

Soil Sight Specific



Seeing soil: tools
and visual practices
for a new imaginary



A workshop affiliated with:

spore
SCUOLA di CAMPAGNA

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DATES

ON-SITE: from Monday 26/10/2026 to Friday 30/10/2026
ONLINE: follow-up 11/11/2026

THEMES

Soil Sight Specific is a transdisciplinary workshop on soil, viewed as a limited and living resource, conceived and developed during the European Year of Soil in 2026. Soil, a realm consigned to invisibility and obscurity, is an element we are accustomed to treating as an inert substrate, at most a foundation for human endeavors. It is, however, the precondition for any living world: a complex, multi-species network in which small animals, microorganisms, root systems, fungi, and mycorrhizae interact in a continuous and collaborative exchange. The topic will be explored through perspectives and contributions from various academic disciplines, which today are increasingly urgently examining the relationship between humans, the environment, and the land: from microbiology to landscape philosophy, from anthropology to sociology, and on to agronomy. It is precisely through a transdisciplinary approach that it becomes possible to convey to students the complexity of these issues and, at the same time, the urgency of a collective commitment to soil conservation, including—and above all—through the languages of art and design.

Soil is visible under a microscope, but its vitality, richness, and chemical composition can also be captured through the photographic impression of Pfeiffer's circular chromatograms (PCC), used as an analytical tool by those practicing regenerative agriculture. This training course aims to provide students with an in-depth exploration of this habitat, which is fundamental to life and essential to the survival of planet Earth. The goal is to teach students how to observe and recognize soil diversity through microscopic analysis and the creation of Pfeiffer's circular chromatograms. These are two distinct techniques that both allow for an analysis of the organic and inorganic composition of soils, as well as their state of balance and imbalance. Techniques that can also be used to process images and produce photographic prints by using the imaging properties of organic and inorganic materials.

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TRAINING PROGRAM

The proposed training program is based on a transdisciplinary methodological approach. The workshop will offer participants an immersive and active learning experience focused on the theme of soil and the processes related to its regeneration. The workshop will be conducted entirely in English to facilitate the full participation of international students and create a working environment consistent with the Erasmus dimension of the project.

The faculty involved in the workshop is affiliated with **Spore – Scuola di Campagna** (an organization that explores the intersection of agricultural practices, cultural research, and educational processes) and consists of professionals and researchers from various disciplines, active in both research and practice related to the topics covered by the training program:

Giorgia Liberati — a microbiologist and environmental engineer specializing in soil regeneration and the production of microbial inoculants, as well as a lecturer and consultant for organizations and companies engaged in regeneration initiatives. She is the founder of the Radici Connesse project, through which she develops participatory action research with farmers. She operates a bio-complete composting facility and produces equipment for making compost tea at the Fermenti Sociali brewery, located on the Cà Battisini organic farm in the Bolognese Apennines.

Pietro Autorino — a researcher and practitioner in agroecology — is conducting a PhD in environmental sociology at the Scuola Normale Superiore, focusing on participatory and transdisciplinary approaches. He is currently on a research fellowship at the University of Santa Cruz (California) to study experimental composting practices and conceptions of soil in contemporary agroecology.

Valeria Bochi — an anthropologist and farmer with extensive experience working in countries of the Global South, she currently collaborates with NGOs and research centers at the national and international levels.

Ilaria Bussoni — philosopher and professor of Aesthetics at the Accademia Ligustica di Belle Arti in Genoa, she focuses on environmental and landscape issues, writing for the online magazine OperaViva and having edited the *habitus* series (DeriveApprodi publisher) on the environment, gardens, and landscape. She has curated exhibitions at the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rome, including *Sensibile comune. Le opere vive* (2017), *Looking forward. Olivetti* (2018), and *ilmondoinfine: vivere tra le rovine* (2018–2019).

STRUCTURE

The training program consists of 5 days of in-person training and 1 session of blended learning. The in-person sessions will all take place at the Academy of Fine Arts in Macerata and include field trips to locations within walking distance. A field training visit is planned at the La Distesa farm in Cupramontana, where the group will conduct part of the training in the field and collect soil samples that will later be used in the workshop activities.

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Participants will be invited to engage with the complexity and diversity of soils, selecting samples to analyze and use as material for the reworking of their personal artistic projects. Soil thus becomes an opportunity for an investigation that is both scientific and aesthetic. The diversity of soils—from urban to agricultural, from residual spaces to cultivated lands—will thus be reflected through the diversity of the proposed artistic reinterpretations. At the end of the training program, the students' work may be featured in a small exhibition and presented to the school community and the city, in collaboration with Spore – Scuola di Campagna, which will help promote the event.

REQUIREMENTS

Participants are expected to meet the following requirements:

- **Language:** the ability to follow and participate in activities conducted in English.
- **Subject-related:** an interest in interdisciplinary approaches and a passion for sustainability-related topics.
- **Interpersonal/practical:** willingness to participate in fieldwork (soil sampling, visits outside the Academy).

PROGRAMME

The following programme may be subject to adjustments or improvements:

Day 1: Macerata — Academy/City

- Presentation of the program and general introduction to the topic (Bochi - Bussoni);
- Visit to the Macerata Civic Museum of Natural History and a free, exploratory walk to recognize soil as an element of the landscape; reconnaissance for collecting soil samples for the analysis laboratory.

Day 2: Macerata - Academy

- The history and morphology of soil (Liberati) + Soil sampling techniques and possible applications for the laboratory component: microscopic analysis and Pfeiffer chromatography—operation, interpretation, and production (Liberati).

Day 3: Macerata - Accademia

- Soil as a relational space (Autorino).

Day 4: Cupramontana

- Visit to the regenerative farm La Distesa, outdoor lesson with sample collection and circle time (Bochi).

Day 5: Macerata - Academy

- Reflection activities and work with images (Romano).

The Blended Learning activity will take place 15 days after the in-person training and will serve as a follow-up and an opportunity to share and reflect on what was learned and exchange perspectives on the work carried out.

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**DESCRIPTION OF THE VIRTUAL
COMPONENT**

We propose to incorporate a blended learning session into the on-site course, featuring an expert from the international soil research and experimentation community affiliated with the research center at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), where Spore instructor Pietro Autorino is currently conducting international research and teaching. The Department of History of Consciousness (HistCon) at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) was founded in the 1970s as one of the first interdisciplinary graduate programs in the U.S., integrating studies in science, technology, feminism, ecology, and human-animal relations, with a particular focus on critical and posthumanist theories. Donna Haraway taught there beginning in 1980, profoundly influencing the department with works such as *A Cyborg Manifesto* and research on multispecies studies, biopolitics, and environmental cultures. Today she is professor emerita, but the department continues to promote transdisciplinary approaches to ethics, nature, and politics.

The meeting will last a total of three hours and will support the learning and research journey offered to participants. It will, in fact, facilitate a deeper exploration of what is currently the most significant international landscape of study, research, and activism regarding the topic of soil. A true “soil community” that, through an interdisciplinary and transnational approach, is developing research and practices focused on care and regeneration, fostering a fruitful and collaborative dialogue with the visual arts community and fine arts academies.

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