



Scuola affiliata a:

Scuola universitaria professionale
della Svizzera italiana

SUPSI

Master of Arts in Theatre

Physical Theatre

Teatro di figura – material, object and puppet theatre

Applied Theatre Practice

Study Guide

Established within the framework of the **Master Campus Theatre Switzerland**, the Master of Arts in Theatre at the Accademia Teatro Dimitri (ATD) degree programme is a joint venture with three other universities offering theatre degrees in Switzerland, Hochschule der Künste Bern (HKB), La Manufacture Lausanne, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHDK).

The **Master of Arts in Theatre** is a space for concentrated theatrical creation and artistic experimentation in the stimulating, intimate environment of a small academy located in an arena of mountains in Southern Switzerland. Central to the MA programme of the ATD is the focus on the human body – in the theatre, but also in the dialogue between the theatre and the other arts, as well as in society. The body forms the basis on which artistic and social practices are developed. Each new class of students comprises a wide range of cultural backgrounds and theatrical interests. The MA degree programme emphasizes the importance of the peer group in order to learn and to respect different viewpoints and to broaden one's own views. Due to the student cultural and artistic diversity that characterizes the school, the Master of Arts in Theatre at the ATD becomes a place for nurturing and preparing globally aware, socially engaged and theatrically versatile artists in the theatres of the future.

Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Theatre at the ATD can opt for one of three specializations:

In the specialization **Physical Theatre**, the actress or actor is at the center of theatrical creativity. The creative actor or "cre-attore/cre-attrice" combines the functions of author, director and performer. The programme introduces students to individual and collective forms of theatrical creation that place the actor's body at the center of the dramaturgical process. In their practical work students learn on the one hand to find a distinct theatrical form as subject-matter of their master project while developing their own theatrical idiom. The theory seminars, on the other hand, provide a platform for investigating and debating the historical and contemporary aesthetics of the performing arts, encouraging the students to define their own artistic position.

Teatro di figura is devoted to a form of theatre that employs material, objects, and puppets in addition to or instead of live performers. In view of its aim to produce movement and emotion from "dead" matter, it could be termed theatre of animation. Substituting the human actor with an inanimate object does not contradict the original meaning of "théatron" as the spectators' "place to watch from"; what we watch in the Teatro di figura contours humanity in its universality and infinite plasticity.

While primarily focused on exploring practices of puppet theatre in the broadest sense, the purpose of the course is to emphasize the Teatro di figura's importance in the history of theatre as the fourth established theatre form, the others being: dramatic theatre, music theatre, and dance theatre. The programme is not only designed to maintain a genre that is older than the theatre with live actors itself, but to use it as an artistic laboratory to experiment with the basic elements that determine our idea of what theatre is – and could be.

In the **Applied Theatre Practice** specialization students investigate the use of theatre as a tool for effecting changes in the behaviour of a particular group of people or in social practices at large. Put simply, the intention of Applied Theatre Practice is to ask how theatrical techniques developed for the stage can be employed beneficially outside the theatre – be it in education, social work, the health system, urban development, non-artistic institutions and corporations.

The reconfiguration of the theatre from an art form to an instrument for introducing a new perspective on a given social practice always pursues a specific purpose: to have a positive transformative effect on groups of “social actors/performers” outside the theatre. Students learn how to approach social problems theatrically and develop social commitment as emerging artists.

Degree: Master of Arts in Theatre (MA)

Duration: 4 semesters, starting on 26 September 2022 (beginning of the autumn semester 2022/23)

Workload: 90 ECTS credits

Language of instruction: English

Location: Accademia Dimitri, Stradòn 28, 6653 Verscio (CH)

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Groups of modules

Four module groups

In the first and second semester of the course the three tracks of the Master of Arts in Theatre are taught jointly. Beginning with the third semester, unique teaching contents and projects are dedicated to each of the three specializations: Physical Theatre, Teatro di figura and Applied Theatre Practice.

The whole programme develops and reinforces specific competences within four specified module groups.

First module group: Artistic competence and theatrical abilities

This first group of modules is designed to broaden and deepen the artistic and theatrical education of the students. The instruction and practice of various performance techniques is in tune with the ATD's principle of exposing and training the physicality of the performer. Dramaturgy and theatrical composition are the specific focus in the progression, always offering students the possibility of applying the acquired knowledge and testing their ideas on stage in front of an audience.

Second module group: Theoretical knowledge and analytical skills

The courses taught in this group of modules aim at improving the ability to critically discuss and analyse performances. Theory classes comprise both historical and contemporary concepts of the theatre. These are considered in comparison with the other arts and against the background of social and technical developments.

A range of different course types, individual tutoring, and prominent guest lecturers enable students to acquire broad knowledge of theatre forms past and present.

In doing so students become acquainted with methods of artistic research and performance analysis. They learn to switch from the artistic freedom given to them as performers to the critical position of spectators.

Third module group: Campus and external courses

The ATD's partnership with the HKB, La Manufacture Lausanne, and the ZHDK provides access to a wide range of additional external courses, both practical and theoretical. Depending on their personal artistic interests and aims, students have the possibility to individualize the curriculum by integrating learning experience and creative collaboration with students from the other theatre schools in the Master Campus Theatre Switzerland.

Fourth module group: Professionalization of theatrical practice

Physical Theatre and Teatro di figura

The second year of the Master of Arts in Theatre programme is an opportunity to apply the newly acquired techniques and skills in dramaturgy, narration and composition. Working in small groups the students of the specializations in Physical Theatre and Teatro di figura will create joint projects and present them for the public.

In view of their individual MA production students develop creative methods to transform the material and ideas accumulated in the artistic research into a theatrical performance. The performance is presented to the public and evaluated by a jury.

The theoretical parts of the MA create the framework for the performance. At the beginning of the creation process, students are asked to present their related artistic research. After the performance the students critically reflect on their creative process. The reflection may be presented in different forms, be it a written essay, a lecture performance, or a newly developed format, in which the student traces the project from the initial idea to the finished performance.

Applied Theatre Practice

Students specializing in Applied Theatre Practice present a concept that explains how they intend to apply theatrical practice to a non-theatrical environment involving professional and/or unprofessional performers. The students demonstrate the application of their concept and discuss its social merits in a final theoretical-practical Lecture Performance open to the public. Like all the other participants of the MA programme, students specializing in Applied Theatre Practice are also expected to submit a critical account of their artistic research.

The fourth group of modules also includes a course in project management. The emerging theatre artists are instructed in legal and ethical matters regarding public performances, introduced to marketing, and learn how to present their theatre project professionally in the form of a production dossier.

Types of courses

Physical Theatre, Teatro di figura, Applied Theatre Practice

Theme week: Collective exploration of a special theme over the course of a week for all MA theatre students in Switzerland (Master Campus Theatre Switzerland).

A second theme week takes place at the ATD for all its BA and MA students.

Forum: Interdisciplinary theoretical and creative exchange with experts from other artistic disciplines, namely architecture & design, "still image", "moving image", and contemporary art as well as cultural history.

Open to MA theatre students in Switzerland (Master Campus Theatre CH).

Training: Bodywork, voice work, animation lab, artistic practice.

Art lab: Short for artistic laboratory to investigate practical questions of stage work and experimentation with different modes of artistic expression.

Partly open to MA theatre students in Switzerland (Master Campus Theatre CH).

Seminar: Historical-theoretical investigation of a specific topic followed by group discussion.

Workshop: A theoretical and practical examination of a theatrical concept or theatre-related topic under the guidance of a professional expert.

Open to MA theatre students in Switzerland (Master Campus Theatre CH).

Module plans for the Master of Arts in Theatre

Master of Arts in Theater	MODULE PLAN				
Specialization: Physical Theater					
	credits 1°sem	credits 2°sem	credits 3° sem	credits 4° sem	TOTAL
Module Group 1 - Artistic competence and theatrical abilities	18	19	6		43
Training	1	1	1		
Art lab	10	16	5		
Workshop	7	2			
Module group 2 - Theoretical knowledge and analytical skills	6	5	1	5	17
Forum	2	2			
Seminar	4	3	1		
Reflection on the creative process				5	
Module group 3 - Campus and external courses	3	1	2		6
Theme week	3				
External courses		1	2		
Module Group 4 - Professionalization of theatrical practice		2	10	12	24
Project management		2			
Devised group project			6		
Master production			1	8	
Presentation			3	4	
Total	27	27	19	17	90

Master of Arts in Theater		MODULE PLAN			
Specialization: Teatro di Figura					
	credits 1°sem	credits 2°sem	credits 3° sem	credits 4° sem	TOTAL
Module Group 1 - Artistic competence and theatrical abilities	18	19	6		43
Training	1	1	1		
Art lab	10	16	5		
Workshop	7	2			
Module group 2 - Theoretical knowledge and analytical skills	6	5	1	5	17
Forum	2	2			
Seminar	4	3	1		
Reflection on the creative process				5	
Module group 3 - Campus and external courses	3	1	2		6
Theme week	3				
External courses		1	2		
Module Group 4 - Professionalization of theatrical practice		2	10	12	24
Project management		2			
Devised group project			6		
Master production			1	8	
Presentation			3	4	
Total	27	27	19	17	90

Master of Arts in Theater		MODULE PLAN				
Specialization: Applied Theatre Practice						
	credits 1°sem	credits 2°sem	credits 3° sem	credits 4° sem	TOTAL	
Module Group 1 - Artistic competence and theatrical abilities	18	19	2		39	
Training	1	1				
Art lab	10	16				
Workshop	7	2	2			
Module group 2 - Theoretical knowledge and analytical skills	6	5		5	16	
Forum	2	2				
Seminar	4	3				
Reflection on the creative process				5		
Module group 3 - Campus and external courses	3	1	2		6	
Theme week	3					
External courses		1	2			
Module Group 4 - Professionalization of theatrical practice		2	15	12	29	
Project management		2				
Internship			10			
Master production			3	8		
Presentation			2	4		
Total	27	27	19	17	90	

Four-semester curriculum

Physical Theatre, Teatro di figura, Applied Theatre Practice

	weeks of the year																
First semester	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51		2	3	4
Theme week	x												x				
Forum		x															
Training			.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.			.	.	.
Art lab					x	x	x	x	x	x						x	x
Seminar						x	x			x		x			x		
Workshop			x	x							x	x			x		

	weeks of the year																			
Second semester	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Forum	x																			
Training		.	.	.	.	.	.					.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Art lab				x	x	x							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Seminar												x								x
Workshop		x	x	x	x	x	x													
Project management																				x

Physical Theatre & Teatro di figura

weeks of the year

Third semester	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51			2	3	4
Training	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.			.	.	.
Art lab	x	x	x															
Seminar			x															
Devised group project				x	x	x		x	x	x								
Master production												x	x			x	x	
Presentation							x				x							x

weeks of the year

Fourth semester	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Master production	x	x		x	x	x													
Final reflection													x	x	x	x	x	x	
Presentation			x				x			x	x	x							x

Applied Theatre Practice

weeks of the year

Third semester	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51			2	3	4
Workshop			x															
Internship				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
Master concept												x				x	x	x
Presentation	x											x						

weeks of the year

Fourth semester	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Master concept	x	x	x	x	x	x													
Final reflection													x	x	x	x	x	x	
Presentation							x			x	x	x							x

Assessing student progress and final qualification

During the MA programme the student's level of achievement is monitored by members of staff as well as guest teachers and artists.

The level of achievement in the specializations Physical Theatre and Teatro di figura is determined by three factors:

- 1) Gain in artistic as well as critical-analytical competence;
- 2) Acquirement of specific abilities and skills;
- 3) Artistic progress in devising the final stage production.

For the specialization Applied Theater Practice, the criteria of assessment are slightly different:

- 1) The definition and organization of the specific theatrical practice to be applied in a non-theatrical social context;
- 2) The artistic research in preparing the theatrical elements for a specific use;
- 3) Progress in developing the concept towards feasibility and practical application;
- 4) Preparing the project for the final presentation in a lecture performance.

The final practical and theoretical tasks that conclude the MA programme – a **staged performance** for Physical Theatre and Teatro di figura, a **Lecture performance** for Applied Theatre Practice, as well as the **critical reflection** of the creative process– are judged by a specially appointed board of experts to assess the quality of the work and determine whether the student has reached the professional qualification.