

LABORATORIO LAGUNA

PhD on Sail

Call for proposals



As early as 1990, in his book *The Natural Contract* (*Le contrat naturel*), Michel Serres presented a philosophical reflection on the scenario of the climate crisis, which has preceded current debates for decades. In it, he diagnoses, among other things, that the destruction of the foundations of human life on Earth is based on the rupture with the knowledge that humanity has accumulated over millennia in activities developed in the open air in symbiosis with the forces of nature. For Serres, seafarers and peasants are the paradigmatic figures of this knowledge; their counterparts, the modern indoor workers who no longer deal with things and natural conditions but only with symbols (data, images, linguistic signs etc.): Politicians, CEOs, assembly line workers, scientists etc.—but also modern artists, entrenched in their studios.

Laboratorio Laguna aims to bring together artistic and scientific projects that venture beyond indoor spaces (offices, libraries, laboratories, rehearsal rooms, studios etc.) and re-explore a practice that starts from experiences on the outside. The Venice Lagoon is a space that, since its settlement, has been simultaneously threatened by siltation and inundation. For centuries, it has been reformed by intensive human interventions (such as river detours, dredging, dams, nautical and (bio)economic uses) and always only temporarily secured.



LABORATORIO LAGUNA

PhD on Sail

Call for proposals

As such space (as urbanized complex, agricultural and fishing area as well as biotope), the lagoon is a historical precedent and, at the same time, a model of the hybrid world of the Anthropocene. Venice and its surroundings between the mainland and the Adriatic Sea (islands, sandbanks, marshes, and canals) is a field of experimentation to be explored in every possible way—not least with an open fleet of boats. In this way, we hope to gain experiences that will contribute to the reconstruction, investigation, re-appropriation and transformation of practices of non-destructive coexistence with non-human beings as practised by lagoon dwellers in pre-industrial times, some of which have been handed down to the present.

Venice and its lagoon are a space in which—although threatened and in a constant state of change—living conditions have been preserved in which the knowledge of Serres' sailors and peasants is rooted. Therefore, it offers the unique opportunity not only for an artistic exploration of these conditions but also for a study of the cultural and lifeworld contexts of historical phenomena of music, art, and architecture, which prove essential to their understanding, but which have rarely survived comparably in other cultural centres. Thus, to give just one example, the Laguna's only marginal access by road and rail has preserved aspects of a pre-modern acoustic environment and modes of locomotion and orientation (access by walkways and boat traffic).

Laboratorio Laguna will bring artistic practices and approaches to architectural design into dialogue with historical research. It aims to promote artistic and architectural projects that involve cooperation experiences with natural forces (tidal range and wind), such as those offered by sailing. As a spatial model, it will advance investigations of the precarious Venetian archipelago—emerging from the conflict between land and water, transit space of human and animal migratory movements—and inspire revisions and transformations of the knowledge bases of lagoon inhabitants. At the same time, the **Laboratorio** wants to promote scientific research approaches that combine an empirical study of the lagoon with historical reconstruction. And that, in turn, could lead to a new way of looking at historical sources. The records of the ship trumpeter Zorzi Trombetta da Modone (mid-15th century), for example, contain, among other things, a set of rules for shipbuilding, colour recipes, musical notation, prayers, poetry, rules for navigation, commercial calculations, a system of measures for predicting the tides etc. and have been exploited piecemeal by various historical disciplines. We aim, on the contrary, at an approach that asks about the interrelation of these bodies of knowledge.

LABORATORIO LAGUNA

PhD on Sail

Call for proposals

We seek doctoral projects in art, music, architecture, art and media, art history and musicology. Eligible are projects in the humanities and projects pursued as arts-based research. The latter are invited in cooperation with the Linz University of Arts.

<https://www.kunstuni-linz.at/Newsdetail.6932+M53b5edfbb91.0.html>

We expect:

- The willingness to open up your practice in the making („sharing“)
- The desire to contribute to your field and to enter a negotiation with your respective peers („challenging“)

We offer:

- 4 years PhD curriculum of low residency
- You will be involved in **Laboratorio Laguna**, a yearly, three-week workshop in Venice in the **Bohemian Pavilion** (obligatory attendance; no further courses) including navigational trips into the lagoon
- Personal supervision by a professor at the University of the Arts Berlin
- International PhD network connecting 12 PhD candidates from Berlin, Helsinki, Linz, and Zurich
- A substantial contribution to the costs for tuition and the three weeks in **Laboratorio Laguna** by the universities (including housing, excluding food)
- There is no further financing associated with the admission

The following documents must be submitted for the application:

- Portfolio of your (artistic) practice
- Detailed curriculum vitae
- Letter of motivation (2-3 pages)
- Proof of a Master's degree or graduation as „Absolvent“/“Absolventin“

LABORATORIO LAGUNA

PhD on Sail

Call for proposals

Candidates are welcome who have a basic knowledge of boat handling, especially sailing.

Application deadline: April 9, 2023

- Mail to: Prof. Dr. Ariane Jeßulat ajessulat@aol.com or Prof. Dr. Stefan Neuner s.neuner@udk-berlin.de
- Dates of the interview: April 21, 2023 (via video link)
- First Laboratorio Laguna: 14/08/2023–01/09/2023

Further information:

Laboratorio Laguna is a project of *Biennale Urbana, U5* and Florian Dombois. It is carried out in cooperation with the partner universities Uniarts Helsinki, Universität der Künste Berlin, Kunstuniversität Linz and the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste.

Selection committee:

Andrea Curtoni (BUrb), Florian Dombois, Giulia Mazzorin (BUrb), Berit Seidel (U5), Karin Harrasser (Kunstuniversität Linz), Sabine Pollak (Kunstuniversität Linz), Ariane Jeßulat und Stefan Neuner (Universität der Künste Berlin) and delegates from Uniarts Helsinki.

Contact

Prof. Dr. Ariane Jeßulat
Universität der Künste Berlin
Fasanenstraße 1B, Raum 312
10623 Berlin
ajessulat@aol.com

Prof. Dr. Stefan Neuner
Universität der Künste Berlin
Hardenbergstraße 33, Raum 104c,
10623 Berlin
s.neuner@udk-berlin.de