

FEDERICA BUONSANTE, PhD

Cultural Project Designer | Public Art Researcher | Creative Wellbeing Facilitator

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PROFILE

Multidisciplinary researcher, cultural project designer, and creative wellbeing facilitator with a decade of work across public art, education, institutional cultural production, and mindfulness practice. Holds a PhD in Fine Arts (Public Art & Placemaking) and has founded and directed nonprofit cultural initiatives, coordinated major international art productions including the Venice Art Biennale, authored peer-reviewed publications and a book, and delivered workshops, keynotes and public talks across Italy, China, Switzerland, Brazil, and India. Fluent in Italian, English and Mandarin Chinese, with working Spanish and Portuguese.

EDUCATION

PhD in Fine Arts — Dept. of Public Art & Placemaking, Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts, Shanghai University (2016–2019)

Thesis: “Practice and Aesthetics of Public Art: Contemporary Universalities and Cultural Specificities across China and Italy.” Class A Doctoral Scholarship (SGS, Shanghai Government).

MA in Contemporary Chinese Culture & Business (NFQ Level 9) — University College Cork, Ireland (2015–2016)

Thesis: Shanghai Fugetsusha Art Gallery — social media strategies in the contemporary Chinese art market.

BA in Foreign Languages & Literatures (Chinese & English) — G. D'Annunzio University, Chieti-Pescara, Italy (2011–2014)

Thesis: Towards a Transcultural Aesthetic: The Almighty Theater of Gao Xingjian.

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING

- Yoga Teacher Training — RYT 500h (Yoga Alliance, US), Kashish Yoga, Goa, India; Restorative Yoga (YACEP) and Ayurveda Specialist Certification, Yoga & Ayurveda Center (practitioner since 2020)
- Advanced Chinese Language & Culture Diploma, Shanghai University (2017)
- Theatre Arts Training (1200h), ITACA Academy / Teatro dei Borgia (2009–2011)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Director

Rong Place ETS — Puglia, Italy

2021 – present

- Founded and registered a nonprofit initiative with the RUNTS (Italian National Register of the Third Sector) in 2021, winner of the PIN grant (Regione Puglia) with European Social Fund co-financing.
- Designed and led 50+ documented creative and mindfulness practices with 500+ participants across Italy, Switzerland, Brazil and China.
- Continues to serve as the platform for artistic research, residencies and grant-funded cultural projects.

Founder — Studio Rong

Creative Wellbeing Education — Italy

2026 – present

- Launched Studio Rong to bring a decade of research and field practice into structured, repeatable creative wellbeing programs for schools and organizations.
- Builds and manages institutional partnerships across Italy and Switzerland.

Project & Programme Designer

The Guardians of Life APS — Fasano, Italy

Dec 2024 – May 2025

- Designed wellness-centered programs integrating yoga, ecology and ceremony on a reclaimed quarry site.
- Coordinated facilitators, artists and healing practitioners for immersive retreats and community events.
- Developed internal communication systems and a social media storytelling strategy.

Site Officer & Cultural Mediator

Venice Art Biennale — Malta Pavilion, Arsenale

Apr – Nov 2024

- Facilitated artist Matthew Attard's exhibition alongside the curatorial team.
- Managed multilingual guest interaction and coordinated a team of interns.

Production Coordinator

National Gallery of Canada — Canada Pavilion, 60th Venice Art Biennale

Jan – Mar 2024

- Coordinated and supervised the production team for Kapwani Kiwanga's “Trinket” installation.
- Recruited personnel, built a production team, and assigned tasks and responsibilities.
- Developed execution plans against time and resource constraints; delivered weekly/daily status reports.

Learning Designer and Writer

Private Commission — Valencia, Spain

Dec 2023 – Mar 2024

- Researched and developed 40 learning activities for children's psychomotor bilingualism, integrating Montessori and Waldorf principles.
- Authored an educator's guide manual with practical methodologies and activities.

Teacher and Activity Leader

Alpadia Language Schools (Kaplan International) — Engelberg, Switzerland

Jul – Aug 2022

- Delivered culturally-adapted lesson plans; organized Creative Arts and Yoga activities for young people; led nature excursions.

Youth Culture Councillor (Assessore alla Cultura Giovanile e Città Internazionale)

Municipality of Corato, Italy

Oct 2021 – Oct 2022

- Launched public calls for arts and culture; mediated between universities, research institutes and youth organizations.
- Coordinated “RESTARE,” winner of the national ANCI call, in partnership with Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
- Created “Natale Sospeso,” a public cultural program broadcast during the pandemic.
- Secured regional urban-regeneration funding to reactivate underused public spaces (“Luoghi Comuni” call).

Art Researcher and Writer

Public Art China Magazine — Shanghai, China

Jul 2016 – Jan 2020

- Authored articles on contemporary public art's intersection with social, political and economic issues in China and Italy.
- Managed public relations and international partnerships; conducted field research and translation of expert interviews.

Teacher and Activity Leader

DD Dragon / Montessori Peace Education — Shanghai, China

Oct 2017 – Jul 2019

- Facilitated language-learning pathways integrating Montessori methodology with Chinese cultural context.
- Contributed to the publication of the experimental method “Quattro Arti: il potere creativo della lingua straniera.”

Research Fellow & Lecturer

Institute for Public Art — Shanghai, China

2016 – 2020

- Conducted comparative international public art research; presented findings at global conferences.
- Authored the case study “Perception” (eL Seed); awarded the Excellence Prize, International Award for Public Art (IAPA) 2019.

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Board Member & Creative Designer — Casa Radici, Ostuni, Italy: co-founder and board member of a collective cultural and territorial association (art, nature, community, wellbeing); contributed to brand identity, storytelling and program planning. (2026)

Art Researcher (freelance) — LAP – Laboratorio di Arte Pubblica, Potenza, Italy: art-based research on participatory practice for site-specific international art projects. (May 2022 – ongoing)

Facilitator & Event Designer — Sensistan Museum, Goa, India: contributed to the launch of an immersive art-tech residency and museum opening as part of a community-based initiative. (Nov 2019)

PUBLICATIONS

- “Quattro Arti: il potere creativo della lingua straniera.” Book. July 2023. ISBN 979-8891211834
- “5 Artists Interviews: Kim Engelen.” June 2020. ISBN 979-8653735950
- “Public Art as Social Form: The Quality of Community Engagement in ‘Perception.’” Public Art China, N1/2020, ISSN 1674-7038
- “Public Art to Fill the Human Gap: How Perception Came into Being. Interview with eL Seed.” Public Art China, pp. 40–44, N1/2020
- “Compressed Identities in Traditional Beijing.” Babel Magazine, Issue 2, 2019, ISSN 2590-2067
- “Art Park: Art Influenced by Living in China. Intimate Gatherings.” Curated by Kim Engelen. 2019. ISBN 978-90-809866-8-8
- “Social Functions and Modes of Intervention of Public Art in Contemporary China: A Case Study of Beijing Dashilan Project.” Public Art China, n.3/2018
- “Absent Matter, Metaphysical Ruins and Genius Loci: Interview with Edoardo Tresoldi.” Public Art China, n.4/2018

SELECTED WORKSHOPS, TALKS & PUBLIC SPEAKING

- Sumus Women Summit — “The Power of Water,” Panel Speaker, Venice, Nov 2023
- The Fourth International Award for Public Art (IAPA) — Keynote Speaker & Case Study Researcher, Shanghai, Nov 2019

- Ecstatic Dance Venice — Sound Healer & Movement Facilitator, Venice, 2023–2024
- Nuvala Fest — Breath & Sound Workshop, Alta Murgia National Park, Puglia, Aug 2023
- Relational Painting — Art & Expression Workshop, Espaço Vagalume, Florianópolis, Brazil, Oct 2022
- Natale Sospeso — Cultural Programme Press Conference, Corato, Dec 2020
- “Gift to Heart” — Dimension Local Art Festival (DLAF), Chongqing, China, Oct 2018
- Moganshan, Zhejiang, China — International Public Art Research Forum (2017); Public Art Festival, Stage Designer & Program Facilitator (Aug 2018)

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Excellence Prize, Case Study “Perception” (eL Seed) — International Award for Public Art, Shanghai, 2019
- PIN – Pugliesi Innovativi grant, European Social Fund, 2021
- Class A Doctoral Scholarship, Shanghai Government (SGS), 2016–2019

LANGUAGES

Italian (Native) | English (Advanced) | Mandarin Chinese (Advanced) | Spanish (Intermediate) | Portuguese (Intermediate)

SKILLS

- Program and project design, grant writing and management
- Cross-cultural facilitation and multilingual communication
- Public speaking, keynote delivery, workshop facilitation
- Editorial and academic research and writing
- Team leadership and coordination in high-profile international productions
- Canva, CapCut, and applied AI tools