



PICCOLO TEATRO DI MILANO

PICCOLO

## Earth/Soil/Land...: with the Feet (and the Hands) on the Ground

28 - 31 October 2024 | Milano, Italy

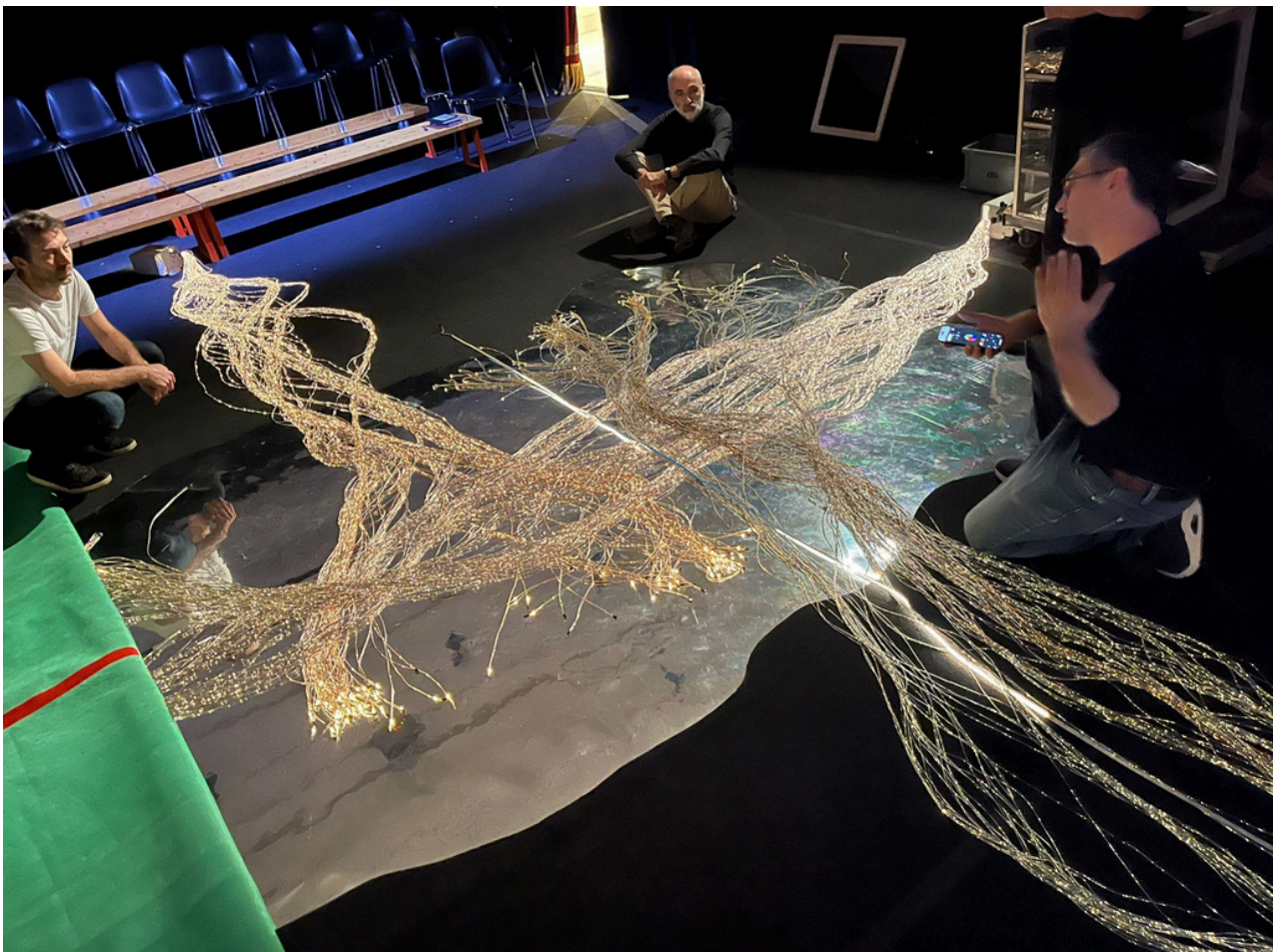
### WORKSHOP CONTENT

*This year's workshop (n. 3) was organized with the specific purpose of providing theoretical and practical tools to be used in the creation of a show designed to convey to a child audience the knowledge that has been developed in the work and workshops of previous years (Workshop n.1, 2022 and Workshop n. 2, 2023).*





The show, entitled *Viaggio fantastico nel sottosuolo* (Fantastic Journey into the Underground), was part of the project “*Il teatro tiene banco*”, a series of shows for young audiences, scheduled in the season of the Piccolo Teatro di Milano. Our target, in particular, was identified in the age group 7 - 11 years, corresponding to the last courses of the primary school cycle. The show was staged at the Scatola Magica of the Teatro Strehler in November - December 2024, for a total of twelve performances. The themes revolved around the soil and its most significant characteristics, already identified in the workshops of previous years: its richness, its biodiversity, its intelligence, its predisposition to act as a space of interconnections; but also its fragility, due to excessive land consumption and the difficulty of turn free surfaces to de-anthropize. The primary objective was to convey the idea that soil is something alive, endowed with its own complexity and protagonist of an ecosystem whose importance has an inextricable impact on the life of the planet. It was necessary first of all to break with the anthropocentric mentality according to which the earth would be “at the disposal” of human beings; therefore, one of the most famous operette morali by Giacomo Leopardi, the *Dialogo di un folletto e di uno gnomo* (Dialogue of a Goblin and a Gnome), was chosen as the starting point for our text. The work served as a framework to bring a series of significant situations before children: a librarian mole who teaches how to “read” the soil through non-human languages; a nematode that tells of an invisible underground world, full of life; a mushroom that illustrates the functioning of the connections between trees and hyphae, evidence of a different intelligence than the human one.



*Part of the workshop was therefore aimed at collecting and organizing the scientific information to be transmitted within these scenes. To this aim, a dialogue was established with Professor Paolo Pileri of the Politecnico di Milano, who became a real scientific consultant for dramaturgy: in a series of live and online meetings, we discussed several times the text, its contents and the forms of exposition, the words to use and the concepts to underline. In addition to the one just mentioned, we were able to count on other forms of specific consultancy: a meeting with Professor Francesca Neonato of the Politecnico di Milano allowed us to outline the issues regarding the rhizosphere and the behaviour of funguses; while a meeting with Dr. Angelica Mosconi allowed us to more precisely orient the contents regarding the seismic activity of the earth. Furthermore, Dr. Mosconi allowed us to get in touch with the Department of Earth Sciences "Ardito Desio" of the Università degli Studi di Milano, where she collaborates, which provided us with a series of fossils to use in the show, as illustrative teaching material.*

*This meeting method, which mixes information gathering and the provision of scenic elements to be used in the show, was replicated in two other cases, which constituted an important part of the workshop. The association Re-plant allowed us to collect a certain quantity of seeds of various types and some examples of trunk sections, to show to the public during the show; furthermore, it provided us with the quantity of humus necessary to reconstruct a section of soil in the venue, the true protagonist of our show.*

*Furthermore, we then worked with Serra&Fonseca to create a series of fragrances to be smelled as well in the venue, always with the idea of leading the audience to have perceptive experiences different from the visual one, thus contributing to de-structuring the anthropocentric approach even in the very form of reception of the show.*

*Finally, an eminently practical part of the workshop consisted in the deal and work with the technical laboratories of the Piccolo Teatro; in particular, the light designer Manuel Frenda allowed us to identify in optical fibres the most suitable tool to replicate the activity of fungal hyphae on stage.*

The show was therefore presented as an educational and playful device, suitable for conveying the scientific content that emerged during the three workshops (2022, 2023, 2024), characterized by a participatory dimension that stimulated the reception of the themes by the public. Of fundamental importance was in fact the idea that the soil and the earth can be saved only thanks to the exercise of principles such as solidarity and cooperation, in a relational exchange that replicates, from many points of view, the functioning of the soil - surface ecosystem. The same solidarity and cooperation that were the basis of our meetings, and that constituted their essence; making the workshop an ecosystem representative of a collaborative and sustainable way of doing theatre today.

Davide Carnevali

## MAPPING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN A CREATIVE WORKSHOP

*The aim of the workshop is to respond to the sustainability challenges outlined in the 2030 Agenda by addressing and integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at every stage of the process. From the very beginning of the activities, we chose to make the SDGs the guiding thread of our conversations, recognizing their cross-cutting importance.*

*During the first workshop (Workshop n. 1 December 2022), by addressing the topic of soil from different perspectives, we came to understand the complexity of its connections to environmental, social, and economic aspects. Through real-time mapping of the implications of the topics discussed in relation to the SDGs, the central role of soil emerged clearly. Its conservation is fundamental to achieving many of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Soil, in fact, is the essential foundation for the survival of the biosphere and, consequently, for life itself.*

*In the second year (Workshop n. 2 December 2023), the focus shifted to transferring the collected content into devices and scenic elements for the creation of an original performance dedicated to elementary schools. Even in this phase, the themes and objectives of sustainability guided the discussions, contributing to the narrative structuring of the performance. From a multitude of SDGs addressed, we concentrated on the following key ones:*

- **SDG 15** – Life on Land: Soil is life; a treasure chest of biodiversity and valuable substances that supports life and facilitates communication between species.
- **SDG 4** – Quality Education: Raising awareness of the crucial role of soil through educational tools like theater, involving both adults and children.
- **SDG 16** – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: Theater, rooted in the local territory, becomes a tool for collaboration with civil society and institutions to address environmental and ecological challenges by creating evocative imagery.
- **SDG 17** – Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthening the relationship with non-human elements, such as soil, recognizing them as key players in decision-making processes and sustainable transformation.
- **SDG 13** – Climate Action: Soil, as an ally in combating climate change, requires greater public awareness to halt its degradation—an area where theater can play a central role.

*In the third and final year of the workshop (n. 3), the integration of the SDGs was refined during the final creative phase. Alongside the sustainability content, new characters created by Davide Carnevali were introduced—true ambassadors of key messages: biodiversity conservation (SDG 15), climate change mitigation (SDG 13), and the creation of eco-systemic alliances (SDG 17). These non-human characters invite us to rethink our relationship with nature, emphasizing the need for new alliances to preserve life on the planet.*

*The development and dissemination of knowledge and environmental awareness, particularly regarding the role of soil, were achieved through a memorable multisensory experience (SDG 4). In this context, theater reaffirms its central role as a social actor capable of processing and conveying urgent sustainability messages to a wide audience (SDG 16), confirming itself as a powerful tool for change.*

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE ARTISTS:**

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### **DAVIDE CARNEVALI: WORKSHOP COORDINATOR**

(Milan, 1981) is a playwright, director and theatre scholar. He is currently Artist in residence at Piccolo Teatro di Milano and tutor for the program “Authors under 40” of the Biennale di Venezia Teatro College.

He obtained a Ph.D. in Theatre Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, after a semester at the Freie Universität Berlin. From 2013 to 2020 he was a member of the Dramaturgy Committee of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya; from 2018 to 2021 he was Artist in residence at ERT Emilia Romagna National Theatre. In the period 2020/21 he was invited artist and tutor of the École des maîtres.

He teaches Theatre Theory and Playwriting at the Theatre Academy Paolo Grassi in Milan and Institut del Teatre de Barcelona and in different universities, theatres and international institutions. He’s member of the editorial board of the theatre magazines “Pausa” and “Estudis Escènics” (Barcelona), and he writes for different international journals, mainly about German and Ibero-american theatre. He’s also editor and translates from Catalan, French and Spanish.

He wrote, among others: *Variazioni sul modello di Kraepelin* (Prize Theatertreffen Stückemarkt 2009, Premio Marisa Fabbri 2009, Prix de les Journées des auteurs de Lyon 2012); *Sweet Home Europa* (Schauspielhaus Bochum, 2012); *Ritratto di donna araba che guarda il mare* (Premio Riccione per il Teatro 2013); *Actes obscens en espai públic* (Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, 2017); *Menelao* (ERT, 2018); *Goodbye Europa. Lost Words* (Teatrul National Craiova, 2019). He wrote and staged, among others: *Maleducazione transiberiana* (Teatro Franco Parenti, 2018); *Ein Porträt des Künstlers als Toter* (Staatsoper Unter den Linden, 2018); *Suini* (Teatro Sannazaro, 2019); *Lorca sogna Shakespeare in una notte di mezza estate* (ERT, 2019), *Ritratto dell’artista da morto* (Italia ’41 – Argentina ’78) (Piccolo Teatro di Milano, 2023). In recent years he has also been involved in creating plays specifically for young audience, staging about ten shows at ERT and, currently, at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan.

In 2018 he received the Prize “Hystrio for dramaturgy” for his artistic activity.

His plays have been presented in various international seasons and festivals and have been translated into a dozen languages.

Editions of his plays are published by Einaudi in Italy, by Actes Sud in French, by Arola in Spain; by Bicho do Mato and Livrinhos de teatro in Portugal, among others. He also published the essay *Forma dramática y representación del mundo en el teatro europeo contemporáneo* (Ciudad de México, Paso de Gato, 2017) and the collection of short stories *Il diavolo innamorato* (Roma, Fandango, 2019).

In recent years his interest has turned towards rebuilding the relationship between theatre and society and reimagining the role of the spectator. For the project Classroom Play (ERT), Davide created a series of small format shows, written to be staged by professional actors in middle- and high-schools; for the project PON Metro - *Così sarà la città che vogliamo* (ERT), he has curated the dramaturgy of theatrical events that involved the community of Bologna and integrated themselves into the urban fabric of the city, paying particular attention to the question of public spaces, ecological urbanism and environmental sustainability.

He is also one of the artists involved in Creative Europe's project UNLOCK THE CITY!, which comprehends 7 european partners and to which Piccolo is project leader, and will be writing and directing Limited Edition, 9th-11th May 2024.

## **BIOGRAPHY OF THE SCIENTIST:**

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**Scientists collaboration coordinated by Prof. EUGENIO MORELLO, Associate Professor in Urban Planning at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy. His research interest lies in the interaction between urban design and sustainable development, environmental quality, and adaptation to climate change. Since 2017 he has been appointed the Rector's Delegate for environmental sustainability.**

### **PAOLO PILERI**

Full professor of urban and ecological planning at Politecnico di Milano where he teaches both at the School of Architecture and the School of Environmental Engineering. His research focuses on deep ecology and sustainability on three axes: i. Soil in urban planning and zero land consumption (see book: *L'intelligenza del suolo* - Altreconomia, 2022). ii. Design the Slowness by the way of long tourist walking and cycling routes to regenerate and enhance territories (see VENTO project - [www.cicloviavento.it](http://www.cicloviavento.it); TWIN project - [www.twin.polimi.it/](http://www.twin.polimi.it/) and the last book *Progettare la Lentezza* - People, 2020). iii. Qualifying urban public spaces in front of schools (see [www.habitatscuola.polimi.it/](http://www.habitatscuola.polimi.it/) and the book *Piazze Scolastiche/School Squares* - Corraini, 2022). Author of more than 400 publications, columnist for the magazine *Altreconomia* ([altreconomia.it/author/paolo-pileri/](http://altreconomia.it/author/paolo-pileri/)), past advisor for the Italian Ministry of infrastructures and mobility.



### **FRANCESCA NEONATO**

Agronomist and Landscape Designer/ [www.pnstudio.net](http://www.pnstudio.net)

Founding partner of PN Studio PROGETTO NATURA conducts environmental consultancy and landscape design, also in an international context, in particular parks, green facilities, ecological networks, regenerative agriculture and landscape restoration. She has developed a high experience in Healing gardens design. AIAPP (Italian Association of Landscape Architecture) member, she is

### **ANGELICA MOSCONI**

Angelica Mosconi is a geologist with an academic background in Earth sciences and science communication. She earned her degree at the University of Pavia and completed a PhD in geochemistry at the University of Milan, focusing on the early orogenetic phases of the Adamello batholith in the Alps.

During her university studies, she attended acting courses, conceived, and hosted a radio program at Radio Statale, through which she developed a passion for communication and audio storytelling. Later, she pursued a master's degree in science communication and journalism at Sapienza University of Rome, where she had the opportunity to undertake an internship at Rai Radio Scienza. She is currently a research fellow at the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Milan, where she focuses on geoscience communication.

### **FEDERICO SANTARELLI AND RE-PLANT**

Re-plant is an association that aims to promote the culture of recycling and greenery. Re-plant rescues unsold plants from nurseries and garden centres, used and discarded plants from showrooms and photo shoots, recycles plants to be replaced on balconies or in gardens. Wherever there is a plant that cannot be taken care of there is Re-plant. The plants are then donated to members in exchange for a free offer. The project was set up by professionals and enthusiasts in the sector, in order to create a network of people who are committed to caring for the environment, using recycled plants and green-related materials. The passion for plants and the network of professionals in the sector allows the association to reuse materials and revitalise plants that would be destined for disposal. Become a member of Re-plant and help create a greener, more sustainable world!

[www.replant-milano.org](http://www.replant-milano.org).

### **SERRA & FONSECA: STORYTELLING WITH PERFUMES:**

Serra&Fonseca produces its own brand of pure essential oils (from directly cultivated organic aromatic plants) and a limited series of perfumes for the person and the environment. From concept to creation and development, it realises tailor-made projects to tell stories of places, people and values.

Creating fragrances for an alternative narrative, through the emotional and expressive power of the sense of smell.

## UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) LINKED TO THE WORKSHOP

