

20 - 26 NOVEMBER 2025 - GERMANY

Atelier Chemnitz 2025

Open Call – Capacity Building Programme

20 - 26 November 2025 - Chemnitz, Germany

Deadline for applications: 31/01/2025

The Festival Academy, an initiative of the **European Festivals Association (EFA)**, in partnership with **Chemnitz European Capital of Culture 2025** calls for applications for the **25th edition** of the **Atelier for Young Festival Managers**, to take place from **20 - 26 November 2025** in Chemnitz, Germany.

The **Atelier for Young Festival Managers** will offer the opportunity to up to **35 young festival leaders and curators from all over the world** to spend **7 days** together guided by experienced **festival leaders, cultural activists, cross-sector experts and artists** in Chemnitz. The Atelier facilitates a **global conversation about today's challenges and the role that festivals, art and culture can play in these**. The Atelier is about innovating leadership, gaining new perspectives, exploring the essence and impact of festivals in a global context, share and exchange experiences and reflect on the topics that concern the participants.

The Atelier starts from the very essence of festivals –**the arts, the artist and the audience**– and all issues tackled during the training and in one way or another relate to this essence, why we do things, for whom and with whom.

"The Atelier has been an inspirational week that has been instrumental in shaping my understanding of festival management and creation in the global context."

Participant Atelier Elefsina 2023

Chemnitz 2025: European Capital of Culture

The Atelier will be hosted by the Chemnitz European Capital of Culture 2025. The **European Capitals of Culture (ECoC)** initiative, established in 1985, annually awards a few cities in Europe with the title of "European Capital of Culture". Over the years, this initiative has contributed to the **sustainable development of cities** and their **surrounding regions**, generating **long-term cultural, social, and economic impact**. In **2025**, the two European Capitals of Culture will be **Nova Gorica / Gorizia** (Slovenia/Italy) and **Chemnitz** (Germany).

The ECoC is a unique opportunity to **promote Europe's cultural diversity**, as well as **dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens and beyond**; to **widen access to, and participation in culture**; to **strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector** and its **links with other sectors**; to **improve cultural infrastructure**; to **develop the skills, capacity, and governance** of local and national assets; and to **promote the city and its cultural programme**.

Chemnitz locates itself as an **Eastern European city** in the German state of **Saxony**. The city and its surrounding region are linked by a **vibrant shared cultural and industrial heritage**.

"C the Unseen" - the motto for Chemnitz 2025 is both an invitation and a program. The aim is to make the **previously unseen and undiscovered visible**. The title "European Capital of Culture" shines a **spotlight on people, places and activities** that have not yet been the focus of tourist attention. They want to **show themselves and warmly welcome their guests**. The ECoC program creates **experiences and encounters**. It conveys the **past and present** of the people who live here. **New places** are created as well as opportunities for **active participation**.





Who can participate?

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This **seven-day long capacity building programme** targets **festival curators from all over the world**, regardless of age, gender and nationality, who are interested in **exchanging knowledge and experiences between professionals** active in the field of festivals and who wish to **improve their management skills, learn from renowned experts** and **exchange ideas and best practices** with other participants.

It is addressed at young leaders who are interested in the organization and in the **new ways of cooperation and sustainable production**. In addition, it is aimed at participants who are interested in becoming part of a network that focuses on **knowledge sharing and networking**. At the end of the programme, participants will leave with **expanded skills in festival organisation and curation** with a **wide new personal and professional network** and with inspiration for new ways of developing their festivals.

‘Young’ in the Atelier title refers first of all to **being young in the festival business**.

Participants represent a **broad diversity of cultural and professional backgrounds** – from students to young managers working for large **established organisations**, to **emerging curators** running their own innovative international festivals.

Topics

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The Atelier for Young Festival Managers is a **tailor-made capacity building programme focused on the needs of the specific group taking part** in the programme, based on the **analysis of the expectations** of the selected participants. The topics and issues raised by the selected participants are further developed during the Atelier: in **panel discussions** guided by renowned festival leaders and cross-sector experts from across the globe, in small **working groups, thematic lunches, cross-discipline round tables and plenary sessions**. There is plenty of time and space for official and **informal one-to-one talks** during the programme and during meals and **cultural visits**, as the sharing of experiences and networking are key to the Atelier.

Topics to be explored could be amongst others:

- Innovative forms of leadership
- Different models of curating, focusing on building audiences/communities
- Digital innovation and new technologies
- The social, environmental and artistic impact of festivals: how festivals are/can be agents for social change and social cohesion
- Fundraising (beyond subventions)
- How and if festivals can contribute to strengthening global identities and values and tackle rising nationalism
- Decolonisation
- Equity and Fair international collaboration (and trade) including the UNESCO 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
- Festivals and the integration of underrepresented or fragile communities (people of colour, first nation people, migrant/refugees, LGBTQIA+, disabled people, children and youth, etc.)
- Sustainable festival-making on all levels
- Freedom of expression and the relevance of artistic boycott

All these food-for-thought and conversations will be developed in close relation with our partners and the context in which the Atelier takes place, serving as a source of inspiration and discussions by meeting local actors. You can find out more about the programme [here](#).



Expected Results/Outcome

- **Capacity, leadership, skills and knowledge building within a global context:** In raising awareness and increasing the cultural and economic competitiveness and potential of the culture and creative sectors' main protagonists – cultural leaders -, organisations, participants and stakeholders are allowed a life-changing opportunity of walking away with skills, abilities and tools to essentially become more sustainable and socially and economically viable.
- **Digital toolkits** collecting the knowledge shared to distribute to a larger arts/festival community in a global level.
- A **platform for exchange in between arts and cultural colleagues** taking up different roles and coming from different regions
- Generating a **better understanding and knowledge** of the possibilities that may occur to festivals and cultural organisations.
- Offering time and space for imagining **new collaborations with people coming from very different backgrounds**, based on solidarity and incorporating fundamental universal values.
- Becoming part of a **global network of upskilled cultural and production** managers including Alumni and experts of The Festival Academy, today with 1400+ people from 100+ countries on all continents.

"The Atelier exceeded my expectations. The group became tight very quickly. The energy, intelligence, deep subject expertise made all our conversations very powerful. (...) I also got to experience geo-politics at play and it gave me a very different perspective on arts as a diplomatic tool."

Participant Atelier New York 2024

Mentors and guest speakers

Renowned festival leaders and directors, cross-sector experts, cultural activists, and artists are guiding the participants throughout the 7 days. Mentors and facilitators are present for the whole period of the programme. Members of the Alumni community of The Festival Academy are also invited as speakers to join the Atelier and take initiative leading sessions and involving professionals from their own networks (find out more about our Alumni-led sessions [here](#) and about our previous experts [here](#)).



Practicalities

The Festival Academy will select up to **35 participants** for the **7-day programme** of Atelier Chemnitz 2025. There is no age limit, and the average age of Atelier participants is of 32 years. **Excellent knowledge of English is required (the working language of the Atelier).**

We encourage people from all parts of the world to apply, and we commit to working towards making the Atelier accessible for all selected applicants by assisting as much as possible with visa procedures and other permissions/requirements in preparation for the Atelier.

Full course fee: €2.400

Reduced course fee for EFA member festivals: €1.900

Course fee includes:

- Accommodation for seven nights
- Registration
- Working documents
- Access to all sessions
- Meals and drinks
- Receptions
- Local transport to activities within the programme
- Cultural and artistic programme
- Follow-up activities.

Travel expenses and insurance are not included in the Atelier fee and are the responsibility of the participant or the supporting organization.

Funding opportunities for this training programme are numerous at local/national level, and we have established long-term partnerships with some organisations all over the world to support prospective participants. Find out more about the application procedures and funding opportunities [here](#).

Apply here!

Deadline for applications: 31/01/2025

Application & Selection Procedure

The 35 participants will be selected out of an open call for applications. Applicants are asked to provide information on their work experience, their expectations related to the programme and – most importantly on their motivation to participate in it. You can read more about the application process [here](#).

Find out more & Apply!

Take the opportunity and **apply before the 31st January 2025** if you want to:

- **Broaden your festival-making skills**
- **Challenge your ideas and develop new perspectives**
- **Be inspired by colleagues from all over the world**
- **Be part a unique global network of festival leaders**

Please do not hesitate to contact The Festival Academy on info@thefestivalacademy.eu or call us on **+32 2 588 20 46** for further information on the application & selection procedure.



Organizers & Partners

The Festival Academy believes festivals are bridging platforms with a direct link to people and civil society structures. We believe a critical reflection between artists, arts and cultural managers worldwide and cross-sectoral stakeholders can bring about positive change, informed awareness, ideas and proposals for actions through personal human relations and based on knowing, respecting and tolerating different value and belief systems. We are a global community of more than 1400 festival managers from 100+ countries today.

The Festival Academy receives a grant of **Open Society Foundations** for 2023-2025.

If you wish to strengthen our global inclusive conversation and **support** young festival managers and our international activities, click **here**.



With the motto "C the Unseen", the **European Capital of Culture Chemnitz 2025 GmbH** focuses on activities and artistic projects that have a lasting impact in the areas of socio-culture, art, corporate culture, building culture, food and nutrition culture, the environment, sustainability, children's, youth and senior citizens' activities, as well as numerous other areas of society and culture. To this purpose, it brings together regional, national and international partners.



The Festival Academy is an initiative of the **European Festivals Association (EFA)** which unites distinguished music, dance, theatre and multidisciplinary arts festivals from Europe and beyond since 1952. It connects about 100 festivals and festival associations in 40 countries. EFA's activities are implemented with the support of the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.



Thanks to the support of the **Open Society Foundations**, The Festival Academy is able to further extend its activities geographically as well as its global community of festival makers. More people worldwide will have the chance to participate in its programmes and will become part of its growing community.

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