AMBRA BERGAMASCO

Academic Curriculum Vitae | October 2026
Ad Astra PhD Researcher | School of Geography, University College Dublin
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RESEARCH PROFILE

Italian and Finnish researcher in health and wellbeing geography whose academic ambition is grounded in three decades of work across migration, community health, education and the arts. She is committed to building a career as a professor, advancing original interdisciplinary research and educating future scholars through intellectually rigorous, socially engaged teaching. Her doctoral research at University College Dublin examines migrant healthcare access, embodiment and infrastructures of care, bringing ethnography and oral histories into dialogue with clinical dance therapy.

Her contribution combines sustained practitioner experience with academic research, undergraduate teaching, international cultural leadership and research community building. Working in migration since the 1990s and in socio-educational and health settings since 1995, she brings a deep understanding of how policy is experienced through bodies, relationships and everyday encounters with care. Her professional career as a dancer, artistic director, dramaturg and playwright informs her conceptual approach to wellbeing and embodiment, alongside expertise in non-Western understandings of body, mind, senses and healing.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

2023–present | PhD in Geography, University College Dublin, Ireland

Ad Astra Research Scholarship; School of Geography, College of Social Sciences and Law. Supervisor: Assistant Professor Geoff Boyce. Thesis by papers, in progress. Working title: “Embodied borders: understanding migrant healthcare from volunteer doctors and clinical dance therapy advocacy in Turin, Piedmont, Italy.”

2021–2024 | Postgraduate professional qualification in Clinical Dance Therapy

Lyceum Academy, Milan, Italy. Completed 2024.

2008–2011 | Level 9 training and Certificate in Teaching and Learning

NIRSA, National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM). Training in critical thinking, research methodology, qualitative methods and methodologies, urban development, creative urban regeneration, urban regeneration and academic writing; Certificate in Teaching and Learning with Professor Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain

2007–2008 | Postgraduate qualification in Cultural Anthropology

Maynooth University, Ireland.

2004–2007 | BA, Double Honours in Anthropology and French

Maynooth University, Ireland.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH

2023–present | Ad Astra PhD Researcher, University College Dublin

Research across Camminare Insieme migrant medicine clinic and migrant reception settings in Turin and Piedmont.

- Investigates migrant healthcare access, voluntary medical practice, institutional environments and embodied wellbeing through ethnography, oral histories, interviews and reflexive research.
- Undertook fieldwork during June 2024–June 2025; integrates clinical movement practice through phenomenological, non-interpretative observation within an ethically approved research framework.
- Develops therapeutic body-landscapes, healthing infrastructures and the generative body as conceptual contributions to health, cultural and critical geography.
- Works with clinical and community partners on participant engagement, consent, confidentiality and the relationship between research and care.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Accepted for publication

2026 | Bergamasco, A. “S-place/S-placing.” Cultural Geographies, Concepts Entries. Accepted for publication; final bibliographic details forthcoming.

Under peer review

2026 | Bergamasco, A. “Embodied Doors: Tracing Care, Memory, and Abolition through Time.” Health & Place. Under peer review.

Essays under editorial review

2026 | Bergamasco, A. “Doors Held Open.” Essay submitted for the Hektoen International essay prize; under editorial review.

2026 | Bergamasco, A. “To Hold a Vanished Glacier: Residual Presence.” Critical essay on Cecilia Vicuña’s work, submitted to IAAC; under review.

Book Chapter Abstract submission for consideration – under review

2026| Bergamasco, A. Embodied Care and Spatial Permission in Asylum Reception

Chapter proposal for ‘The Spatial Life of Trauma: Public Space, Memory and Future-Making’ collection ed volume

Published book reviews

2011 | Bergamasco, A. G. (2011). Planning cultures in Europe: Decoding cultural phenomena in urban and regional planning [Book review]. European Planning Studies, 19(5), 917–919. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2011.561045

2012 | Bergamasco, A. (2012). Cohesion, coherence, cooperation: European spatial planning coming of age? [Book review]. Urban Research & Practice, 5, 291–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2012.691629

Published Chapter

2015 | Co-edited chapter: “The H.E.P.P.Y Project: Esperienza di un percorso europeo.” In L. Garrino (Ed.), Strumenti per una medicina del nostro tempo: Medicina narrativa, Metodologia Pedagogia dei Genitori e International Classification of Functioning (ICF). Firenze University Press.

Book and public research communication

2022 | Bergamasco and Fichera (2022). Notazione. L’Erudita, Perrone ed. What happens beyond the Wound? Embodiment through Butoh dance and Poetry: a collaborative process of notation from experiential experimentation of body text dance poems.

2026 | University College Dublin, College of Social Sciences and Law (2026). “When the body speaks: Clinical dance therapy, migrant wellbeing and engaged research.” Research case study featuring

doctoral work.
https://www.ucd.ie/socscilaw/research/casestudies2026/researchfeatures2026/whenthebodyspeaksclinicaldancetherapymigrantwellbeingandengagedresearch/

2026 | “Camminare Insieme.” Contribution featured in United Nations Volunteers (UNV), 2026 State of the World’s Volunteerism Report: Volunteerism and its Measurements, Box 5.2, “Measuring the impact of volunteer doctors on refugee and migrant healthcare.”

2026 Selected manuscripts in preparation

“Therapeutic Body-Landscapes: From Emergency to Emergence”, clinical dance therapy and migrant reception space.
“Performative Dysmorphia” understanding wellbeing through somatic geographies, embodied practices in Academia.

“S/placing: Qr Codes and Bodies in Migrant Hosting Facilities” Research on QR-code registration in Italian migrant hosting reception settings and the translation of clinical movement practice into qualitative health data.

From Clinical Movement to Qualitative Knowledge: A Methodological Framework for Clinical Dance Therapy in migration research and studies

SCHOLARSHIPS, AWARDS AND RESEARCH FUNDING (selected most recent)

2026 | Qualitative Research Specialty Group award, American Association of Geographers

2026 | Migration Beyond Emergency symposium funding

Co-organised project supported by UCD Humanities Institute (€3,000) and School of Geography (€1,500).

2025 | ENRGHI conference research funding

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), Geographies of Health and Wellbeing Research Group; support for co-creating and hosting the conference and developing the “Blue Bodies” call for papers.

2025 | Erasmus+ Mobility Award — Tunis, Tunisia. Completed mobility under the guidance of Professor Mary Gallagher.

2025 | School of Geography Seed Funding Award, University College Dublin

2023 | Ad Astra PhD Research Scholarship, University College Dublin

2015 | Create, Ireland: Artist in the Community Scheme Research Award. Awarded funding for socially engaged artistic research on activism, migration and urban aesthetics.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2025 | Invited workshop facilitator, ARiSE project - delivered a one-day Health and Arts workshop on dance therapy for migrant women for the Participatory Health Research Unit (PHRU), School of Medicine, University of Limerick, Ireland, WHO Collaborating Centre.

2024 | Guest, Mastering Change podcast: The Trauma, Mental Health & Wellbeing Project, Masters Events Oxford.
https://open.spotify.com/show/6LyJRhKxzMmlHumle6soMr

2010 | Contributed to the development and writing of a policy Green Paper in Ireland.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2010–2016 | Undergraduate Geography Tutor

Department of Geography, Maynooth University, Ireland. Tutored first- and second-year undergraduate students in Geography.

ACADEMIC SERVICE AND RESEARCH NETWORKS

2023–2026 | Postgraduate Representative

Geographies of Health and Wellbeing Research Group, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

2026–present | Co-organiser, ENRGHI lunchtime seminar series

Connects postgraduate and early-career researchers in health and wellbeing geography through international online research discussion.

September 2025 - May 2026 | Principal Investigator and Co-organiser and, Migration Beyond Emergency, UCD

Two-day interdisciplinary symposium, co-led with PhD Researcher Tasneem Filaih; 52 presenters and approximately 60 attendees, with hybrid participation. Responsibilities included conceptual design, programme development, funding and participant coordination.

October 2025 | Co-creator and Host, ENRGHI Conference, Bristol

Co-created and hosted the postgraduate and early-career conference as Postgraduate Research Representative. Designed the theoretical and conceptual "Blue Bodies" call for papers. Supported by research funding from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), Geographies of Health and Wellbeing Research Group.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2026: "Deprived Health: the Collaborative Pursuit of Health Capability in Contexts of Socioeconomic Deprivation", taking place on 20 November 2026 at University College Dublin.

2026: College of Social Sciences and Law, UCD: engaged research, School of Geography session.

2026: Transitional Migration Humanities Network UCD: Research Paper presentation

2026: School of Geography Postgraduate Conference, UCD Ireland
2025: Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).
2024: School of Geography Postgraduate Conference, UCD Ireland
2011 and 2009 - American Association of Geographers.
2023, 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2009 - Irish Geography Conference.

RESEARCH GRANT SHORTLISTING

2025 | Wenner-Gren Foundation, Engaged Research Grant — shortlisted; received positive feedback on the proposal.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) | MEDACT, UK

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE METHODS

Ethnography; participant observation; oral histories and qualitative interviews; reflexive and embodied methodologies; participant recruitment and engagement; qualitative data organisation; research ethics; clinical dance therapy and group facilitation; programme and partnership coordination. Cross-cultural expertise in embodiment, health, healing and wellbeing, supporting culturally responsive engagement.

LANGUAGES

Italian: native | English: bilingual, academic and professional proficiency
French: B1 | Spanish: A2

MIGRANT HEALTH, COMMUNITY CARE AND PRACTITIONER EXPERIENCE

May 2026–present | Co-Coordinator, Mother–Child Hub

Camminare Insieme, Polo Materno Infantile, Turin, Italy; part-time.

- Coordinates activities supporting prenatal and postnatal care for migrant women and families in a multidisciplinary community healthcare setting.

- Facilitates clinical dance therapy groups; supports planning, participant engagement, triage and reporting, with attention to cultural and linguistic access.

2023–present | Migrant healthcare research, triage support and movement practice

Camminare Insieme and collaborative community/reception settings, Turin and Piedmont.

- Supports patient interaction and access to care; works with healthcare professionals and engages participants in qualitative research.
- Delivers Clinical Dance Therapy Sessions with Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Migrant women groups, mother-child groups (particularly North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa and India), and disability in migrant context.

SELECTED CULTURAL AND SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE

Shortlisted for Artistic Director, EU 2030 cultural programme, Leuven, provinces and Brussels, Belgium, candidacy not pursued further.

2015–2021 | Artistic Director, Teatro Espace C.S.D., Turin

Led artistic programming and international partnerships; managed approximately 20 staff and collaborators, budgets, and relationships with cultural institutions, embassies and European project partners.

2014–2020 | Founder, Director and Curator, Moving Bodies Festival, Dublin and Turin

Founded and directed an international platform for Butoh dance research and performance, supported by the Embassy of Japan in Ireland and the Consulate of Japan in Milan. Curated programming and coordinated artists, venues and international collaborations.

2002–2004 | Artistic collaboration, Darpana Performing Arts, Ahmedabad, India

Collaborated with. Dr.Mallika Sarabhai's company on cross-cultural performing arts projects addressing gender violence and social issues.