

Valletta 2019

Atelier for Young Festival Managers 23 - 29 March 2019

Speech by

Albert Marshall

Executive Chairman Arts Council Malta

Opening Ceremony of the Atelier for Young Festival and Cultural Managers
23 March 2019, Valletta, Malta.

On behalf of the Minister for Culture and Arts Council Malta's Board of Directors, I welcome all participants to the 15th edition of the European Festivals Association's 'OTEJER'

Welcome to a country renowned world-wide for its gracious hospitality and sense of good fun.

In Malta we celebrate no less than 110 parish feasts during the year. These feasts can be considered as religious festivals that attract big crowds from all over Malta and Gozo, Malta's idyllic sister island – crowds that include thousands of tourists who happen to be visiting us during these popular festivities

Last year, culture and creative industries made up 7% of our GDP. This year, the national budget allocated EUR 2.4 million to festivals coordinated by Festivals Malta. Including Festivals Malta's national events, we stage a whopping 45 major cultural festivals, some of which are fast developing into destination happenings for tourists from all over the world – not a small feat for the puny size of these rocks.

This is why Malta can be considered as a natural hub where conversations about festivals ought to take place.

One fundamental remit of Arts Council Malta is to, by means of Festivals Malta and its cultural products, offer a strong platform for artistic excellence to inspire our local and foreign audiences and to serve as a bridging link between our diverse communities.

Like the Festivals Academy and the European Festivals Association, we passionately seek to place arts and culture at the heart of our society.

We also consider it our social responsibility to, through our Festivals, we champion cultural rights, inclusivity, diversity, and freedom of expression. May I take this opportunity to put Mr Alam's mind at rest and the mind of all present here that no stone is being left unturned to bring the murderous and perpetrators involved in Daphne's slaying to justice; slowly but surely.

We aggressively promote private/public partnerships to guarantee sustainability for our Festivals and public funding of the arts.

We constantly seek to push hard against the forces of insularity that is an ontological reality for our country. Hence, we invest heavily in the implementation of an internationalization strategy to get our artists to network creatively with the rest of the world. This passionate quest to network beyond our shores is one of the reasons that you are here with us tonight.

We are pleased that during the time you'll be spending with us, we can offer valuable opportunities to motivated people for the growth of their professional careers.

During this 'OTEJER', between today and the 29th of March, various aspects of festival management will be discussed with renowned artistic directors from pioneering festivals and outstanding art centres and institutions from all over the world.

The 35 international young, dynamic and passionate festival makers who have been selected for this training programme will be experiencing an intensive week-long training programme. Experienced festival directors who are leaders in their fields and who have curated important festivals worldwide, will be guiding the participants in this programme.

Finally, a special thank you to all mentors, facilitators and keynote speakers, who have honoured us with their presence and learned contributions.

A heartfelt thank you to the Festivals Academy and the European Festivals Association.

Happy networking and I hope you'll be able to find some free time to let Malta seduce you to come back to us.

Enjoy.

Albert Marshall, Executive Chairman Arts Council Malta, 23 March 2019