

I attended Cortona without knowing what to expect and I was simply overwhelmed by it. In Cortona I experienced a very special atmosphere which was marked by an incredible familiarity right from the beginning. Cortona felt to me like a "save space" which enabled me to try out new things, to challenge myself, to get involved in numerous interesting discussions, to open my mind and to discover previously unknown talents. It is fair to say that Cortona 2016 was live changing for me, on a personal but also academic level.

In the field of biomedical engineering, it is very important to be able of critical thinking. Several aspects such as ethics or dual use research of concern (life sciences research misapplied to threaten public health or national security) are central points, which shouldn't be underestimated. It is important to discuss and talk about such transdisciplinary topics to promote good conduct and to educate scientific community.

In the Bachelor I took courses such as "Datenmanipulation, Betrug und Fälschung in den Wissenschaften", "Magnetransonanz-Tomographie (MRT): Transdisziplinäre Erkenntnisfragen" and Medienproduktion, Mediennutzung und Medienwirkung, which all helped to widen my horizon and start to see the transdisciplinary connections.

The international experience at the Cardiff University in the last semester of my Bachelor's degree gave me additional insights into a new culture and how to adapt and integrate into a foreign country. Additionally I have seen the program of last year and I would really like to gain new experiences in different fields. The participation at those seven full days course will help to enter the topics even better and deeper to profit from this experience the most. Especially in a region such as Tuscany, which is famous for its culture and traditions.

To me, Cortona is a week of encounters with inspiring personalities and perspectives. I experienced Cortona as a wonderful place for reflections, visions and ideas. The dynamic of transdisciplinary exchange, simultaneously opening up spaces for maturing thoughts and the confrontation with novel concepts, inspired me in particular. For these reasons, I would love to be given the opportunity to be part of this year's Cortona Week.

Throughout my academic education, which I will be concluding in September 2017, I experienced transdisciplinary exchanges and intercultural encounters as the most valuable gift for my personal development. Some of the most inspiring ventures on my academic path were working for a year in a steel factory in Brazil, living and experiencing both the Jewish and Arab culture during a semester abroad in Israel, as well as diving into the Japanese teaching and communication culture during a summer school in Tokyo.

Recently, I am working on my master's project at the MIT in Cambridge, USA. Being here I am intensely confronted with the challenges of moving concepts and ideas – between disciplines, social cosmes and my own ideologies. My project evolves around the question about how to design products at the edge of technological opportunities, social needs and environmental sustainability. In my perspective, the answer partly lies in shifting from the concept of sustainable product engineering, to a much more holistic design of sustainable socioeconomic systems. At the same time, I am experiencing the life within the highly privileged, intercultural sphere of academia – strongly contrasting with the reality of tremendously diverging political perceptions in the US. This fact frequently confronts me with the question of how to move, or rather shape, concepts of communication and opinion formation within communities – and especially across social spheres.

These experiences necessarily impose questions on my very own actions and ideologies. How can I employ my values, engineering skills and passion for humanities to contribute to a responsible dialogue about technological and sociopolitical concepts? I am convinced, that the Cortona Week and the discussion about "Concepts on the Move" would represent a great opportunity for transdisciplinary exchange and mutual inspiration.

My last Cortona experience has not completely ended yet. With some others from that year, we started a "Science Brunch" with the aim to replicate the Cortona spirit every few weeks, having people from engineering/natural sciences and art/social sciences presenting their point of view on a specific topic. As I am finishing my studies with a master thesis at Yale in the U.S. of A, my participation there has been set on hold. However, I have just met a dear friend from the 2015 Cortona week at the MIT in Boston, where I visited a group for another scientific collaboration. Hence, my motivation is on one hand to again be part and contribute to a group of interesting personalities and on the other hand exchange minds on an interesting topic through-out disciplines.

In my mind's eye this year's topic spontaneously provokes the image of a long-distance truck rushing through a desolate landscape – isolated from, untouched by and ignorant to its surroundings: Concepts, however, are always conglomerates of ideas and never only vehicles that come and leave without a trace. Ideas change and transform – within and without. They move only in relation to other ideas. They are flexible structures, trial and error assumptions, perhaps meandering and ephemeral, perhaps powerful and stubborn, but hopefully never motionless. Because when they are that, they can neither evolve, nor be vivid and contemporary in quality. Hence, when ideas end up motionless they have, most probably, become dogmas and – in concert with other stagnant ideas – support dogmatic notions on the how and the why something is as it is. A concept in motion is an understanding in motion. And any understanding is highly dependent on a certain time and place as well as on certain privileges and entitlements. The creative mingling of diverse understandings set in motion, which Cortona Week enables to a matchless degree, can only ever lead to more and, consequently, better understanding. For if I wish to challenge and broaden my view of things there's no more effective way of doing than that to let it be moved by concepts that differ from mine, while the goal needn't be to abandon all own preconceptions but rather to test and enhance them in a fruitful friction with those of others. A hunger to share, reflect and reconsider my knowledge as well as my ignorance is what draws me, once again, to Cortona – this bootcamp training in thought fitness, this rare opportunity of in-depth exchange among wide open minds.

I am attracted by the unique and fascinating program, which combines theoretical lectures with practical experience. I believe this could be a valuable opportunity to promote critical thinking and personal growth due to the stimulating and interdisciplinary nature of the program.

As a physics student and teaching assistant for a GESS-seminar on Philosophy in Physics, I often see how physical concepts shape whole scientific fields and scientific education, for example modern quantum mechanics that has changed the view on physical theories for many young physicists.

I would like to know more about how these and other concepts influence other parts of our society, like politics and art and how on the other hand, society and art can influence concepts in different scientific fields. As I mainly deal with physical concepts, it would be interesting for me to get to know other types on concepts, their evolution over time and how they relate to the physical concepts I am familiar with.

I believe Cortona Week is the perfect environment to learn and discuss this topic on a deeper level, including the many different viewpoints from the international participants with a variety of study backgrounds. I mainly work and discuss with other physicists or philosophers, which is why the group of interdisciplinary participants is very important to me. The physics degree does not have room for much interdisciplinary and exploratory work, so I would like to have this opportunity to enhance my study life.

I did not attend a Cortona Week yet, but I have taken part in various other programs of the ETH Critical Thinking Initiative, like Student Innovedum or different Science in Perspective courses. As a former board member of the student union at ETH (VSETH) I was able to participate in a lot of team projects and take part in different workshops on conflict management and leadership. From exchanges in Canada and Australia during highschool and my Bachelor degree, I know that I really enjoy studying in an international group and getting to know people from all around the world.

A friend of mine recommended the Cortona week to me. He explained that it was rejoicing meeting people in an environment completely different to an university.

Meeting new people with many different backgrounds and ideas brings me great pleasure.

Having traveled all around the world (4 years in USA, Mexico + Central America, South East Asia, all around Europe) I know how it is to meet new people, immerse myself in a different culture and language (I went to Spanish school for several months in Panama).

As you can notice, I am always "on the move" discovering new places and countries. I would love to be able to ad these places Cortona as well.

My goals in Cortona is to challenge my thinking and mindset of "pure scientist" by meeting new people, especially people that think and see aspects of life completely different than I do.

I am a Master student in Material Science at ETH Zurich. It's a fascinating study area with a lot of interesting aspects in Innovation and technologies. But ETH is very focused on the technical side, obviously. So, when I heard about the Interdisciplinary Cortona Week, I had to apply immediately. I'm missing the more artistic, humanistic and maybe also spiritual side at ETH in my studies. I am very interested in the more holistic world view and not just from a scientific viewpoint. During a study break in my bachelors I went traveling and discovered meditation (I did a 10 days Vipassana retreat) and other more spiritual and primitive lifestyles where you live in higher harmony with nature. It might sound like a contradiction when you consider what I'm studying at ETH and how ETH is directed, but I'm convinced the scientific research can use a bit of spirituality and art in its field. I want to look beyond my own nose and try to use some of the techniques in my professional life.

From what I read on the Cortona website, the aim of the week is to bring together the artists and the scientists and build a bridge between the two. I would love to learn more about that and I'm thrilled that ETH offers such an opportunity. Therefore, I want to take this chance and learn more about how I can integrate more art and spirituality into my life.

Please find my contribution to the Legacy from Cortona. It's not very long, but it's all my true feeling and memories about Cortona. I'm so sad and shocked that the Cortona Week will not continue after this time. I was even planning to propose a workshop next time. Cortona Week came to me by chance. Driven by curiosity, I stepped on the train without knowing anybody or anything to expect. What happened in the following week has completely blown my mind.

Listing to the great wisdoms in the morning, discussing with various minds, expressing opinion freely, participating in creative workshops, enjoying fabulous Toscana gourmet and view, etc. All of these had me overwhelmed with excitement.

I've experienced lots of first times in Cortona: first time discussing philosophical questions at 7 in the morning; first time listening to lectures about acting; first time interviewing a speaker and introducing him to over 100 people; first time becoming friends with artists; first time playing drum; first time dancing lindy hop; first time seeing a beautiful red moon. The list goes on and on. Drumming and lindy hop are two of the great legacy from Cortona that I'm still keep doing now.

I learned in Cortona not only to look at things from different perspectives, but also to keep an open-mind to different opinions. I also realized that science, work and "cold" logic are not everything in life. Art, leisure and spiritual are also important aspects that make the life more colorful. A Chinese word "Ti Hu Guan Ding" (enlightened) would best describing my feelings after the Cortona week. It derives from a Buddhism story, meaning to instill great wisdom and to bring thorough consciousness and awareness.

Another thing I appreciated in Cortona is the format. Living together in the Monastery created a closed and safe environment encouraging the sparkle minds to fly. I felt more comfortable expressing myself there than before. In that week, it felt like living in a book. When I looked around the sunny yard, I saw the ancient Greek Academy surround me. On the last in the train back, I felt like being in the Hogwarts Express back to Muggle world and waking up from a dream.

I really appreciate participating Cortona week. It brought me great changes in life as well as many great friendships. The news it will come to an end is a shock to me. I was planning to propose a workshop about science behind gastronomy and health for the next time that is not existing anymore now. I would like to share my memory of Cortona with the others. It's one the best experience in my life.

Great event held at a great place. Many people from different walks of life. Allows one to get out of the bubble and reflect about the world in general which is very important for today's scientists for their knowledge tends to be confined within the limits of their specific work.

I first heard about Cortona Week from friends who attended in previous years, and came back excited about the people they met, the new experiences, and inspiring environment. This motivated me to consider the summer school as an enrichment of my own PhD studies. I have always been interested in a wide range of topics, from natural sciences to history, politics, and philosophy. These interests, combined with aspirations to make a change for the better in the world, eventually this led me to study environmental science. After a BSc in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and an internship at an international NGO, I decided to study abroad at ETH, where I also stayed to do a PhD. During the course of my studies, I have met many people from diverse cultures, which I value greatly. Nonetheless, I feel that we are sometimes caught up in our own academic "bubbles" of people with similar backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, I like the idea of exchanging with students from across other disciplines, and challenging our understanding of the concepts we take for granted. This would also be useful in my PhD, where I often need to use conceptual frameworks (e.g. ecosystem services) and sometimes face challenges due to differences in the way people understand them. Furthermore, I look forward to trying out new activities such as meditation and Tai Ji, and learning more about the history of the region.

The experience of the "Cortona Week Workshop" was a life-changing one. I learnt how to believe in my self and open to the others, self awareness and self conscience. Despite not having attended in the last years, knowing that the workshop existed and that there was always the chance to go back one day was comforting. The knowledge that future generations of students will not have the chance I had to live such a wonderful experience is extremely depressing. I do hope there is a chance for the same free atmosphere to live again at some point.

I am in the last year of my master studies and will begin to work in industry soon after the Cortona Week. I study electrical engineering but have specialized more in computer science and software development. This field is very much in flux with new ideas and technologies being developed and replaced very quickly. Therefore, the topic of concepts being on the move and of how to be open to these changes and embrace them, is not only of high interest but also of high importance to me.

Another strong motivator is the interdisciplinarity of the project. During my studies at ETH I have been mostly been in contact with people of similar specializations and interests. On one hand, this allowed thorough discussions about these topics. On the other hand, it has often limited these discussions to some few topics of our specialization, which I have always seen as a great loss. Consequently, I would enjoy it immensely to talk about other interesting topics which are not directly related to my field of study. To have these talks with people from completely different backgrounds would make it even better.

I have never been to a foreign university. However, I have spent the summer of 2016 as a volunteer for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. It was a great experience because it allowed me to meet people from different cultures from all over the world and hear their views and opinions which were often very different from my own.

Cortona was one of the very few occasions, ETH allowed us to learn social and manual skills and try to apply them in a transdisciplinary environment. Working together with people from various backgrounds, it was a unique experience getting to know how other individuals think and act which is absolutely necessary for achieving a more social and sustainable way of living, from an environmental perspective.

I am intrigued by the idea of the Cortona Week to foster other competences than just technical knowledge. This is very different from the "usual" vibe of the ETH which seems to not value other competences outside each individual study. I have always been very broadly interested and believe it is essential to combine natural sciences with other domains like psychology and intercultural knowledge. I grew up experiencing both the US and Swiss culture and though they might seem quite similar, there are differences. I believe growing up being exposed to different cultures has helped me to be a more open-minded person and realize that we can learn from all cultures. I spent an exchange semester in Holland in Utrecht and there experienced not only Dutch culture but also the richness of being in a group of students from all around the world. I would enjoy that very much in the Cortona Week as well.

In between my bachelor's and master's I spent 6 months traveling around Central and South America and felt extremely enriched by all the things I got to experience and people I met. I also learned a lot about myself, about who I am and who I want to be. I also spent 5 month in Germany during an internship and enjoyed getting to know a new place while speaking the language.

I have heard very good things from people who attend the Cortona week and I would very much like to participate this year before I finish my studies. The aspects of transdisciplinarity are especially important when looking at climate change and how to solve the problems that are facing us. I would profit greatly from this experience while at the same time enjoying myself. I aspire to improve society and conserve nature while also being happy.

During my young academic career, I have immensely profited from interdisciplinarity. Starting from my undergrad studies where I came in contact with the thought styles of chemists, biologist and physicists to my PhD where I work closely with people from many different backgrounds. Being exposed to all these different approaches to problem solving, enabled me to collect bits and pieces from each field and recombine them in order to set new impulses in my own research but also to mediate the communication between people from different disciplines. I am very excited to extend these experiences to the humanities. In my scientific "bubble", I rarely have the chance for an exchange with people from the arts and I hope that we can profit from each other and reduce prejudices and misunderstandings.

"Concepts on the move" is a red-hot subject in our ever-accelerating world and sounds very interesting to me from an epistemological and societal perspective. I am looking forward to many fruitful discussions with people from diverse backgrounds.

I'm interested in attending because I'm concerned that I might be getting stuck in a cognitive rut. I do nothing but analytical work for my masters, because of how close the master's group is, I'm part of a community of people who all think the same way, and even the extracurricular things I do are very left-brain oriented. My interest in the Cortona Week is in experiencing something completely different—a way of thinking that's different to what I'm used to (and indeed I confess to finding myself somewhat skeptical of)—but also to meet a different kind of people; people with whom perhaps it is easier to find an emotional connection, as well as intellectual connection.

Unfortunately, last year I was not able to join Cortona Week, even though I would have liked to. I have always been keen to widen my horizon and expand my knowledge to other fields. This is something I also practice in my free time as an ambitious musician (bassoon and choir singing). I am also generally interested in the arts and aim to combine experiences from different areas with my works as a scientist. I have participated in various courses within the critical thinking initiative, for example a philosophy course, research ethics and a seminar on the relationship and the mutual influence between art and science. In the course of my activity in the chemistry students association's panel for university politics I also discussed various topics regarding the critical thinking initiative with other students and at that time and thus helped shape it.

Another thing that intrigues me about Cortona Week is meeting new people in a transdisciplinary environment. I have previously experienced that the most inspiring conversations arise from rounds involving people with different backgrounds, such as natural scientists, philosophers and artists. I value new inputs highly and draw motivation from them. I am also familiar with different meditation techniques and frequently practice yoga. As I understand, at Cortona Week there is also space for a spiritual component, which I find intriguing. Overall, I believe that this event could bring me further in various ways and I am hoping to gain new inputs for my personal and scientific development, and ideally to forge new friendships. For all these reasons I would highly appreciate it if I was allowed to participate.

I have been closely following the critical thinking initiative and think that Cortona Week would be a nice finishing point for my Master studies at ETH, as I hope to hand in my thesis by the end of the year.

I'm passionate about the concept of transdisciplinarity and think that an exchange with artists and other professionals is a much-needed balance to the theoretical work we do at ETH and a great opportunity for creativity. I have enjoyed working together with students from other fields at multiple occasions: during the work in the UFO Studies Union, visiting FAO in Rome during this Easter break and most impressively during the Transdisciplinary Case Study 2016, when we worked together with local students and stake holders in a small development island setting. Other universities I studied at include the University of Toronto, and the University of Tehran.

In my private life I have just begun to give more emphasize to the non-rational: emotions, dreams and quality leisure time. I would love to exchange with other young professionals on this often-overlooked theme.

I would like to be a part of Cortona week 2017, because it seems like a great way to meet people of various backgrounds, get advice that follows a different logic than what I am perhaps used to, learn how to open up and not be afraid to get involved with the unfamiliar or unconventional.

During my undergraduate studies in the US, I was a member and later the president of a highly successful student group called HBR News (Health and Biological Research News). It aimed to help its members develop research-comprehension and critical thinking skills and to promote public understanding of current scientific discoveries. Through writing summaries of primary research articles, presenting them to the group and publishing them on our website, the group proved to be an excellent way to stay immersed in cutting-edge research. More importantly though, we had to think outside the box to deliver the highly technical information from a field we were specialized in, to students of different backgrounds and even non-scientific audience. This diversity of our backgrounds propelled us to think of innovative ways to deliver our message.

I expect to find an ambience similar to HBR in Cortona, perhaps even more so, since it will bring together people that have otherwise little in common.

I am excited to expand my network, make new friends, try new things and have a fun and fulfilling experience.

During my research work and PhD study, I had the chance to experience from the inside different universities, research groups and research institutions in various countries. I started my PhD at the Vienna University of technology, had research stays at the ETH and the National University of Singapore, I am finishing my PhD and progress with my further research work at the RWTH Aachen university.

Cortona Week is among all these maybe the most significant and eye-opening experience, not for the human being or the scientist alone, but for the person who is both. For me this was the place and time, where I realised for the first time, that I am a scientist in my life and philosopher and artist in science and this is the right way to live it.

The mixture of classes in philosophy, religion, art, psychology gave the idea of the multitude of possible perspectives different from those inside the lab. And this perspective widening or perspective adding experience naturally had its impact on me as a scientist and on my research work. I am convinced that the Cortona week is still one of the most significant if not the most significant triggers for a gained freedom and dimensions of observation and courage to look for a bit longer at and try the "why not?" and "what if?". Experiences from this kind can be a game changer for a scientist. In my case, I know it was, also according to the classic standard metric in my field.

And since it is the last of the Cortona Weeks, I am hoping to be able to participate and give a little bit of it back on my turn, too.

In my early twenties I travelled much and lived in Latin America and Asia for some time. I learned about other cultures and languages, but most importantly I learned about myself. I started to question my own ideas and concepts.

While working or studying, it is hard not to be trapped in the mindset of your discipline. From professional experience, I know how concepts can simplify complex systems and once established, are seldom questioned. They facilitate understanding but they also limit it to some extent. They can be used (or abused) for communication. I believe that it will be important for my future profession—as well as my personal life—to look at concepts from different angles and to be aware of my own limitations in dealing with them.

My motivation for the Cortona week is to interact with different people from different backgrounds. I hope we will grow as a group and expand each other's sets of mind. My expectation is that the diversity of topics and speakers will open my mind to new disciplines and ideas.

I am highly motivated to contribute to a positive environment and I am curious of what I will experience.

Motivations Anticipation

Text by Students of Cortona Week 2017

Legacy Retrospective

Text by Participant of Cortona Week 1985-2007

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution." A.E. 1931 One of my favorite quotes, describing the spirit of Cortona Week precisely: Opening the mind for the unexpected, surprising matter, yet focusing on very rational and distinct questions. It was an enriching experience to take part and absorb the unique environment of curiousness, knowledge and pleasure at this beautiful place together with amazing people. Thank you for this fantastic time!

I have long heard of Cortona week since the beginning of my PhD. My colleagues told me how during this week they not only managed to fully relax, met new people but gained new ideas and perspective on their projects. I have always been interested in multidisciplinary environment and meeting people from different cultures and backgrounds. I find an encounter as Cortona week very inspiring and I'm excited to learn and try out new things that I never had the chance to in my daily life.

I was born in the US but raised in Taiwan. I came to Switzerland when I was 18, first off I just wanted to learn French, but then I ended up signing up for this program for preparing the entrance exam for Swiss Universities. After a year in Fribourg taking up this preparatory courses and passing the exams, I started University in Geneva. After my Masters, I wanted to move to a new city and I was lucky enough to be chosen as a PhD candidate in Zurich. Throughout my studies, I have experienced and met people from different background. Both Geneva and Zurich are very international cities, which I appreciate a lot.

Another thing of Cortona week that attracts me is the combination of science and art. These two fields seem different but in my opinion there are many things that are complementary yet intertwined, and people from both fields can learn a lot from each other. Although since High School I have been academically more science oriented, I have always demonstrated strong interest in art, especially in Chinese calligraphy.

I'm looking forward for a week of exposure to both scientists and artists, and hopefully it can be also be a week of self-improvement and a valuable experience.

As a computer science student and soon to be data scientist, I am interested in an event like Cortona week. My goal is to become a Data Scientist. However, I believe that transdisciplinary competences are essential. During my studies, I tried to expand my knowledge to other fields whenever it was possible, taking courses related to philosophy, history and arts.

This event provides the perfect opportunity to broaden my range of skills. Furthermore, networking and intercultural exchange is something valuable and I believe that such things are more easily done in an environment like Cortona Week. I have studied in other universities such as the Universidad de Malaga in Spain and the Universidad de Granada and I have had a positive experience. From my perspective, studying in a different environment can help break down prejudices established in a field of study and it has also helped me to understand the problems from a different perspective. Attending to conferences and having debates with people from other universities and backgrounds is something I look forward to, because it will help my skills as a student and person. Also, being able to represent Computer Science in the dialogues and provide my expertise in the matters is also something interesting.

In conclusion, I believe that Cortona Week, being far away from the university institutions, is the perfect venue for promoting transdisciplinary, nurturing intercultural cooperation and to help students to network.

This is my aspiration: I want to evade my routine of thought. I find contrasts to be both an inspirational and an enjoyable part of life. An analogy explains: Grown up with mixed ethnicity, I feel neither attached with one nor the other. The same as man can neither be artifice nor nature. This dichotomy strangely promotes an interest in what "being" implies. In this matter, explorative thinking depends on an element of turbulence. And there is the one in which we are contained, the fragile and sometimes mysterious shell which chaperones our doings, our body. Through it, we 'are' a map of thoughts in a territory of concepts, which is drawn by unrest. The spot of Cortona is marked by a deep history of human activity and may itself serve as a shell, for the short time of a week, and may expose, what has to be from the reflections of our minds. In my personal experience, I encountered people with diverse backgrounds, not merely by chance, but by a shared interest in the unfamiliar.

I enjoy the the interaction, discourse and knowledge transfer between different fields of study that Cortona Week facilitates. This breadth of interest across multiple disciplines is reflected in my past experience; I have previously studied physics (University of Chicago), linguistics (Imperial College London), biology (Imperial College London, Natural History Museum London, ETH Zurich) and environmental sciences (ETH Zurich), as well as worked in a variety of fields (NGOs/IGOs, consultancies, design and research). Moreover, I find that the physical setting and atmosphere of Cortona Week to be very conducive to trying new activities; in my previous time there, I rock-carved, drummed and sang. It was enjoyable to say the least!

There are several things I enjoy about my studies. The one thing I don't enjoy is that it's all mathematics. What I miss about high school is the wide range of topics, compared to the rather narrow field of vision now. In high school, I had Latin, which was fascinating. I had geography, which was interesting. I had French, which was bearable but it was still part of a generally broad and open meadow, on which I mentally romped. Nowadays, I struggle trying to explain to older relatives the fact that Algebraic Topology and Differential Geometry are really quite different. Of course, it's still a wide field but we're always talking about mathematics, narrow in the sense that it isn't everything else at the same time as well. I yearn for deeper discussions about broader topics, where it can't be revealed at the end that one person simply was right and the other simply wrong. Attempts to talk about spirituality or philosophy with fellow students often end in cliché mathematical jokes. The idea of Cortona Week, as I understood it reading about it rather appeals to me: new concepts, new ideas discussed and interpreted based on a wide range of media. Perhaps even a little cognitive dissonance, cultivating the idea that one might not be in possession of the one and only objective truth. In general: experiencing learning beyond academia. Opening my mind, so to speak, although that might sound rather stereotypical.

Concerning experience in other countries and universities, I must admit that I have never studied at any other university than ETHZ. However, I lived in Australia for three years.

I hadn't signed up for my Cortona take-home message. Instead, I signed for interesting talks and meeting open-minded people. Both certainly came true. But the most valuable take-home was something, I hadn't expected: Cortona had me realize that in my output oriented, rationalized life, I was slowly losing the ability to play, to enjoy my senses and my body. For the sake of brevity, let me focus on the former only.

Playing is a goal in itself. Its justification lays in the joy of the play and not some future gain. Most of the day, I do A to get B to get C and so on. But then, what's Z? What is the thing that you do for its own sake, the thing that justifies doing A, B, C, ect in the first place? While my daily life doesn't always have a lot of Z-activities, Cortona is packed with them: Painting and singing, pursuing philosophical ideas for the kicks of it, resting in the garden of the monastery or building a pyramid of people, just because it occurred to someone. In my mind, all these activities belong to the category of play. They spark creativity and emotion and allow you to relate on a deep and fundamental level with others. However, play can only occur in a space of liberty and experiment. These spaces are rare but invaluable on a personal and societal level. Cortona is one of them. The organizers have my deepest gratitude for creating it.

In 2015 I have taken a design thinking class at ETH with Allan Cabello. I have always been very interested in interdisciplinary projects. In the class I realised the enormous potential in it and enjoyed thinking beyond architecture. On my way to finish my master a goal for the future would be to work with other disciplines beside my architectural practice. Together with Ricardo Joss we have founded a small Architectural practice also working on furnitures projects and hopefully many other projects. Since 2016 I have started a collaboration with the Dancer Clélia Vuille, where we try to combine our different perceptions of space. Beside the intellectual part of architecture I have enjoyed it's practical part, in my projects I try to combine work with head and work with hands. I developed a lot on handcraft skills by working on constructions as a mason or building the Pavillon of reflections for the Manifesta Biennial in Zürich. Architecture is at the border between science and art. In cortona I hope to be able to meet and work with people from other disciplines (Scientists & Artists) this exchange of knowledge could generate fruitful ideas and projects that I can not imagine yet how their form will be.

In spring 2013 I have spent 8 month studying Architecture at CEPT in Ahmedabad India. This experience enriched my perception of my field of study. The diversity of problems and architect is confronted to has been taken to another level in this country.

Already last two years I took part at Cortona Week and really enjoyed the new perspectives on science and art, the interesting conversations among students from different disciplines and the inspiring atmosphere. The presenters and topics of the scientific program were chosen well and inspiring. I think it is a great concept, to combine scientific talks and discussions with workshops that enhance "soft skills" in a very subtle way. I learned a lot from other students, the film making and the writing workshops, group activities and the presentations.

As a student who major in science, I am always very interested in other areas and seeking the chance to think about all kinds of problems in different ways. There will be experts and scholars representing science and engineering, humanities and the arts, giving a series of transdisciplinary talks, which attracts me a lot.

The topic this year, "Concepts on the move" especially means a lot for me. As a non-English native speaker, I am not that familiar with concepts in English since I learned almost all stuff in my mother tongue (Chinese). I feel the talks will help me a lot understand the old and current meanings of those important concepts and how & why they have been changing through time.

Also, I am highly looking forward to those workshops, such as carving, drawing, performing which I have been willing to have a try for a long time but didn't have a chance before.

What's more, I regard this special week as a very good chance for me to make new friends and to study, communicate and live closely with people from other countries thus to get to know more about each others culture, especially European culture.

Actually, I didn't attend a similar activity before. So I do appreciate this chance and would like to attend it very much! I hope I could gain enlightenment from it as well as bring my own viewpoints to others.

The concept of transdisciplinarity is what Cortona Week attracts me. Transdisciplinary works are also valued a lot by ETH Zürich. Transdisciplinarity becomes a more and more important tool to handle issues in the modern world.

I finished my Bachelor in Environmental Sciences in Beijing. I also did some field surveys about environmental studies in Tibet and Inner Mongolia. Through the study, I realized that the involvement of various disciplines and the cooperation from diverse roles are necessary to face environmental problems. I also studied a minor in Chinese Language and Literature, through which I got more understanding in my own culture. I once combined the two disciplines from the aspect of environmental ethics and collective unconsciousness in some coursework.

I am curious about everything, because I believe there always exists something beautiful beneath. Thanks to my major in Ecology and Evolution, I get plenty of opportunities to explore the complex connections in nature. Recently, I am fascinated in evolutionary thoughts refined from nature, and their explanation to the human society.

I have been learning drawing and painting for several years, but lately, I become more interested in modern and contemporary arts. I like masterpieces created by rational minds, and I love science fictions with poetic sentiment. Science, modernity and art are three essential things in my life. I am still in a state of gathering ideas. Sometimes I feel I am going to explode, but I know I need to study more and think more.

I will do a voluntary work in a ceramic studio this summer. Meantime, I plan to learn graphic design, which has flooded the world. I also want to read more books about evolution and modernity. Personally, Cortona Week is a wonderful end for this summer, and communicating with people from different backgrounds could allow me to think critically about what we have done and where we will go.

As you emphasize, dialogue is the ultimate goal of Cortona Week. I feel like to participating the program and making my contribution to its diversity.

Concepts provide a guideline and thus simplify and unify our way of working. At the same time, they must be adapted to reflect the current state of knowledge. And as everything new, it is scary to change a concept that has been applied for a long time. I'm interested to discuss on how to deal with this fear of 'the new'. I'm an environmental scientist and I'm currently doing my mandatory internship at an environmental engineering company. I gained experience abroad in several projects. Firstly, I participated in field trips that took place in various parts of the world (e.g. Borneo, Russia). Secondly, I took part in a research project by eawag, the water research institute, in which I was able to go to Tanzania and help looking at water quality and water use in rural households. Lastly, I gained most of my experience abroad from travelling countries such as Nepal or Cambodia.

My motivation to attend the Cortona Week one more time is manifold. I'm looking forward to the atmosphere of the place, the interesting people, the engaged dialogue and the tasty food. I enjoy being surrounded by people from various backgrounds again, as I miss this at the company that I work in right now. This year, I would like to participate more actively, for instance by introducing a lecturer. This would help me grow from last years' experience.

I had the opportunity to attend the Cortona Week which was an incredible experience. I arrived back home very thoughtfully, but meanwhile happy and excited — with a lot of new ideas.

For me, there are four reasons, which makes the Cortona Week so precious: First, in my opinion the Cortona Week provides a perfect frame to meet and exchange with people who might think differently than I do. In the last year's Cortona Week, I met a great number of new people and had many profound, interesting and very inspiring discussions. During these discussions, my opinions often got challenged. This allowed me to see beyond my own's nose, to broaden my horizon and to reflect on my way of seeing things. In daily life, I do not often mingle with people who have a completely different way of seeing the world. The Cortona Week brings people from very different backgrounds at one table. Exchanging with these people is enriching and increases my acceptance and understanding for other people's opinions.

Second, meeting all these new people can be seen as a valuable way of networking. New ideas, projects and working opportunities might result from some of these contacts. For example, in the last year's Cortona Week, I got to know a person who provided me with very valuable ideas for my Master Thesis project and who gave me good advices for future applications. Meanwhile I could provide my ideas and advices to other people.

Third, the Cortona Week allows actively exploring new things. I'm very curious and eager to do things I've never done before. It helps me to explore myself. The Cortona Week, with its rich offer of workshops provides a perfect opportunity for that. I did not have the chance to try out all of the morning activities last year. Furthermore, there have been many interesting afternoon-workshops I would have liked to attend. I would love to catch up on that in this year's Cortona Week.

Finally, the Cortona Week provides a perfect opportunity to acquire new knowledge. The talks have been very informative and inspiring. It is amazing, and I think unique compared to other summer schools, that most of the lecturers stay in Cortona for the whole week. To have the chance to talk to all these fascinating personalities face to face is a huge privilege.

In summary, for me, the Cortona Week is an exceptional and very enriching summer school. It touches all of my elements; my body, my soul and my mind.

"It is important to make experiences abroad" — This is a sentence that I heard so often in my life. Led by these voices I went two months to south of France and later on for another stay to San Francisco. Both times I came back enriched, without analyzing further the real value of what I gained in this time. For me it is now clear that every experience you make widens up your horizon. There is very often no good or bad way, but insights into different cultures and situations empowers solutions that might fit best for a situation. Or in other words: One can only reflect about things that you have felt, seen or heard by yourself. This is why, in my opinion, a concept cannot be universal. A concept is a cloud shaped by human individuals, and evolves constantly within time, whereas it depends a lot from the point of view where people are applying it. Stress is a good example for that. Everyone has experienced it, and on a biological level we talk the same language. However, on a social level we need to compare between fear of life and fear of an exam. Back to biology, both are triggered by simple survival. This is why we can use now the concept "stress" as a base where people meet to pursue a certain goal, to form an opinion with many perspectives, but in a language that everyone understands. Having a broad view on a concept helps me in science to contribute as useful as possible for the "common goal". I would love to use this week to broaden up my horizon with opinions from people with diverse backgrounds, hopefully giving me total new perspectives that change the way I think about concepts, and especially its applications. I apply for the Cortona week because with my experiences as a pragmatic normal worker, ending up seven months at the well-known university Caitech, I certainly can give valuable inputs outside-the-box for fruitful discussions.

I've enjoyed to converse and work together with someone from different fields than mine. That was the one of reasons I chose studying biomedical engineering since it is an interdisciplinary research that is realized through the teamwork of biologists and engineers, even though it is still close enough to say they have same background. I had more apparent interdisciplinary experience when I used to play drum in the band during my bachelor in Korea. There was a small performance that we had to make together with musicians who majored arts, not like us who studied science and technology. Working together with them was an valuable experience and could see that the synergy of collaboration based on diverse backgrounds. That's why I'm looking forward to attend Cortona. Especially the topic of this year is appealing to me since we are living in the world rapidly changing. Therefore, it would be very interesting to think and discuss about the movement of concepts from different point of views.

Besides it will be also personal improvement in terms of look into myself and understand more about. I grew up in Korea and in Asian countries people often consider that being polite means do not express your feeling plainly and behave based on what others think about you over than what you actually feel. Under this circumstance, it is hard to listen you own voices. Through this Cortona week, I'm looking forward to interact with my body, creativity and emotions. In addition, I'm for sure it will beneficially affect to my perspective on daily lives and work. I'm looking forward to delve into my own thinking and share with others through this Cortona week.

After completing my PhD in Italian Linguistics at University of Zurich I decided to broaden my field of knowledge and to take a new challenge, attending a second Master's degree at ETH in History and Philosophy of knowledge. I've embraced interdisciplinary research with a lot of enthusiasm and I'm trying to enjoy all the opportunities that ETH offers me in this sense – as the activities of the Critical Thinking Initiative, of Collegium Helveticum and ... Cortona Week. I'm especially interested in historical epistemology and history of ideas, so the topic of the Cortona Week 2017 seemed just perfect for me. How do concepts move in time (creativity as hereditary "genius" in 19th century, creativity as a learnable technique in the '60) and in space (how does a culture borrow a concept and transform it?), in our brain (through imaginary, generalization, abstraction) and in artifacts – texts, buildings, paintings (how does a concept move through translation processes?), through disciplines and "above" them?

The "plus" of Cortona lies however in its very special setting, which I don't conceive as "just a frame" of scientific and artistic discourse but a unique fertile terrain for it, where to discover new ways to do research, to grow scientifically and personally through the exchange with others students and scholars as well as through a deeper, freer contact with my body, my emotions and my intuition.

It was a nice surprise to see Prof. Rigotti in the list of speakers: "Il filo del pensiero" has been for a long time one of my favorite books, taking me in the fascinating world of metaphors between testi, tessuti e pensieri.

Just a last note: Cortona as a location has for me a special charme. During my previous studies I've spent one year as exchange student at the Scuola Normale in Pisa and I remember this research time as a wonderful time in a special, inspiring part of the world.

Last year, Cortona was a mind-opening experience in which I unlocked the potential of my mind through the awakening of my body. The connection which was built up between the participants created an aura of creativity and inspiration, in which eyes would enlighten upon new ideas and projects. During Cortona last year, recently back to Zurich from two years in São Paulo and Laos, I was working on the harmony between my traveler soul and my presence in the occidental world and culture; now, after half a year in Colombia where I concretized some academic and professional aspirations but also let the wind carry me through the secrets of the ancestral Andean cultures, I rediscovered the sensorial world and am more aware of the importance of developing our sensibility towards the world around us, especially nature. Movement and dynamism have been part of this experience not only through dance and sports, but also through the visualization of life as a flow which should be listened to. Through motion, I believe we can get closer to combining solid and volatile, hard and soft, straight and curved. I strongly believe in the potential of Cortona Week to unleash senses, unlock potentials, and feed ambition for change – it's up to us!

My motivation to attend Cortona Week 2017 is to gain inspiration, knowledge and ideas from the multidisciplinary environment it provides: myself was raised bilingual, studied both music and physics during my Bachelor's and am now in the Master's for computational neuroscience. In my work I am seeking the basis of music perception in human audition, trying to find connections between my two primary fields of study, art and science, in the frame of neuroscience. As expected, this attempt has further gotten me into matters of psychology and cultural significance, highlighting the importance of keeping the big unifying picture among disciplines in sight.

Studying each of the fields I experienced how concepts are being transformed among disciplines, and the unique color every field gives to an idea. Unfortunately the amount of information is vast, making it hard to find time and energy to break out of your own cluster and reach out to a discipline on the other end of the spectrum to engage in deeper exchange. Among others I aspire that Cortona Week will give me the chance to take this leap, explore new ideas and challenge me to expose and question my own. Feedback I got from colleagues and former participants of the conference only convinced me further that my views lie directly within its concept, and the benefits for personal as well as social development are not ones to miss.

While attempting an integrative approach to both science and art I participate in the organizational team of the annual Science Festival in Athens, Greece and project reach (Zurich, Switzerland). I have joined several exchange programs, such as the EU project Comenius (Italy, Greece), Boys and Girls go Science (RWTH Aachen, Germany), the Astronomy Expedition (Williams college USA, Cairns, Australia), and have participated in as well as organized the exchange program and competition Jugend Musiziert (Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Greece).

Last year I had the chance to participate to Cortona. The time spent there was magic. I have the impression that I have learnt more during one week in Cortona than any other moment in my life. It was a combination of mind, body, awareness, sensation, perception, curiosity, inspiration, creation and freedom. To be stimulated at our maximum potential, the mind alone is not enough; the body has to be turned on and the senses have to cooperate to allow an easier access to the instinct and to our creative side. The experience to mix the rational with the irrational and to go behind categories and static structures, was the main heredity I got from Cortona.

My motivation is to broaden my perspective on environmental sciences as well as on my personal life by totally different means. In September, I have to decide a research field and a topic of a master's thesis and a following PhD. Thus, I am very open and glad to attend the Cortona Week to reflect on my wishes and needs and to boost my creativity to eventually come up with a more creative career plan. I already have some experiences with similar concepts like the Cortona Week but in a much smaller extent. I once attended a three days course at my former university which was called "The expressive power of the moment". It was about studying my own body and emotions, the relationship between both, investigating how I feel in that moment, and express this either in words or performance. Furthermore, I attended some academies and a language course from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation, where I always enjoyed the atmosphere of the cultural exchange between the different sciences.

As an environmental science student, I attended the Cortona Week 2016 on "Uncertainty & Serendipity". For me, Cortona was one of the most memorable and intense weeks I experienced during my studies at ETH. I'm very happy to have attended this course because I did not only learn theoretical theories, I was presented with various perspectives on one topic. My days were full of singing, discussing, eating delicious food, drumming and more discussions. This unique experience brings together people from various disciplines to an environment where they can exchange freely and thus, think critically and moreover, inter- and trans-disciplinary, on topics that you have not thought about before. I can truly say that I learned more than in several classroom courses!

... after 3 years of working as a drama educator (mainly developing pieces with nonprofessional actors) I came back to ZHdK to continue studying. I felt like I found a way of working that I can rely on and I am not really challenging myself anymore. I want new, exciting input. I want to challenge myself again, I want to get challenged by others and I want to experience other ways of thinking and of getting in action. I really appreciate how ZHdK offers a lot of possibilities to leave my own microcosm and get in touch with other artists and I am trying to take as many occasions for intercultural cooperation as possible. Luckily I did not only get the chance to work with students from our partnerschool in Ouagadougou last november but I also got chosen to be part of building bridges, an exchange program for art students in Helsinki, Stockholm, New York and Zurich. This program will take me to New York in June and to Helsinki next January, I am very excited! On top of that I recently got accepted as a scholar for Schweizer Theatertreffen where I also get the amazing opportunity to exchange with other young theatre professionals and I am looking forward to that a lot, but again: It's either theatre or artschool and I would be so happy if I got the opportunity to get in touch, work, eat and play with ETH-scientists for a change! People who think differently, who question things I am convinced of or are passionate about things I never even considered to be interesting. I'd love to find out about our similarities and differences and how to combine our skills.

So if you ask about my aspirations I would sum it up by this: curiously exploring new mindsets and fields, getting challenged, expanding my horizon especially concerning natural sciences and getting to know interesting people.

Various former participants have recommended me to attend the Cortona Week being an amazingly stimulating experience. During an exchange semester in Singapore, I heavily enjoyed getting in contact with students from numerous backgrounds. Thus, I am looking forward to meeting people of various different fields during the Cortona Week. As an open minded person with a large range of interest, I am excited about the diversity of workshops and talks. Especially, since after my matriculation at ETH seven years ago my entire focus has been on science. Hence, I am looking forward to getting involved with some art related topics.

My first experience in the Cortona Week opened up a new horizon in my life. I recall a workshop leader telling me during a conversation: "This is not your voice". To cut short a long story, my inner journey started in Cortona. After 12 years, my voice yes did change, and not only my voice!

My life took a new direction since then, a new flow. In this new life flow, people I have met made the difference. They became key people in my life. Friends (including workshop leaders, whose friendship became for me a connection for life) encouraged me to take important decisions and introduced me into new practices, for example zen meditation, breathing exercises, wood carving. I don't make their names now for the sake of keeping this review short. Though I would have done it mostly to express my deep gratitude to them. Moreover, I belong to those lucky guys who found their life partner in Cortona! I am happily married to another Cortona ex-participant. We talk the same language thanks to our "Cortona background", which has launched us like coupled space-jets into life-space!

In the years that follow, I have eventually put aside my professional life to dedicate myself only to my personal growth. I have eventually applied the same strict discipline I used to science also to the other practices. Results came soon! This inner journey carried me along through the discovery of fake fundamentals, on which I was basing my life principles and behaviors. Experiences have re-shaped my character by a work of "do, undo, cut, delete, save". If we want to use familiar PC-terms... hard to say it in words! I kept meeting new people making my life richer.

This year, I have received the offer for a new scientific position at the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. I have already started the work and all I can say now is: it seems that a circle is about to be closed!

As a material scientist or a scientist in general, I am aware of how important collaboration is within the research group, with other research groups or even with other universities. But what happens when you go beyond your nature science discipline towards humanities, arts and spirituality? This is what I would like to find out by attending the Cortona Week 2017.

After doing an internship at RUAG Technology, where I worked hand in hand with the workmen and mechanics, I did my master thesis at Imperial College in London together with people outside my discipline and now I am doing a PhD in a group of material scientists, chemists and physicists coming from nine different countries and educational backgrounds. All these experiences broadened my horizons greatly and I would love to continue experiencing how valuable a transdisciplinary approach is during the Cortona Week.

Finally, it is part of the daily life of a PhD student to deal with "concepts on the move". Literature provides a lot of different concepts of scientific phenomena, which changed over time, due to new ideas, new technology available or just due to a coincidental discovery. We have to scan those concepts and find the one which suits best to explain our research and which is still highly accepted by the community. It would be very interesting to discuss such "concepts on the move" in a transdisciplinary environment.

This semester I am actively participating in the course "Cultural and Scientific History of East-Asia", which compared to the common technical lectures at ETH offers discussion rounds in class to exchange ideas and improve the intercultural understanding. This is truly inspiring since in turn it likewise provides a new and open mind set for improving one owns ideas and understanding in the technical disciplines.

However ETH as a technical university offers only a very limited number of opportunities similar in spirit. With the notable exception being the Cortona Week. Unfortunately I was unaware of this opportunity till last year, when my supervisor Professor Joachim Buhmann returned with raving and compelling experiences.

While ETH is an excellent place to work interdisciplinary e.g. already during my graduate studies in mathematics I was able to work as a research assistant in sociology at D-GESS. Moreover I was able to drive the research direction of my PhD towards the difference understandings and concepts of inference in dynamic systems in statistics, physics and numerics, with applications being in cell biology, fluid dynamics or control theory. The restricted platform of a technical university likewise motivated my external and additional studies in Berkeley and London, where courses like music perception or politics were offered in the curriculum. However these courses then presented concepts and ideas from the viewpoint of their own discipline while I am looking forward to share the fun of discussing, combining and integrating concepts into a holistic viewpoint across disciplines. Given my work across sociology, biology or mathematics, I believe that I can adapt my language and understanding to not only participate but actively contribute e.g. in the speakers corner.

So far all my interdisciplinary efforts are within the natural or social sciences and unfortunately not including humanities. To overcome this cultural gap and work, discuss and experience topics across disciplines, motivates my desire to be actively involved and contribute to the Cortona Week 2017. By establishing contacts and bonds with other open-minded participants I likewise hope to share and live the "Cortona Experience" even in the future.

In 2000 while working in psychiatry in Zürich as my first job after medical school I spotted a flyer of the Cortona week. I was attracted joining the week in order to meet in person my "heros" David Steindl Rast and Frjtof Capra. I have read their books with great pleasure in my teenager years.

The Cortona week was a great experience. A new era started for me. Being able to share knowledge, creativity and passions with other persons, students and teachers, looking at life in a holistic way. I am so grateful having met so many inspirational persons. After every Cortona week, my list of want-to-read books has grown immensely. Not only were the weeks in Cortona inspirational to read and learn more, but the encounter with certain persons had valuable impact on my life.

I invited a Cortona Workshopleader to give her KI-workshop to friends and coworkers of the psychosomatic clinic in Bern, 2-3 times. Everybody was amazed by her skill of letting us feel our own energy and power in simple body movements. I used elements of her workshop in my medical practice with my patients.

In 2001, I met Vitto Ferrari, my other half. We attended the same Haiku workshop by Brother David. We will never forget this. Vitto and I are now since 15 years together, married since 7 years and have two boys Miro 6 years old and Lucio 2 years old. We had the opportunity to return back to Cortona in 2011 with our 3 months old son Miro, as Vitto was invited to give a talk about statistical fallacies.

To me, Cortona is a week of encounters with inspiring personalities and perspectives. I experienced Cortona as a wonderful place for reflections, visions and ideas. The dynamic of transdisciplinary exchange, simultaneously opening up spaces for maturing thoughts and the confrontation with novel concepts, inspired me in particular. For these reasons, I would love to be given the opportunity to be part of this year's Cortona Week. Throughout my academic education, which I will be concluding in September 2017, I experienced transdisciplinary exchanges and intercultural encounters as the most valuable gift for my personal development. Some of the most inspiring ventures on my academic path were working for a year in a steel factory in Brazil, living and experiencing both the Jewish and Arab culture during a semester abroad in Israel, as well as diving into the Japanese teaching and communication culture during a summer school in Tokyo.

Recently, I am working on my master's project at the MIT in Cambridge, USA. Being here I am intensely confronted with the challenges of moving concepts and ideas – between disciplines, social cosmoses and my own ideologies. My project evolves around the question about how to design products at the edge of technological opportunities, social needs and environmental sustainability. In my perspective, the answer partly lies in shifting from the concept of sustainable product engineering, to a much more holistic design of sustainable socioeconomic systems. At the same time, I am experiencing the life within the highly privileged, intercultural sphere of academia – strongly contrasting with the reality of tremendously diverging political perceptions in the US. This fact frequently confronts me with the question of how to move, or rather shape, concepts of communication and opinion formation within communities – and especially across social spheres.

These experiences necessarily impose questions on my very own actions and ideologies. How can I employ my values, engineering skills and passion for humanities to contribute to a responsible dialogue about technological and sociopolitical concepts? I am convinced, that the Cortona Week and the discussion about "Concepts on the Move" would represent a great opportunity for transdisciplinary exchange and mutual inspiration.