

Atelier Donostia / San Sebastián 2025

for Young Festival Managers

11 - 17 MAR 2025 - BASQUE COUNTRY, SPAIN

Programme



Pillars

1. Festivals as agents for social change – the transformative power of art.
2. Shifting harmful narratives (of a region, a continent, authoritarianism, othering etc.)
3. Radical imagination – Embodied re-imagining how and why we do things, for who and with who and how we exist within this world as human beings first and as part of a common humanity.
4. Connection beyond networking – in depth connection sharing our diverse stories (both personal and professional), practicing active listening both through our minds and bodies generating empathy based on human connection.

The purpose of our gathering

1. To create a platform where all voices, contexts, stories, and realities can be heard; to connect as human beings, peer-to-peer, eye-to-eye; to identify what we have in common, rather than what divides us; to recognize our collective pain in turbulent times, resulting from inequalities, conflict, climate threats, social injustice, etc. around the world.
2. To experience joy – to celebrate and enjoy our humanity together, and to share, play, learn, listen, engage and relax together. To reach a state where we can see our own challenges and context through the eyes of another.
3. To awaken our creative power, curiosity, and radical imagination, inspiring and being inspired - to transform and broaden our perspectives, methods, and habits (how we do things) and our human experience (how we exist).
4. To create a long lasting and meaningful festival community of friends who are empowered and have gained tools to act both individually and collectively in response to the main issues of our times; who can set up new collaborations and new models of cooperation together; and who can go back to their context and make positive changes in their festival creation and face their challenges with more courage and strength.
5. To witness and experience dFERIA-Performing Arts Fair and to get to know the sociopolitical and cultural context of the Basque Country and Spain, as well as to connect with festivals, cultural professionals, and artists from the region.

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:

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

Formats

The Atelier uses interactive formats (facilitated and focused interactive dialogue, games, rituals, immersion, bodywork to engage participants, experts, and mentors equally in the conversations and dialogues.

Vision & Mission The Festival Academy

The Festival Academy envisions 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 catalyzing 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

Programme development, facilitation and mentoring

- **Vigdís Jakobsdóttir** – Cultural Strategist, Theater Director and former Artistic Director of Reykjavík Arts Festival – Iceland
- **Thobile Maphanga** – Dance Practitioner, Writer/Scholar, Creative Collaborator, Project Manager and Assistant Curator of JOMBA! Contemporary Dance Experience – South Africa
- **Inge Ceustermans** – General Director The Festival Academy – Belgium

Mentors

- **Eduardo Bonito** – Independent Curator and Performing Arts Advisor - Brazil / Spain
- **Ibrahim Owais** – Sound Artist, Creative Producer, Founder of Recordat, and core member of Radio Alhara and Wonder Cabinet - Palestine
- **Isabel Ferreira** – Artistic Director of Arbola Festival - Spain
- **Mac Andre Arboleda** – Artist, Digital Rights Advocate, and Cultural Organizer – Philippines
- **Marko Ahtisaari** – Technology Entrepreneur, Musician, former Artistic Director of Helsinki Festival, and co-founder House of Sound - Finland
- **Natacha Melo** – Educator, Curator, and Independent Cultural Manager - Uruguay
- **Orwa Nyrabia** – Artistic Director of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), President of the Board of The Festival Academy – Syria / Netherlands
- **Princess Sibanda** – Scholar Artist – Zimbabwe / South Africa
- **Priscila Santana** – Curator, Conductor, Educator, Scholar and Programming Manager for SummerStage Festival – Brazil / US

External Participants

- **Amaia Serrulla** – Head of Thought and Discussion & Head of Documentation and Films department of the San Sebastian Film Festival – Spain
- **Eloisa Vaello Marco** – Head of the Department of Cultural Cooperation and Promotion of the AECID – Spain
- **Florian Borchmeyer** – Curator of Festival International New Drama (FIND) – Germany
- **Gerardo Salinas** – City Dramaturge at KVS Brussels and Artistic Director of Próximamente Festival – Argentina / Belgium
- **Ilona Goyeneche** – Cultural Manager and Performing Arts Curator – Chile / Mexico

dFERIA & Victoria Eugenia Theater

- **Jaime Otamendi** - Managing Director Donostia Kultura - Spain
- **Norka Chiapusso** – Dance and Theater Programming Director – Spain
- **Koldo Doman** – Production and Management Technician – Spain
- **María José Irisarri** – Production and Management Technician – Spain
- **Lorenzo Pappagallo** – Professionals Programme & Coordination - Spain

The Festival Academy

- **Inge Ceustermans** – General Director – Belgium
- **Mar Sebastià Casanova** – Project Manager – Spain
- **Fabiola Eidloth** – Content and Community Development, New Initiatives – Germany / Belgium
- **Mette van Zoest** – Trainee Project Manager and Research – The Netherlands

Programme

DAY ONE: Tuesday, 11 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabe Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

12:30 – 14:00 **Registration and snacks**

Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

14:00 – 14:30 **Introductory session: *Where are we?***

- Getting to know the local context
- Welcome by The Festival Academy, Victoria Eugenia Theater & dFERIA
- Introduction to the arts in San Sebastian and Basque Country

14:30 – 17:30 **Introductory session: *Who are we?***

- Informal Mapping of the group
- Introduction mentors
- Introduction of the Atelier format and schedule

17:30 – 18:30 **Break**

18:30 – 20:00 **Welcome words by Jaime Otamendi, Managing Director Donostia Kultura**

Opening Keynote - Is curation a way to explore our common humanity?

Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

Facilitated by **Inge Ceustermans** (Belgium) and **Thobile Maphanga** (South Africa)

Speakers: **Priscila Santana** (Brazil/US), **Ibrahim Owais** (Palestine), **Princess Sibanda** (Zimbabwe/South Africa) & **Mac Andre Arboleda** (Philippines)

We are witnessing a rise in authoritarianism in different parts of the world, limiting free expression and free ways of being. Differences are not tolerated. Populist beliefs and views thrive. Festivals are spaces for expression, for experiment, for diversity, for different perspectives and ways of being to co-exist. Can festivals have an impact on civil society, on people and on their belief systems? Can festivals mobilise people to stand up for a more humane world? And ultimately impact on democracy? What does democracy mean today? We often relate to the idea that "People have the Power". Why do people vote for authoritarian leaders and against their own power? Why do we believe what we believe? Why do we choose what we choose? What is the role of stories and storytellers in this? What is the role of curation - its origin tracing back to the Latin 'curare' associated with actions as 'to care' and 'to cure'?

20:00 – 21:00 **Holistic Anthropological Cultural Opening Ritual**

Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

21:00 **Shuttle bus to Sidreria**

21:30 – 23:30 **Sidreria dinner with Bertsolariak (Basque oral tradition)**

23:30 **End of the day programme**

DAY TWO: Wednesday, 12 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

External participants: Amaia Serrulla

10:00 – 11:00 Introducing a **Code of Conduct** / group contributes to code of conduct
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

10:55 - 11:00 **Passion Provocation**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00 **Plenary and Working Session - Festivals and Sustainability: financial and environmental**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

Facilitated by **Priscila Santana** (Brazil/US)

Speakers: **Amaia Serrulla** (Spain), **Orwa Nyrabia** (Syria/Netherlands), **Isabel Ferreira** (Spain) & **Natacha Melo** (Uruguay)

13:00 – 14:30 **San Sebastian Guided Walking Tour**

14:30 – 15:30 Lunch at Lasarte taberna

15:30 – 15:45 Walk to Victoria Eugenia Theater (6 min)

15:45 – 17:45 **Festival Presentations**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

17:45 – 18:00 **Journaling**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

18:00 – 21:00 Free time

21:00 – 22:30 Dinner at Kazkazuri

22:30 End of the day programme

DAY THREE: Thursday, 13 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

- 09:15 – 09:40** **Passion Provocation**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 09:40 – 11:30** **Working session – How do we become caring international curators?**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 11:30 – 12:00** Coffee Break
- 12:00 – 13:00** **Visit and tour of the Victoria Eugenia Theater**
Meeting with Norka Chiapusso, dFERIA Artistic Director and the production team
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 13:00 – 14:00** Lunch at *Victoria Eugenia Theater*
- 14:00 – 15:15** **Working session - How has my value system changed throughout my career?**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 15:15 – 15:30** Break
- 15:30 – 17:30** **Festival Presentations**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 17:30 – 17:45** **Journaling**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 17:45 – 18:45** Free time
- 18:45 – 19:00** Shuttle bus, meeting point at Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 19:00 – 21:00** **Cultural Programme: Basque pelota & Txalaparta**
- 21:00 – 22:30** Dinner at *Oquendo*
- 22:30** End of the day programme

DAY FOUR: Friday, 14 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

External participants: Ilona Goyeneche

- 08:45** Meeting point at Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 09:00 – 09:30** Departure to Chillida-Leku Museum (20 min bus)
- 09:30 – 10:30** **Welcome at Chillida-Leku and guided tour**
- 10:30 – 12:00** **Session - Quality is a useless concept for the arts.**
- 11:00 – 12:15** Coffee Break
- 12:15 – 13:30** **Group work - Dreaming up international collaborative projects.**
- 13:30 – 15:00** Lunch at *Chillida-Leku*
- 15:00 – 15:30** **Festival Presentations**
- 15:30 – 17:00** **One-on-one sessions with mentors** / Journaling / Free time
- 17:15 – 17:45** Departure to San Sebastian (20 min bus)
- 17:45 – 20:30** Free time
- 20:30 – 22:00** Dinner at *Lasarte*
- 22:00 - 01:00** Atelier Concert

DAY FIVE: Saturday, 15 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

External participants: Eloísa Vaello Marco, Florian Borchmeyer, Gerardo Salinas and Ilona Goyeneche

- 09:45 – 10:00** **Passion Provocation**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 10:00 – 11:15** **Session - What is the impact you want/need to have in your context?**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 11:15 – 11:30** Coffee Break
- 11:30 – 13:00** **Session - Mentors' Roulette**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 13:00 – 13:15** Walk to Beharri (10 min)
- 13:15 – 14:45** Lunch at *Beharri*
- 14:45 – 15:00** Walk to Victoria Eugenia Theater (10 min)
- 15:00 – 16:45** **Session - Mentors' Roulette**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 16:45– 17:15** Coffee Break
- 17:15 – 18:00** **One-on-One sessions with mentors**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater
- 18:00 – 19:30** Free time
- 19:30 – 21:00** Opening circus event dFERIA: [Danse Macabre](#) by Martin Zimmermann (Switzerland)
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater / Language: Without a text
- 21:00 – 21:15** Walk to *Oquendo* (3 min)
- 21:15 – 22:30** Dinner at *Oquendo*
- 22:30** End of the day programme

DAY SIX: Sunday, 16 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Orwa Nyrabia (*last day*), Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

External participants: Eloísa Vaello Marco, Florian Borchmeyer, Gerardo Salinas and Ilona Goyeneche

09:45 – 10:00 Welcome at Tabakalera by Mikel Edeso, Programmation Manager

10:00 – 12:00 Session - Group works on Manifesto – Manifesto
Location: Tabakalera

12:00 – 12:30 Coffee Break

12:30 – 13:30 Session - Individual Manifesto/action plan
Location: Tabakalera

13:30 – 13:45 Walk to Atotxa (6 min)

13:45 – 14:45 Lunch at Atotxa

14:45 – 15:00 Walk to Tabakalera (6 min)

15:00 – 16:00 One-on-One sessions with mentors
Location: Tabakalera

16:15 – 17:45 Plenary Dialogue - Uncommon Spaces: Centre & Periphery
Location: Tabakalera
Sharing around centre and periphery, and the importance of a reflection on 'Uncommon Spaces' while spaces for critical thinking and freedom of expression seem to be closing in on us. What is the 'centre' and what is the 'periphery' and who defines this? What is the meaning of land, territory, borders? What is the relation between 'community' and territory? Do we create in the territory or with the territory? A dialogue will be catalysed by a concrete example of **Territorio**, a cooperative platform created by KVS Brussels connecting the arts in Spain's periphery with **Isabel Ferreira** (Spain), **Joaquín Collado** (Spain), **Lorenzo Pappagallo** (Spain), and **Gerardo Salinas** (Argentina/Belgium) and followed by sharing of different examples within the group.

17:45 - 20:00 Free Time

20:00 – 21:30 Performance: Ni flores, ni funeral, ni cenizas, ni tantán by La Dramática Errante (Spain)
Location: Location: Teatro Principal / Language: Spanish, with English live translation

21:30 – 21:50 Walk to Victoria Eugenia Theatre (5 min walk)

21:50 – 22:00 Shuttle bus to Sidreria

22:00 – 00:00 Welcome dFERIA dinner at Sidreria

DAY SEVEN: Monday, 17 March

Mentors present: Vigdís Jakobsdóttir, Thobile Maphanga, Inge Ceustermans, Eduardo Bonito, Ibrahim Owais, Isabel Ferreira, Mac Andre Arboleda, Marko Athisaari, Natacha Melo, Princess Sibanda and Priscila Santana

External participants: Eloísa Vaello Marco, Florian Borchmeyer, Gerardo Salinas and Ilona Goyeneche

- 09:30 – 12:00 Atelier closing plenary**
- Key learnings, takeaways from the Atelier
- What each most needs going forward; what each can offer
Location: Tabakalera
- 12:00 - 12:30 Atelier feedback & evaluation**
- 12:30 – 13:30 Networking with Basque festivals:**
• **Arnaud Mahouy**, Artistic Coordinator – TEMPS D'AIMER (Biarritz, France)
• **Eztiñu Zaldúa**, Co-Director – TITIRIJAI (Tolosa, Gipuzkoa)
• **Ane Pikaza**, Co-Director – Festival Clásico de Olite (Navarra)
• **Marta Monfort**, Director – Festival Internacional de Teatro de Vitoria (Araba)
Location: Tabakalera
- 13:30 – 14:30 dFERIA Inauguration**
Dance: Twenty Toes by Roxana Küwen (Germany)
Location: Tabakalera / Language: Without a text
- 14:30 – 16:00 Welcome Lunch at Tabakalera**
- 15:30 – 16:15 Break**
- 16:15 Shuttle bus to Imanol Larzabal (Lugaritz)**
- 16:45 – 17:45 Theater: Reminiscencia by Malicho Vaca Valenzuela (Chile)**
Location: Imanol Larzabal (Lugaritz) / Language: Spanish, with English live translation
- 17:45 – 20:30 Free time**
- 20:30 – 21:30 Dance: Mellowing by Dance On & Christos Papadopoulos (Germany / Greece)**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater / Language: Without a text
- 21:30 – 21:45 Walk to Kazkazuri (6 min)**
- 21:45 – 23:00 Dinner at Kazkazuri**
- 23:00 Farewell party**
Location: Victoria Eugenia Theater

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.

dFERIA is Performing Arts Fair of Donostia / San Sebastián, which is a Spanish national reference point for professionals in the performing arts. Established in 1988 by the **San Sebastian City Council** and **Donostia Kultura**, dFERIA is a contemporary, innovative, committed and varied fair that focuses on strengthening its Latin American and European markets. At the same time, it is an extraordinary meeting platform for different agents in the sector, which promotes multiple opportunities for the exchange of experiences and artistic collaborations.

Donostia Kultura is a Public Business Entity that aims to position culture as one of the main assets of development and projection of San Sebastian. It manages various municipal facilities and services, such as theaters (Victoria Eugenia, Teatro Principal), scenic spaces (Gazteszena, Imanol Larzabal...), the San Telmo Museum, 10 houses of culture in the neighborhoods and a wide network of Municipal Libraries.

It also programs events of all disciplines, organizes festivals and, above all, promotes new cultural platforms in the city, combining public and private initiatives. In addition, it organizes and collaborates in all kinds of festive activities in the city.

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.



Organizers & Partners

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life. It supports priorities and activities set out in the European Education Area, Digital Education Action Plan and the European Skills Agenda.

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The **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)** is a Spanish autonomous agency responsible for the management of the Government international development cooperation policy. AECID has 51 Cooperation Offices (OCE) around the world.

Arts Council Korea (ARKO) aims to enrich the lives of the population by increasing accessibility to arts and cultural activities, making the arts a meaningful part of everyday life in Korea. ARKO endeavors to provide a strong platform to support artistic work in diverse disciplines, including performing and visual arts, by increasing funding opportunities for artists and arts organizations, undertaking outreach initiatives, enabling Korean artists to reach the world stage, and encouraging cultural exchange.

The **Goethe-Institut** serves as the cultural ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany worldwide. They promote cultural exchange, education, and social discourse in an international context, as well as the teaching and learning of the German language.



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