

Valletta 2019

Atelier for Young Festival Managers 23 - 29 March 2019

Speech by

Annabelle Stivala

Director Festivals Malta

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

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Participants, Colleagues,

Good evening,

On behalf of the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government, Arts Council Malta and Festivals Malta, it gives me great pleasure to extend to you all, a very warm welcome and to say how grateful we are to be hosting the Atelier for Young Festival Managers in Malta. Thank you for travelling to Malta from all four corners of the globe to exchange views on themes motivating the cultural sector. Festivals Malta is delighted to be bringing the Atelier for Young Festival Managers to this small island in the Mediterranean and to be co-hosting this event with the Festivals Academy, an arm of the European Festival Association. Malta is situated at the heart of the basin, at a crossroads where cultures have interacted throughout history. In this context, we hope that this Atelier will provide participants, mentors and facilitators an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities, have a global conversation about the role art and culture can play in cultural festivals and explore a diversity of perspectives. Arts and culture are essential to the quality of life in our country and it is with great pleasure that we welcome leaders in the sector to reflect upon, examine, and address key issues and lead by example, while you also experience some of the best that Malta has to offer.

Maltese Culture that has developed over centuries through dynamic exchanges, proves how possible it is to communicate peacefully, to interact without tensions and to benefit from exchanges rather than closing borders.

The very choice of hosting the Atelier in Valletta, the city which was built by the Order of the Knights of St John and which was ECoC in 2018, is symbolic of the promising and exciting cultural synergies that lay ahead of us.

The bastions and fortresses surrounding This City, with the passage of time lost their original purpose and stood silently for four and a half centuries, lending their majestic beauty to our country and its visitors, like yourselves. The largest natural harbour in Europe which was armoured in stone to repel the enemy became one of our country's attractions. The buildings that surround us and the bastions beyond us were created for one aim, to protect the island from its enemies. Yet history had different plans. And Malta once again becomes a cultural junction to debate challenges and create synergies. I augur that this Atelier will inspire new ideas and approaches. May it map out new paths for us to execute our work in the best possible ways.

In the next few days, as we will be discussing human rights, inclusion, diversity, climate change and other matters which impact our festivals and debate an ever-changing world in the present climate, we will be reflecting on ways of turning challenges into new opportunities.

The Atelier will also give you the opportunity to experience Malta in a different way to the ordinary visitor and we have prepared a program which will present a unique opportunity for all delegates to experience a taste of a rich and vibrant Maltese culture. We invite you to participate wholeheartedly in this.

To conclude I would like to thank everyone at Festivals Malta, who has contributed to make this event a reality, particularly Jeanelle, Monique and Mario who have been working hard these past months to make all the preparations. Mr. Albert Marshall Chairman Arts Council Malta and the Ministry of Justice Culture and local Government who have supported us throughout, All mentors and facilitators, it is an honour having you in Malta the Festival Academy, with a special thank you going to Inge and Laure.

My message to the participants:

congratulations on having been selected for this Atelier,
absorb and network and cherish every moment of this experience
An experience which will open will open a world of opportunities
Enjoy it to the full

I now pass on the word to Mr. Albert Marshall, Chair Arts Council Malta

Thank you.

Annabelle Stivala, Director Festivals Malta, 23 March 2019