

# CULTURE AND TERRITORIES: LESSONS FROM THREE DECADES OF INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE

**MAY  
12  
2026**

Venice School of Management  
Campus San Giobbe

Volpato Room  
15.00 - 16.30



**Lia Ghilardi**

Director of Noema, a UK-based organization working internationally to deliver place mapping and strategic cultural planning projects.

After more than thirty years of international work across cities and regions, Lia Ghilardi reflects critically on the evolution of urban cultural policies and their progressive institutionalisation.

In her talk she examines how culture-led urban development has come to be shaped by instrumental logics, where culture is mobilised to serve predefined economic or political goals alongside the widespread circulation of “best practices” and replicable models.

Drawing on examples from her work, Ghilardi challenges this tendency towards easy standardisation and policy transfer, arguing instead for a more

situated approach: working with rather than over communities; recognising culture as dynamic, plural, and at times contradictory; and embracing uncertainty as intrinsic to the process.

Here culture is reclaimed not merely as an instrument of development, but as a vital force that enables human growth and social innovation in the first place