

# MYSTERY\_45 Atelier Elefsina

21 – 27 June 2023

## Objectives

1. Explore the relationship of a festival maker, reflect on their values and purpose with festival making and the world at large and in relation to the other participants.
2. Gain new perspectives, explore the essence of the why and how of festivals in a global context, share and exchange experiences and reflect on the topics that concern the participant cohort.
3. Meet and network with festival makers from across the globe
4. Reflect on the role of festivals in society, explore the power of festivals and critical global concerns of our time including, during and in the aftermath of conflict.

## Atelier Outcomes

By the end of the Atelier, participants will be able to:

- a. Have formed deeper bonds and relationships with the cohort and gained a deeper understanding of the local cultural context of the Atelier host city.
- b. Gained knowledge and skills needed to manage their festivals and initiatives better
- c. Better understanding of multiple perspectives that exist
- d. Have had deep, open, and authentic discussions around global challenges and the role of festivals.
- e. Gained training around specific sustainable strategies, specifically strategic partnerships, and funding mechanisms and fundraising.

## Formats

The Atelier uses interactive formats to engage participants, experts, and mentors equally in the conversations and dialogues.

## Vision & Mission

The Festival Academy envision a world where all people regardless race, gender, social background, sexual orientation can equally enjoy and participate in cultural life and festivals; where festivals can reflect - through incorporating human rights values - the real world experience of all of us, furthering social and economic justice and human dignity and catalysing positive change on a local, regional, national and even global level.

We enable and facilitate a global inclusive conversation and critical reflection between festival managers from different art disciplines, origins, generations and social backgrounds on the role that arts, culture and more particularly festivals, can play in a fast changing world.

# Pool of experts

## Facilitators

- **Mike Van Graan** - Playwright and coordinator, Sustaining Theatre and Dance (STAND) Foundation (South Africa)
- **Rashmi Dhanwani** - Founder & CEO, The Art X Company (India)

## Keynote speakers

They are part of the [SNF Conference](#) programme happening in parallel in Athens, the keynote speech will be livestreamed in Elefsina.

- **Barack Hussein Obama** - 44th President of the United States (United States)
- **Andreas Dracopoulos** - Co-President Stavros Niarchos Foundation - SNF (Greece)
- **Sofia Kouvelaki** - Founder & CEO The HOME Project (Greece)

## Mentors and experts

The role of mentors and experts is to guide participants, in plenary, small group work and one on one sessions, they work from the needs and questions of the participants.

### 1. Festival mentors

Mentors have relevant experience in running a festival related to the topics of the programme.

- **Anton Ovchinnikov** - Curator, choreographer, director, performer, educator, founder of the Zelyonka Fest Contemporary Dance Festival (Ukraine)
- **Cristina Fuentes La Roche** - Director of Hay Festival (global)
- **Gintarė Masteikaitė** - Artistic director of New Baltic festival and ConTempo (Lithuania)
- **Horacio Pérez** - Curator, creative producer, cultural manager, and artist (Chile)
- **Jon Grenay** - Associate Director of The Under the Radar Festival and Devised Theater Working Group at The Public Theater (United States)
- **Kenneth Uphopho** - Director, writer and founding director of Abuja Fringe, LagosFringe and Pawstudios Africa (Nigeria)
- **Mark Russell** - Artistic Director Producer, Under the Radar Festival (United States)
- **Nima Dehghani** - Founder of Re-Connect online performance festival, Interdisciplinary artist (Iran/United States)
- **Rashmi Dhanwani** - Founder & CEO, The Art X Company and Co-Founder at Festivals From India (India)
- **Thobile Mphanga** - Durban-based dance practitioner, writer, creative collaborator, and emerging festival curator, curatorial mentee for JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience (South Africa)

### 2. Topic based cross-sector experts

They bring in specific knowledge, expertise and networks related to the topics discussed in the atelier

#### Academics

- **Brett Pyper** - Associate Professor Wits School of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg (South Africa)

#### Conflict transformation and Peace-building

- **Angi Yoder-Maina** - Healing-Centered Peacebuilding Practitioner (United States/Kenya)

#### Fair international collaboration

- **Mike Van Graan** - Playwright and coordinator, Sustaining Theatre and Dance (STAND) Foundation (South Africa)

#### Gender equality and LGBTQIA+

- **Fjorida Cenaj** - Cultterra team (Greece)

#### Health and wellbeing/trauma

- **Angi Yoder-Maina** - Healing-Centered Peacebuilding Practitioner (United States/Kenya)

#### Human Rights

- **Anis Barnat** - Co-founder El Sistema and Managing Director Community Arts Network (Greece)
- **Shahidul Alam** - Writer and human rights activist, initiator of Chobi Mela International Photography Festival (Bangladesh)

#### New technologies

- **Nima Dehghani** - Reconnect Performance Festival (Iran/United States)

#### Sustainability

- **Carla Fonseca Reis** - Economist and PhD in Urbanism, Director Garimpo de Soluções and President of the General Assembly of The Festival Academy (Brazil)
- **Rashmi Dhanwani** - Founder & CEO, The Art X Company and Co-Founder at Festivals From India (India)

## Observers

- **Georg Weinand** - Freelance Artistic Advisor and Coach (Belgium)

## Artists/Cultural Programme

- **Michael Marmarinos** - General Artistic Director of 2023 Eleusis ECoC (Greece)
- **Angeliki Lampiri** - Director of Cultural Training 2023 Eleusis ECoC (Greece)
- **Patricia Apergi** and the **Aerites Dance Company** (Greece)
- **Yolanda Markopolou** - Theatre and film director and producer, Polyplanity Productions (Greece)
- **Collectif MASI: Madlen Anipsitaki** and **Simon Riedler** (Greece)
- **Marina Satti** - Artistic director of the female vocal ensemble Chóres (Greece)
- **Nikos Mavrakis** - Managing Director TooFarEast and Operations Coordinator at Osmosis (Greece)

# Programme

This programme (dated 27/06/2023) can change prior to and during the Atelier as it considers the needs of the participants.

## DAY ONE: Wednesday, 21 June

- 12:00 – 13:00** Registration and snacks at the [Old Town Hall](#)
- 13:00 – 15:30** Introductory session
- 15:30 – 16:00** Break
- 16:00 – 17:45** Guided tour and walk through Elefsina, by **Michael Marmarinos and Angeliki Lampiri**
- Opening Ritual
  - Getting to know the local context
  - Introduction to Greece, Elefsina and the European Capital of Culture
  - Introduction to the arts in Greece
- 17:45 – 18:00** Walk to the [Workers' Union](#)
- 18:00 – 19:30** Plenary: The world in conflict, what hope for a common humanity? at the [Workers' Union](#)  
Speakers: **Anton Ovchinnikov** (Ukraine), **Cristina Fuentes** (global), **Carla Fonseca Reis** (Brazil), **Anis Barnat** (Greece), **Kenneth Uphopho-online** (Nigeria)
- 19:30 – 21:00** Free time
- 21:00 – 23:00** Dinner at [Kapaki](#)
- 21:00 – 23:00** **MYSTERY 154 Live Music Acts.** Music around the city celebrating the European Music Day.  
[Old Railway Station](#)/ [Arkopolis](#) / [Saint George Park](#)
- 23:00** Return / End of day programme

## DAY TWO: Thursday, 22 June

Theme for the day: **Festivals in an age of polarisation, conflict and existential threat**

- 08:45** Departure to the [Old Town Hall](#) (15 minutes' walk)
- 09:00 – 09:30** Morning coffee and conversations
- 09:30 – 10:00** Grounding exercise
- 10:00 – 10:30** Discussions. Theme: **Cultural Boycotts - How world politics determines cultural mobility of artists.**
- 10:30 – 11:30** Themes to be explored in this session:
- How and how much does my immediate reality shape me, the way I think, what I believe, my values and my attitudes to others?
  - What do I feel most threatened by? What causes me to fear?
  - What has been a life-altering experience, and how did it change me?
- How do I live/try to live authentically, consciously within this world as a human?
- 11:30 – 12:00** Break
- 12:00 – 13:30** Plenary: **Festivals in an age of polarisation, conflict and existential threat**  
Short provocations by **Thobile Mphanga, Horacio Perez** and **Nima Deghani**
- Themes to be explored in this session:
- Festivals and the arts are – generally – precarious and constantly face existential threats themselves. Can/should festivals be agents of change? How are festivals impacted upon in practical ways by inequality, social injustice and existential crises? Is it fair to impose social

demands on festivals or expect them to respond to contemporary issues? What is the role, mandate of festivals? Does it differ depending on context?

Facilitated conversation.

- 13:30 – 14:30** Lunch
- 14:30 – 16:30** Festival presentations: Getting to know each other's festivals at Old Town Hall
- 16:30 – 17:15** Personal reflection and journaling
- 17:15 – 18:30** Keynote speech: **President Barack Obama** in conversation with Stavros Niarchos Foundations Co-President **Andreas Dracopoulos**.  
Introduction by **Sophia Kouvelaki**.  
*This discussion is part of the [SNF Conference](#) programme happening in parallel in Athens and it will be livestreamed in Elefsina, at the [Old Town Hall](#). The participation is optional.*
- 18:30 – 20:00** Free time
- 20:00 – 21:00** **Mystery 144 Leave What You Loved Once** and **Mystery 142 Oh So Now Eleusis Is Growing Wheat!** [Kanellopoulou & Karaiskaki](#)
- 21:00 – 22:30** Dinner at [Psarotopi](#) tavern
- 22:30** Return / End of day programme

### DAY THREE: Friday, 23 June

Theme for the day: **Fair cultural/artistic collaboration: globally, regionally and locally in the context of inequality**

- 09:00 – 09:30** Morning coffee and conversations at [Old Town Hall](#)
- 09:30 – 10:00** Group physical exercise/activity
- 10:00 – 10:45** [Continuation] Discussions. Theme: **Cultural Boycotts/ Cancel Culture**
- 10:45 – 11:30** Plenary workshop: **Identifying forms of inequality that impact/may impact festivals and/or international artistic cultural collaboration**  
A brainstorm session with all participants.
- 11:30 – 12:00** Break
- 12:00 – 13:00** Plenary: **What is 'Solidarity'? And how might this work in practice**  
Exercise: Participants have 15 minutes to reflect on the meaning of 'solidarity' from their perspective, and write a definition of solidarity. They post these on the wall. All participants then have an opportunity to read these definitions.  
This is followed by a discussion catalysed by the following questions:  
- Which of the definitions most struck/triggered you, and why?  
- In your current situation, what do you expect of colleagues here, or of others, to be in solidarity with you?  
What are you/your festival able to do as forms/acts of solidarity with colleagues present in the room?
- 13:00 – 14:00** Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:30** Festival presentations
- 15:30 – 17:30** Free time
- 17:30 – 19:00** One-on-one sessions with mentors at [Hotel Elefsina](#)
- 19:00 – 20:00** Free time

- 20:00 – 21:00** Interdisciplinary Art Project **MYSTERY 100 Sacred Songs** at [Canteen square/platform](#). **Mystery 144 Leave What You Loved Once** and **Mystery 142 Oh So Now Eleusis Is Growing Wheat!** [Kanellopoulou & Karaiskaki](#)
- 21:00 – 23:00** Dinner at [Avli](#)
- 23:00** Return / End of the day programme

## DAY FOUR: Saturday, 24 June

Theme for the day: **Sharing practical skills and knowledge to benefit festivals**

- 09:00 – 09:40** Bus to Skironio (40 min)
- 09:40 – 10:00** Check-in
- 10:00 – 10:30** Introduction to Skironio
- 10:30 – 12:00** Participants engage with mentors, experts, speakers and each other around issues of practical concern. This morning session will take the form of roundtables and/or one-on-ones as they engage with mentors and others around such issues. Participants may go from topic to topic as they need/choose.
- This will also be a session to reference the Festival Academy's Toolkits.
- There will be two rounds of up to 5 topics in each, with each round being 90 minutes.
- Round One Topics:
- Forms of curating a festival (and the differences between curating and programming a festival)
  - How to build new audiences while maintaining traditional, historical audiences
  - Affirming artists and technical crew: best practice ideas for festivals to take care of artists and technical crew so that they become great ambassadors for the festival
  - Festival and artistic practice in a restrictive environment (cultural taboos, conflict, political censorship)
  - Climate Change
- 12:00 – 12:30** Break
- 12:30 – 14:00** Round Two Topics
- Festival management and governance: participants share challenges they are experiencing in this regard, with peers providing some answers
  - Building strategic partnerships and alliances: how may these aid festivals?
  - Gender equality / LGBTQ+
  - Disability
- 14:00 – 15:00** Lunch
- 15:00 – 16:00** Break and swim time
- 16:00 – 16:30** Personal reflection and Journaling
- 16:30 – 18:00** One-on-one session with mentors and peers
- 18:30 – 19:30** Return to Elefsina
- 19:30 – 20:30** Free time
- 20:30 – 22:00** **MYSTERY 13 I\_left, I\_left Asia Minor, I\_left Pontus.** Walking performances presented in the singular neighbourhoods of Elefsina, conceived and directed by Yolanda Markopoulou. [OASIS camping](#) (Pontian Association of Elefsina «New Trebizond»)
- 22:00 – 23:30** Dinner at [Italiko](#)
- 23:30** Return / End of day programme

## DAY FIVE: Sun, 25 June

Theme for the day: **Sustainability**

- 09:00 – 09:30** Morning arrival coffee to meet and mingle at [Old Town Hall](#)
- 09:30 – 11:00** Plenary: Business models for sustainable festivals in different conditions  
Speakers: **Rashmi Dhanwani** (India) - responses by **Cristina Fuentes** (global)
- 11:00 – 11:15** Break
- 11:15 – 12:45** Innovative income-generating and sustainability models from around the world  
Speakers: **Carla Fonseca Reis** (Brazil), **Gintare Masteikate** (Lithuania) and **Mark Russell** (United States)
- 12:45 – 14:00** Lunch
- 14:00 – 14:30** Grounding exercise
- 14:30 – 15:00** Group Exercise. Theme: **The ethics of funding**
- 15:00 – 16:30** Plenary: **How can we encourage community care through our work?**  
Could festivals be spaces for collective healing? Stories of well-being are shared guided by **Angi Yoder-Maina** (United States/Kenya)
- 16:30 – 17:00** Break
- 17:00 – 18:00** Theme: **Personal well-being is integral to sustainability**  
Workshop and reflection on how engagement in the arts, in festivals and in this precarious gig economy, impacts on the emotional, mental and physical well-being of individuals
- 18:00 – 18:30** Reflection time followed by a break
- 18:30 – 21:00** Free time
- 21:00 – 22:30** Dinner with Alumni of The Festival Academy and the youth group Cultterra at [Old Railway Station](#)
- 23:00** Return / End of day programme

## DAY SIX: Monday, 26 June

- 09:00 – 09:30** Morning coffee and conversations at [Old Town Hall](#)
- 09:30 – 10:00** Grounding exercise and check-in
- 10:00 – 10:45** Agree, Disagree exercise
- 10:45 – 11:45** Conversation: **Finding humanity in a world in conflict**
- 11:45 – 12:15** Break
- 12:15 – 13:00** Conversation continued
- 13:00 – 14:00** Lunch
- 14:00 – 15:30** Regional meeting: Africa, Asia, Americas, Europe, SWANA
- 15:30 – 16:00** Break
- 16:00 – 17:30** Continuation of the roundtable workshops / Professional and personal care groups
- 17:30 – 18:00** Personal reflection and journaling
- 18:00 – 19:00** Dinner at [MAGATZES](#)
- 19:30 – 22:30** **Open Rehearsal of MYSTERY 59 U(R)TOPIAS Academy of Choreography**
- 22:30** Return / End of day programme

## DAY SEVEN: Tuesday, 27 June

- 10:00 – 13:00** Closing Plenary and Group Feedback at [Old Town Hall](#)
- 13:00 – 14:00** Lunch at [Stratos](#)
- 14:00 – 16:30** Video screenings (optional)
- 16:30 – 20:00** Free afternoon
- 20:00** Dinner & Closing Party with Time Circus at [Arkopolis](#)