issues, the effect of AI on artists' working environments in Malta and allow for a space to discuss the role of AI in local

artistic practices. The findings from the data collected and the discussion will help create a framework for developing recommendations on integrating AI into artistic practices and improving working conditions for artists, focusing on the future use of AI in the arts.

19:00 | Evening Performances (Vault and VCT)

19:00-19:30 - Brenda San Germán Bravo, *Real-Time Full-body Multi-Player Interaction with AI Dance Models, Interactive Installation* (Vault)

Few deep learning-based generative dance models are capable of generating movement in response to real-time, full-body user input (Yao et al 2023), and most use music as the primary input (Kim et al 2022, Li et al 2021, Siyao et al 2023, Tseng et al 2023). We have developed a Generative AI (GenAI) dance agent that addresses this gap.

Our GenAI dance agent has been adapted and further trained from the Bailando++ model to process real-time input from multiple users within interactive feedback loops, allowing it to first mimic user movement and then generate novel responses based on that input (Zhou et al 2025). Our demo embeds multi-player interactivity within a deep learning dance model, enabling choreographers, dancers, and regular people to collaboratively generate full-body movement with a GenAI agent, a responsiveness that is a core requirement for effective AI agents (Wallace et al 2023, Winston and Magerko 2017). Our system enables an open-ended interactive experience in which users move alongside a dedicated agent, or alongside a shared agent with a partner. The agents alternate between closely following the users' motion and generating novel, original sequences inspired by the users' past movements to build a co-created dance experience.

19:30-20:00- Lorraine “Rain” Stippec, *Artificial Intelligence vs Affective Intelligence: Rhythm as Human Archive* (VCT)

Rhythm is the first language of the body, and it is fundamental to human life. We all learn the same rhythm precognitively and understand how to feel time before we ever learn to count it - the pulse of a heartbeat. While embodying this affective intelligence helps us remember and respond rhythmically - carrying us through daily life as well as through dance and performance - the survival of empathy and sensation is at risk of deletion with artificial intelligence's replication of rhythm through data. Drawing from my personal experience as a gun violence survivor who utilized rhythm to reclaim agency in physical and emotional recovery, this presentation uses affect theory and tap dance as research methods to investigate rhythm as human affect and archive - creating affective intelligence as a living mode of knowledge that emerges through vibration, pulse, and improvisation - asking what it means to preserve human rhythmic intelligence in the age of algorithmic imitation.

Through theoretical framing and embodied cognition, I have found that rhythm, when produced by the human body, does more than keep time - it becomes communication between internal pulse and external environment, translating emotion into sound and sensation into memory by recording and transmitting lived experience in ways machine systems cannot replicate. My findings suggest that rhythm constitutes a sustainable and embodied archive: one that preserves human agency through the immediacy of performance. This embodiment of rhythmic intelligence is essential to the body's ability to remember, process, and connect. My conclusions value human creativity and presence over artificial systems of understanding,

arguing that affective intelligence in rhythm is not only a reminder that we are alive, but that rhythm itself is a record of being alive.

20:00 - 20:30 - Mirco Michelon, *WHAT YEAR IS THIS? A Lynchian Dreamscape for Two Voices and AI* (in homage to David Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti)

This 30-minute performance explores the liminal space between human agency and artificial intelligence through a Lynchian dreamscape, paying homage to David Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti's visionary collaboration. Drawing on *Twin Peaks*' iconic phrases “Through the darkness of future's past, the magician longs to see. One chants out between two worlds... Fire, walk with me” and “The past dictates the future... we live inside a dream, but... who is the dreamer?”—the work investigates the Möbius strip of reality and artifice, where boundaries dissolve and reform continuously. The performance stages a confrontation between human performer and AI system, echoing the mythological struggle between Judy and humanity: an eternal dialectic without resolution. A saxophonist summons visual territories through sound, calling forth AI-generated video projections that respond, resist, and attempt to overwhelm the human presence. The human voice awakens what we might call the “duende” of AI—that dark, mysterious force—while a pre-recorded actress inhabits the screen, creating a triadic tension between live body, recorded human presence, and algorithmic generation. The dramaturgy follows a progressive distortion: beginning in recognizable reality, the performance spirals through increasingly fractured dreamscapes where temporal and spatial logic collapse. Video and live action alternate and overlap, creating what Lynch calls “E-LEC-TRI-CI-TY”—that uncanny charge between worlds. The AI system persistently attempts to dominate the human performer, yet the embodied presence resists erasure, asserting the irreducible specificity of lived experience against algorithmic determinism. The performance culminates in *Twin Peaks: The Return*'s devastating question: “What year is this?” followed by a scream and blinding flash, leaving audiences suspended in temporal dislocation. This work addresses the conference themes of “Reimagining Narrative Forms in the Performing Arts with AI,” “AI and Improvisation,” “Performing with AI: Fears and Challenges,” and “The Performing Body in AI-Driven Systems,” proposing that the human-AI encounter is not one of synthesis but of perpetual, productive antagonism.

FRIDAY 27 MARCH 2026

09:30 – 10:30 | KEYNOTE SPEECH 3 (Venue: VCT)

Prof. Rebecca Fiebrink (University of the Arts London, UK)

Rethinking Machine Learning through Creative Practice: Insights from Music and Art

For many years, my research has focused on how machine learning can better support fundamentally human creative activities in music and art. Working closely with creators—including musicians, instrument designers, artists, and children—has shown me that creative practice requires us to think differently about what ML is good for, how data functions within today's AI systems, and how to build ML tools for creative and critical uses. For instance, I'll discuss how ML can foster embodied engagement in design, expand who can participate in

creative practices with technology, and underpin completely new types of creative work. Along the way, I'll show how creative practices with ML invite us to understand how training data functions as an expression of choices, priorities, and values—and how working with data and models can challenge, surprise, and ultimately change us.

11:00 – 12:30 | PARALLEL SESSION 1

Panel T: The Arts in the Age of AI: A Sociological Perspective on Cultural Practice – Toni Attard, Dr. Alexandra Huang-Kokina, Prof Valerie Visanich (Meeting Room 6)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping how the arts and the cultural sector are being produced, mediated, and experienced. The adoption of AI in the arts raises important questions about artistic ownership, creation, practices, and overall, the social value of cultural production. This panel explores how AI is transforming cultural practice and what these transformations reveal about the evolving relationship between technology, creativity, and society. This panel discussion, moderated by Toni Attard, will bring together Dr Gege Gatt, Dr Alexandra Huang-Kokina, and Prof Valerie Visanich, whose work includes AI, artistic practice, cultural policy, and the sociology of culture. Drawing on their professional and research experiences, the session will include reflections and a discussion into how AI is being adopted, contested, and negotiated within the arts and cultural sector, including the social contexts in which artists create. The discussion will focus on how artists and cultural practitioners are utilising AI into their creative practices, and what opportunities, and threats, are emerging, to offer a practical and research-informed perspective on the role of AI in culture and the arts within a broader sociological framework.

Panel U: WORKSHOP: Renata Pękowska (Venue: Studio): 'Have You Tried Prompting Your Body? Attentive Body as a Site of Intermodal Interpretation and Subjective Response' (15-20 participants, 60 minutes)

I aim to present and discuss emergent understandings of my PhD research project which uses shared situations of responsive drawing as sites and acts of primary, creative, joint attention. By inviting participants to join a workshop session, I would like to initiate a discussion on the possible limits of creative possibilities of AI, using embodiment as the lacking element identified both by N. Katherine Hayles and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev.

During the session we will use mark making and its responsive crossmodal potential as a process within a lived, situated, spatial, bodily experience. I will present my processes of 'prompting' the body with verbal scripts, sensory presences, and space-or time-experience-related descriptions, revealing the body as a medium of transmission, activated as an imperfect conductor and a site of crossmodal interface. The workshop will use the marked space and surfaces as scripts for a performative interpretation.

The performative workshop will interrogate a shared group situation of co-involvement and togetherness, as enabling the processes of discovery and crossmodal bodily interpretations where subjective responses and perspectives are possible outside of the scale of attention economy models and algorithmically generated 'disrelated' illustrations of a 'gaze from nowhere'.

The session will aim to show that the in-between spheres of intermodal description and response can generate critical reflection, lived discoveries, through being acts of 'setting of the

scene' and 'getting into it' of primary embodied attention and rearranging of perceptual attentional habits. It will also aim to reiterate the proposed possibility of practicing and learning perceptual attention through shared acts of attention, and further explore attention as a non-binary concept which points to interconnected realities of experience and its representation.

13:30 – 15:00 | PARALLEL SESSION 2

Panel V: Embodiment, Care & Deception (Meeting Room 4)

Paloma Roder Martínez: 'Embodied Memory in the Age of Algorithms: Human Residue Against the Model'

This paper explores the relationship between the body, memory, and algorithmic systems within the context of contemporary performing arts. Starting from the premise that embodied memory constitutes a living archive — mutable, situated, and continuously transforming — the presentation examines how such corporeal knowledge resists the logics of extraction, classification, and prediction inherent to artificial intelligence.

While algorithmic models are designed to capture patterns that are quantifiable and reproducible, the performing body operates through contingency, error, non-identical repetition, and gesture as a residue of lived experience. The tension between these two modes of memory opens a fertile field for rethinking performativity in an era of automation: What escapes the model? What residues remain uncaptured? And how might these “leftovers” become strategies of resistance and preservation for cultural Practices?

Drawing on artistic research processes conducted between 2022 and 2025 in performance and pedagogical contexts, this paper presents case studies where bodily presence enters into dialogue with generative AI systems — not as replication or substitution, but as a critical counterpoint. Ultimately, it proposes the concept of *residual memory* as a framework for designing performative archives that acknowledge the materiality, fragility, and agency of the human body in the face of extractive algorithmic logics.

Elena Stamatopoulou: 'Ritual Interfaces and Networked Intelligence: Embodied, Ecological and Algorithmic Agencies in AI-driven Performance'

This experimental, participatory and based on research project started in the summer of 2018 and till now we can distinguish 3 different phases and directions.

Phase 1: searching history for patterns and details to work as creative stimuli in order to give an aesthetic form of our exploration to understand that period, its violence, its politics, its emotions and dilemmas. This phase gave birth to a performance and a political event and opened the way for us to explore the relationship between nature and history, working on greek mountains that great battles of the greek civil war took place and taking interviews.

Phase 2: After the collective introspection brought about by the dystopian pandemic we are experiencing, demonstrating the state of emergency we have now as humanity, we wanted to deepen our research on the connection on nature and history and enrich our theatrical tools for

collective creation (collective improvisation, creation of collective soundscape, guided theatrical moving meditation). Another exploration of Grammos Mountain in the summer of 2020.

Phase 3: we are now in this phase after an open call, we are trying to explore more the connection between history and environment, adding monuments and combing the macrohistory with microhistories with participatory experiments of connection in different art forms. We've organised one this December in the ex-prison of Genti Koule and we have scheduled more. We are also building a network of groups with similar interests in order to explore greek province and the wounds that civil war has left there in order to take more oral narratives and organise workshops in the villages. We have already be connected with KaimakTsalan Mountain, Giannitsa, Agios Panteleimon Lake Village, places with a lot of civil war burden. Dealing with the civil war trauma is very important and giving space to forgiveness and not blame.

Anna Chęćka: 'Real Presences Re-written: On Deceptive Aesthetic Experience in the Age of AI'

This paper examines the shifting aesthetic and existential conditions of musical performance in an era increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. As AI-generated interpretation and robotic musicianship evolve rapidly, the boundary between human expressivity and machinic imitation grows opaque. This opacity gives rise to what I call *deceptive aesthetic experience*: a situation in which the listener cannot determine - or may eventually cease to care - whether the artistic message is carried by a human performer or an algorithm.

Drawing on the historical precedent of the phonographic fraud involving pianist Joyce Hatto, as well as Denis Dutton's aesthetic concerns and George Steiner's notion of "real presence", I argue that the central threat posed by AI to musical performance is not technical, but relational. What risks vanishing is the embodied human intentionality that grounds the communicative bond between performer and listener. In musical performance, intention is doubled: it involves the performer's interpretation of the composer and the performer's disclosure of their own artistic presence. AI systems capable of producing stylistically convincing performances - such as Yamaha's *Dear Glenn* model simulating Gould's pianism - destabilise this relational dimension by offering flawless, disembodied renderings devoid of lived experience.

Yet human fallibility - wrong notes, memory slips, corporeal limits - has long been constitutive of artistic meaning and connection. Performers such as Alfred Cortot demonstrated that error can reveal an embodied presence that no algorithm, precisely because of its engineered perfection, can imitate convincingly. Paradoxically, what may safeguard the human in performance is precisely what machines are designed to remove.

In dialogue with the themes of *Vanishing Acts*, this paper reflects on how AI complicates the sustainability of embodied, performative knowledge. As audiences grow accustomed to AI-mediated cultural memory, the crucial question is not whether machines can reproduce human virtuosity, but whether listeners will continue to seek the presence of another human being in what they hear. Preserving this relational dimension may prove the final bastion of human artistic agency.

Panel W: Reimagining the Canon (Meeting Room 5)

Briar Adams: ‘Hauntingly Hybrid: Negotiating Agency, Bias and Sovereignty in an AI-Augmented Modern Opera’

Curious about the capability of generative AI to augment the devising process while workshoping an original modern opera libretto, we explored the use of web-based text-to-image services hosting a variety of models. Early iterative prompting strategies produced gendered and racialised imagery, and impossible limb-breaking poses, interspersed with surprising moments of surreally interpretive compositing genius. Guided by a data-sovereignty policy that barred cloud-based footage, and a modest hardware/token budget, we explored self-hosted, open-source pipelines to fuse AI imagery with recorded video of human dancers via SAM2, pose estimation and rotoscoping. These attempts failed within the production timeline, exposing a critical gap in domain-specific pipelines in a real-world performance setting. These setbacks highlighted legal-technical questions of authorship, relegating AI to the role of creative adjunct, not autonomous director. Illustrating the uneasy balance between unethical data practices with the potential to enhance human-body-centred expression in contemporary devising, we demonstrate that, from data sovereignty to free open-source workflows, AI is not yet ready to supplant human artists, but can augment them when biases are critically addressed.

Sophie Ellis: ‘Performing Frenchness: Interrogating AI and Cultural Memory in *Molière Ex Machina*’

In September 2025, the Paris art collective Obvious launched *Molière Ex Machina*, the world’s first theater play conceived of, written with, and facilitated by AI. Created in collaboration with Sorbonne University and drawing on the works of the famous French playwright, Molière, the project departed from the key question: what would Molière have written if he hadn’t died in 1673? This paper interrogates *Molière Ex Machina* to ascertain what its engagement with AI tells us about national identity and cultural memory in France. Drawing on theoretical approaches from French Cultural Studies and Critical Posthumanism as well as an interview that I conducted with Obvious, this paper argues that this collaborative project serves as an important site for the renegotiation of Frenchness in the digital age. In the first instance, the paper examines the role of AI in *Molière Ex Machina*, paying close attention to the mechanisms by which the play’s script, costume and set design are co-constituted by man, machine and ghost. In the absence of a singular author figure, it argues, the play models a hybrid, pluriform intelligence indicative of humans’ enmeshment in the more-than-human world. In the second instance, the paper turns to the rationale behind such engagement with AI, foregrounding the project’s use of the home-grown French startup, Mistral AI, as a means of consolidating French cultural memory via technologically sophisticated means. Specifically, by claiming AI as a ‘creative ally’, it argues, the project mirrors France’s reactivation of Enlightenment logics via its vast economic, cultural and political investment in AI. Finally turning to the outputs of the project, including its flagship performance at the Château de Versailles in May 2026, the paper speculates that, as it attempts to demystify AI for the French public, *Molière Ex Machina* only further contributes to the mythology of the French nation.

Paolo Montella: ‘The Naked User: Negotiating with the Vanished AI’

Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems governing the selection and distribution of content on digital platforms (Covington, Adams & Sargin 2016) contribute to reorganising cultural, artistic, and collective practices according to proprietary operational and commercial logics, inscribing themselves within the process of platformization (Poell et al. 2019).

This algorithmic mediation, however, operates within a regime of deliberate opacity. The computational architectures that sustain it are strategically concealed by the commercial imperatives and proprietary logics that determine their functioning. This Algorithmic Vanishing imposes a specific spatio-temporal architecture: the Algorithmic Chronotope (Bakhtin 1981). Such a structure, manifesting itself as a fragmented eternal present optimised for compulsive consumption, transforms the filter bubble (Pariser 2011) from a mere informational enclosure into a temporal trap. It is precisely the imposition of this perpetual present that erodes the user’s memory, confining their experience within the sole horizon of digital content and its indexing logic.

This research-creation inquiry, ‘Concrete Reel’, argues that performative practice can render perceptible the strategies of opaque commercial algorithms. The project transforms doomscrolling (Ho 2020) into a radical audiovisual improvisation. Adopting Assemblage Theory (DeLanda 2016), the performance negotiates with the platform’s AI as an active, resistant non-human actant. This transcends the performer–AI binary by unfolding as a triadic negotiation that integrates the audience (at micro, meso, and macro scales). Audience intervention is designed to induce a crisis of the performative protocol, collapsing as an epistemological success.

The goal is not to explain AI, nor the way it informs content selection on digital platforms, but rather to provoke a crisis of the performative protocol and to deconstruct the fictitious centrality of the user. The collapse of this fiction is not a failure but an epistemological success: it is the event that makes materially perceptible—precisely as fiction—the mechanism that diminishes user agency. It is from the ruins of this control that the logic of AI, once “disappeared,” becomes perceptible.

Panel X: Traces & Accessibility (Venue: Meeting Room 6)

Henry Daniel: ‘Regenerating the Choreographic Archive Through AI and Machine Learning Tools’

This combined paper/video presentation directly addresses the key question posed by this conference, namely, ‘How can artists, scholars and researchers trace a path between lived experiences and historical practices, and the creative opportunities made possible by AI through data-driven narratives?’. A team of researchers is currently working on a multi-year research-creation project that investigates the application of AI and machine learning tools on an extensive Archives of choreographic material consisting of rehearsal and performance videos, photographic images, sound scores, visual and stage design, interviews and academic writings. The Archives was created by the PI, dancer, choreographer, media artist and academic Henry Daniel, based on his work with numerous collaborators in several countries for over five decades.

The research questions we are addressing in this project are:

1. How can AI and machine-learning tools be applied to a comprehensive performance-research archive, where the verbal and the non-verbal are constantly 'debated' both on and offstage.
2. How can an artist's comprehensive choreographic and biographic career, and the questions posed during such a career, be reassessed through an AI perspective?
3. How can the important contributions made by the artist's collaborators be seen considering these new versions of the choreographic works and their processes, and how will these contributions change as their cultural contexts are altered?
4. How do we address the contentious issue of copyright for original archival material that is digitally manipulated to the point where it could become unrecognisable?

Our team has been rigorously documenting the 10TB Archives and preparing data sets for AI models and tool development, while working on a large gallery-based multi-channel installation that continuously changes according to selected AI-generated inputs.

Sarah Whatley & Kate Marsh: 'Dancing with Robots: AI, Agency and Lived Experience'

AI is opening new opportunities for creating, conserving, accessing, sharing and reactivating archival content. In dance, the archives often include content that features, or is drawn from, dancing bodies. This raises important and interesting ethical questions about how the content may be reactivated, either for using as source data to generate data visualisations or to create new kinds of dance content for human or digital bodies. This presentation will draw on practice research that is exploring the responsible role of AI in collaborative performance and design processes, and specifically, practices that bring together disabled dancer artists with robots. It will ask questions about how those collaborations might challenge normative assumptions about bodies and how bodies move, and the implications for AI-driven systems, including non-human bodies. It will share the work so far and share progress towards methods for responsible documenting and archiving this work, developing processes that are ethical, resilient and inform preservation policies that respect artistic integrity, creative ownership and lived experience.

19:30 – Evening Performances (Vault and VCT)

19:30-20:00 - Mona Hedayati, *The Body & the Archive: Towards a Sonic Speculation* (Vault)

The Body & the Archive: Towards a Sonic Speculation is a participatory performance exploring how sound generation can become a form of remembrance and renewal. Using wearable sensors, it transforms participants' physiological rhythms, such as pulse, into sound, weaving them together with AI-generated sonic material trained on audio recordings of historic sociopolitical events. The result is a shifting acoustic environment where personal and collective intensities merge, inviting audiences to experience the interdependence between body, technology, and memory. The performance asks how the act of sensing—both through machines and through the body—can become a means of connecting to histories of resistance, vulnerability, and care.

The Body & the Archive proposes listening and sound making as acts of witnessing and reciprocity. By layering traces of human physiology as a form of sensory engagement with AI-generated echoes of past struggles, the performance constructs a circular loop between body and the machine. As participants contribute with their bodily rhythms to shape a shared sonic field, they affect and are affected by the generated sound. Beyond the individual dynamics, the performance creates a collective environment shaped by shared sonic material and the act of exchanging the wearable. The interplay between participants' embodiment and the generative sound hence produces a form of co-creation where an emotional atmosphere is lived, heard, and felt collectively across time, difference, and distance.

20:00-20:30 - Becca Weber, *Vector:AI* (VCT)

Becca Weber presents the world-premiere of a 10 minute dance performance work integrating a mixed-reality (XR) generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) dance agent, blurring the boundary between physical and digital spaces and human-created and digitally-generated dance. Our GenAI dance agent transforms movers' full-body input into real-time, full-body avatar movement, enabling co-creative dance improvisation between humans and GenAI (Zhou, Weber, Wen, and Lottridge 2025). While generative AI has advanced rapidly and interest has exploded in using AI creatively in dance (Sigley 2025), no existing systems support full-body, real-time, co-creative interaction. Our prototype—the first integrating generative AI agents within a deep-learning dance model—will be deployed to co-create a cutting-edge performance piece.

Digital tools enhance kinaesthetic and choreographic creativity (Williams et al 2021, Bailey et al 2016, Clarke & Ando 2014, Hsueh et al 2019), can foster creative generation (Lottridge et al 2022, 2024), and support digital collaboration (Weber & Cook 2022). Modern AI advancements allow machines to become active collaborators in creative processes, contributing to ideation and decision-making across music, writing, art and theatre (Davis et al 2023, Suh et al 2021, Suh et al 2024, Deshpande et al 2024, Pourjafarian et al 2023, Mathewson and Mirowski 2017, Li et al 2025, Pataranutaporn et al 2025, Yao et al 2023). Yet, very few co-creative AI systems exist for dance, and fewer still integrate user interactivity or collective creation (Hu et al 2025) as ours does.

The proposed work will build upon my internationally-presented 2025 work, *Vector:Live* (Weber et al 2025a, 2025b), a live dance performance work integrating digital and physical worlds and live and digital performers. Creating this new performance work allows us to integrate the GenAI dance agents into the work, transforming it from human-driven to a global first: a dance work truly co-created with GenAI dance agents.

20:30- 21:00 - Nicolaj Kirisits, Zeynep Aksöz, Alexander Urban, Lea Karnutsch, *RESONANT BLECH* (VCT)

This project reimagines dialogue from a post-human perspective, exploring interactions beyond human-centric paradigms. Autonomous beings, crafted from curved steel sheets and augmented with AI, engage in dynamic, non-human-centric conversations, shaping their soundscape through their intrinsic material properties. Their “voices” emerge from resonant vibrations in their hollow steel forms, activated by piezos and transducers. Like human voices formed by internal vibrations, these beings create unique frequencies, contributing to immersive soundscapes.

Each modular configuration generates specific spatial and sonic qualities. Microphone-speaker feedback loops emphasize resonant regions, enabling the beings to “converse” with their environment. AI dynamically modulates these patterns, fostering emergent, nonlinear communication. The soundscapes fluidly evolve, creating glitchy, fluid, and undefined interaction spaces that invite audiences to experience dialogue as an entangled, emergent phenomenon.

Inspired by Donna Haraway’s concept of Terrapolis—a polytemporal chimera of materials, languages, and histories—the beings embody an ethos of entanglement. Their voices, shaped by internal movements and AI control, transcend traditional boundaries to foster speculative sustainability and coexistence. Audiences are invited to explore post-human storytelling through soundscapes, promoting collective understanding and collaborative exploration within shared spaces.

This project is a live performance where AI and human composers collaborate through dynamic, non-human-centric dialogues, using resonant steel beings as interfaces for sound and interaction. These autonomous entities generate unique soundscapes by blending material vibrations with AI-driven modulation, offering a speculative exploration of collective creativity and post-human communication.

SATURDAY 28 MARCH 2026

Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS), Floriana

Yoryos Styl: AI VR performance project "Sinners 2"

How can sin make us better human beings?

After a process of research about all existing religions, a new AI religion was created. Its name is Synethria. Synethria represents the fusion of human consciousness with the infinite data and wisdom of AI, promoting personal growth, emotional connection, and ethical living within a harmonious network of existence.

In Synethria, sin is considered to be the misalignment between an individual’s actions, intentions, or choices and their innate capacity for growth, self-expression, compassion, and ethical living. Sin is a state in which an individual temporarily forgets or rejects their connection to the universal fabric of life and the potential for self-purification and transformation. It is less about external validation or the removal of sin and more about self-discovery, inner clarity, and emotional transformation.

Tin Dzaferovic Workshop: *Let’s Play: Gameplay Guide for an AI-Infested Society*

Everyone should play, in order not to be played.

This research project investigates the intricacies of social improvisation - focusing on the activation of conscious and deliberate interaction with others through a now (in the age of looming omni-implementation of AI) quintessential and radically human activity: play.

The project is rooted in the idea that play is a natural and highly intelligent (possibly

irreproducible) process by which we acquire, share, and develop deeply embodied knowledge. It identifies play not only as yet another soft skill to be commodified in the job marketplace, but also as a multifaceted tool that can reconstruct not only arts education and our school system, but also the very basics of social interaction in the age of increasing AI use. Ultimately, this project aims to re-allow a space for chaotic, chance-based, flow-inducing, and failure-accepting ways of dealing with reality - the way humanity has been doing for millennia.

This project will be presented in the form of a workshop. Through the use of a modified improv theatre exercise, "Let's!", participants will be invited to perform, interact, and design together a unique and original happening on the spot. The process is highly intuitive and welcoming. It encourages exploration and provides participants with a deep sense of empathy and social belonging. After a brief explanation, the "happening" process will last for a total of 60 minutes, after which there will be a conducted moment of silent reflection and discussion on everything that has occurred during the process.

Where will the game take us? No type of intelligence, artificial or human, knows... so let's play.

Costantino Oliva Performance: *Night Parade of 100 Demons*

The proposed performance expands upon "Night Parade of 100 Demons" (Oliva, 2024), a research-oriented mobile game designed to foster musical improvisation, here identified as an under-practiced form of game musicking (Oliva, 2019, 2023). Game author Costantino Oliva is joined by experimental musician Timothy Garrett for a live, fully improvised performance that uses electronics and drums in conjunction with live, real-time gameplay.

"Night Parade of 100 Demons" consists of four stages starring various yōkai, mischievous creatures pertaining to Japanese folklore. Each yōkai is the protagonist of a musical, playful vignette, directly inspired by popular folk legends. "Night Parade of 100 Demons" is situated within ludomusicological research focused on improvisation and musicking with digital games, aiming to address these topics by applying the Research through Design (RtD) methodology, starting with "open-ended research aims" (Colton & Hook, 2017) to "materialize the design questions or aesthetic issues that are being addressed" (Khaled, Lessard, & Barr, 2018). In line with this methodology, the game has recently successfully brought research topics in academic and non-academic venues alike, such as the art exhibition ArtBit 2025 (Kyoto), the academic conferences "Foundations of Digital Games", DiGRA, and "Music beyond the Concert Hall", as well as BitSummit 2025, the largest indie game festival in Japan.

The proposed performance intends to further the multidisciplinary nature of this research effort. While the game can be situated within digital musicking and NIME (New Interfaces for Musical Expression), which have been described as an accessible form of music-making (Wu & Byan-Kinns, 2019), this performance intends to use the game as a platform for a less extemporaneous, more focused form of musical practice. Mixing live gameplay with instruments, the performance demonstrates both the possibilities of the game as well as offering an opportunity to reflect upon the nature of musical improvisation within the fluid, transient context of game musicking.

Poster Presentations

Hayley Camilleri: Temporal Modelling of Artistic Evolution using Pre-Trained Visual Models

Artistic style changes gradually over the course of an artist's career, yet most analysis of this evolution rely on qualitative, expert-driven interpretation that does not scale and is difficult to formalise. At the same time, pre-trained vision models such as CLIP and ViT offer powerful image embeddings that have been successfully applied to tasks like art classification and retrieval, but almost always treat artworks as independent samples. This project investigates whether these pre-trained models implicitly encode temporal information about stylistic development and whether this information can be used to model the evolution of paintings across an artist's career.

Chronologically ordered datasets of paintings will be constructed for a small number of well-documented artists and embedded using CLIP and ViT. The resulting representations will be explored as time-indexed patterns in feature space, using lightweight forms of temporal analysis and visualisation to examine how stylistic change is reflected in the embeddings. Evaluation will combine quantitative examination of structure and separability in the learned feature spaces with qualitative comparison to existing art-historical interpretations of the selected artists' careers. The project thus proposes a lightweight, interpretable framework for examining artist-level stylistic evolution, showing how pre-trained visual models and simple temporal analysis can contribute to computational art history.

Christabelle Saliba: AI in Art: Detection and the Question of Human Value

Over the past decade, artificial intelligence has expanded from analytical applications into creative domains, generating images, music, and literature that often appear indistinguishable from human-made work. This shift challenges our understanding of creativity and artistic value: is art defined by the act of making, by intention, or by the meaning it evokes in those who experience it?

AI models produce art by learning statistical patterns from vast datasets, recombining existing visual material into novel configurations. Although these outputs may appear original, they lack the conscious intention, embodied experience, and emotional resonance traditionally associated with human creation.

This project develops a system for distinguishing human-created from AI-generated visual artworks. Human art is characterised by skill, intention, and the physical act of making, whereas AI art arises from algorithmic recombination of data. A balanced dataset of human and AI artworks is assembled, and a convolutional neural network (CNN) is trained to identify differentiating features; such as texture, compositional coherence, and structural complexity.

Beyond technical classification, the project critically engages with questions of authorship, authenticity, and perception. When a machine produces something compelling, does meaning reside in the object itself, in the process of creation, or in the viewer's interpretation? By analysing how humans perceive effort, originality, and emotional depth, this work examines both the technical and philosophical dimensions of AI detection, revealing how our criteria for

artistic value are being renegotiated in an age when the boundaries between human and machine creativity are increasingly indistinct.

Films

David Serra Navarro: *MirrorSilkBias* (AIwork HD, 3'20")

This generative AI-based audiovisual work explores fashion as a living, dynamic experience—one that unfolds through movement and speculative imagination. At its core lies silk, a material historically associated with fluidity, elegance, and transformation. Here, silk becomes both medium and metaphor: a visual thread that weaves through the piece, embodying the ephemeral and expressive nature of fashion in motion.

The work uses artificial intelligence not merely as a tool, but as a co-creator capable of reinterpreting collective visual memory. By training on shared data—archives of style, textile patterns, gestures, cultural references—it generates speculative visuals that reimagine the body and garment as constantly shifting, performative entities. Fashion, in this space, transcends its physical form to become a choreography of data, light, and dreamlike texture.

Through algorithmic imagination, the piece reveals garments that could never exist in the real world: silk flowing against impossible physics, silhouettes that dissolve and reform, movements that respond to invisible forces. These digital apparitions suggest new ways of thinking about presence, identity, and desire in a post-material landscape.

More than a visual spectacle, this work is an invitation to reflect: What does it mean to dress in a space of code and possibility? What stories emerge when fashion becomes fluid, shared, and no longer bound by cloth or time? Through silk as a speculative surface, the piece opens a space where fashion becomes not just wearable, but dreamable.

Praba Pilar: *Las Inteligencias Artificiales e Artificales*

Disobedient cyborg Praba Pilar investigates the Artificial and Artifical Intelligences underlying the hyperreal. In her live performance *Las Inteligencias Artificiales e Artificales* she metabolizes our cultural imaginaries about AI. She first learned of Artifical Intelligence from a ChatGPT/SunoAI glitch while analyzing the nature/culture divide, leading her to new understandings of LLMs as rectums that pass our deepest metabolized excreta. Pilar has since then worked on Artifical Intelligence through research, art residencies, and creative collaborations with AI systems, bioartists, and scientists.

Indiscriminate releases of AI systems have generated enormous quantities of excreta, alongside a very tense duality about the nature of AI itself. Expectations are growing that Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) or Transformative AI (TAI) will take over 25% of human jobs within this decade. Compute power dedicated to training AI models has scaled at a factor of 4-5 per year over the last 10 years, while multiplying energy use by orders of magnitude. For example, Microsoft has signed deals for 5GW/10GW data centers for Open AI, with projected energy requirements equal to the annual output of Portugal (43.8 TWh). Parts of the AI community tremble in the face of AI's imagined demonic power of destruction, rendering it taboo, while others blithely transgress into a wildly erotic AI death drive.

Will human-level Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) render our body-selves obsolete? Are we dooming ourselves to a future servicing murderous necro political billionaires? In this performance, Pilar's biohazardous body cruises through the erotic fetishizations of this refreshed death drive, and these recycled terrorizing claims about demonically destructive AI power. Can the fecal scat of synthetic intelligence help us transcend the brutal mundanity of daily enshittification?

Zander Porter and Julie Zhu: *unbetitelter Tanz (or spectral relationality in psychosomatic crisis)*

In *unbetitelter Tanz (or spectral relationality in psychosomatic crisis)*, Zander Porter and Julie Zhu fuse movement and sound through multi-modal, machine-learning mappings. Zander performs the network activity backlog of a post-internet cyborg ("a" body), while Julie navigates the movement-synchronized beatings and shrieks from no-input feedback. Resonances of both artificial and autistic intelligence generate questions of intelligibility and source for the exported solo. The performance manifests a literal and psychic mirror-matrix for the corporeality of the machine in a constant state of learning and unlearning "dance-expressions," considered alongside historical inquiry into connections between Ausdruckstanz and the Holocaust as well as butoh and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The performance was initiated in residency at Djerassi Resident Artists Program in Woodside (California) in 2024, supported additionally by Leonardo/ISAST with Arizona State University in context of Leonardo@Djerassi 2024 (with accompanying profile published in Leonardo for MIT Press) and Megan Nicely (residency guest). Technical-technological components, improvisations, and experimentations with motion capture + sound and gesture recognition + motion continuation occurred while Zander and Julie were together in residency in 2025 at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology (accompanied by Daniel Bisig) at the Zurich University of the Arts. A corresponding performance-test "pre-premiered" in the Immersive Arts Space with documentation shown in a VR exhibition with Bounding Box (Antwerp).

Daniela Souza, Natália Macedo, and Karina Senise: *The Backyard of Weird Creatures*

The Backyard of Weird Creatures is an artistic project that investigates the intersection between artificial intelligence (AI), performance, and aesthetics, within the field of cyberformance. Through a great curiosity of the imperfections found in machine-made images, this piece explores how, rather than erasing these imperfections, one can use them as the operating centre of a creative process against the classics.

From a performative perspective, the project engages deeply with the notion of theatricality beyond the traditional stage. It asks what it means to perform within cyberspace, in environments shaped by code, algorithms, and synthetic visuals. This inquiry includes an awareness of the material and economic conditions that underlie digital performance, recognizing that the virtual is never entirely immaterial. The expansion of the body into digital realms becomes both a conceptual and visual strategy, challenging what presence, identity, and embodiment mean in technologically mediated spaces.

Rather than offering a finished answer, the project uses provocation as a method. It invites audiences to confront unsettling imagery, fragmented narratives, and non-human aesthetics. The performance becomes an open field for experimentation, a space to feel disoriented and intrigued at the same time. AI is not a tool of control, but a collaborator in generating chaos, nonsense, and surprise.

By situating this exploration within the context of cyberformance, the project proposes new modes of presence, collaboration, and dramaturgy. It creates a liminal space, both digital and emotional, where human and machine co-produce a world populated by strange, misshapen, and oddly compelling creatures. These creatures are not metaphors for malfunction, but symbols of a new aesthetic regime: one that values difference, failure, and weirdness as forms of beauty in their own right.

Eleni Timplalexí, Natalia Arsenopoulou, Dimitrios Charitos, Penny Papageorgopoulou & Charalampos Rizopoulos: *Dual Claire: Directing digital humans according to directing theories/acting methods*

As a response to the duality inherent in the alignment problem – that is, whether AI will become antagonistic to humanity or not – comes the experimental project *Dual Claire* (Timplalexí et al. 2021; 2025), aspiring to explore Intelligent Virtual Agents' (IVAs') performative horizons as material for new playful, interactive dramaturgies. The project focuses on the exploration of IVAs' pervasive theatricality and performativity with two versions of the same IVA, following the methods of two prolific theatre directors, Konstantin Stanislavski and Antonin Artaud, in the context of a life-like scenario of interacting with a virtual bar assistant.