Rawabet

From 5 to 7 November 2026, Rawabet Festival takes over Brussels for three days of live performance, music, multimedia, and conversation. Across the city, discover new works developed through the Rawabet production grant programme, bringing together artists and ideas from across Europe.

The festival offers a space for encounters, exchange, and new connections across artistic practices, cultures, and borders.

Rawabet Festival is organised by Ettijahat – Independent Culture, a non-profit association (ASBL) based in Brussels and Beirut. The festival marks the culmination of a three-year programme (2024–2026) implemented through a partnership of cultural organisations across Europe.
Rawabet—Arabic for "links"—is co-funded by the European Union through the Creative Europe programme. The initiative supports artists who have relocated to Europe since 2015 and work across the performing arts, music, and multidisciplinary practices.
Through production grants, residencies, and circulation platforms, Rawabet fosters artistic development, transnational collaboration, and greater cultural visibility.

Thursday 5 November 2026

14:30–16:30 ● Bruxelles Laïque

Public Panel Discussion 1

The Body as Archive – Memory, Language, and Artistic Self-Narration

(discussion in English)

Artists who have moved to Europe transform experiences of displacement and belonging into movement, voice, and image, inviting us to reflect on how stories travel, how memory is performed, and what happens when art crosses borders, cultures, and institutions.

Speakers: **Danya Hammoud,** *choreographer and performer;* **Joud Toamah,** *visual artist;* **Fabrice Murgia,** *theatre and artistic director; and* **Kim Baraka,** *researcher and performer.*

Moderator: **Zeina Bali,** *managing director of Masahat*.

Book here

18:30–19:15 ● La Tricoterie, Salon

Performance

Mehdi Dahkan – KMs of Resistance

Born in Tangier, Mehdi Dahkan is a choreographer and dancer whose practice moves between breakdance, parkour, contemporary performance, and choreographic research. Inspired by Aïta, a Moroccan oral tradition of resistance, *KMs of Resistance* transforms breath into a language of protest. Through breathing, clapping, and rhythmic movement, two performers create a powerful soundscape using only their bodies. As silence becomes rhythm and rhythm becomes the pulse of a crowd, audiences are invited into a shared experience of listening, solidarity, and resistance.

Concept and choreography: **Mehdi Dahkan |** *Performers:* **Mohamed Bouriri, Mehdi Dahkan**
Production: **Cie Jil Z |** *Co-production:* **Forecast; Le Phare, Centre chorégraphique national du Havre Normandie; Ettijahat – Independent Culture |** *Co-funded by* **the Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Book here



Radialsystem, Berlin. Photo credit: Camille Blake

20:00 ● *Continental*

Opening Night

Book here

22:00 ● *Continental*

DJ Set

Deena Abdelwahed

Deena Abdelwahed is a Tunisian producer, composer, and DJ, and one of the distinctive voices in contemporary electronic music. Rooted in global club music, her work draws on the rhythmic traditions of the Arabic-speaking world, blending polyrhythms, percussion, melodies, and languages. Her acclaimed albums *Khonnar* (2018) and *Jbal Rrsas* (2023) explore Arabic dance music, from Moroccan chaabi to khaliji, through bold, experimental soundscapes.
An immersive, boundary-pushing set where tradition and experimentation collide on the dancefloor.

Photo credit: Bachir Tayachi

Friday 6 November 2026

14:30–16:30 ● Bruxelles Laïque

Public Panel Discussion 2

What Can Still Be Said – Freedom of Expression and the Cultures of Self-Censorship

(discussion in English)

Between what is said and what remains unsaid, this session explores the quiet forces that shape who gets heard and whose stories reach the stage. It brings together artists and cultural practitioners to consider censorship, self-censorship, risk, and the possibilities of resisting the growing restrictions on artistic expression.

Speakers: **Laila Hourani,** *novelist, consultant, and cultural facilitator;* **Brigitte Herremans,** *postdoctoral fellow at the Human Rights Centre at Ghent University;* **Mohammad Al Attar,** *playwright and essayist;* **Dirk De Wit,** *independent cultural initiatives consultant; and* **Isshaq Albarbary,** *artist and performer.*
Moderator: **Mary Ann DeVlieg,** *cultural policy expert.*

Book here

20:30 ● Recyclart

Performance

Corps Citoyen – Barrani. The Double Absence

Barrani. The Double Absence is a captivating performance-concert by the Tunisian-Italian collective Corps Citoyen, bringing together dance, music, poetry, and multimedia. Taking its name from the Tunisian Arabic word for "the stranger", the work explores what it means to live between places, languages, cultures, and identities. Dedicated to a generation shaped by diaspora, *Barrani* is both intimate and universal—a journey between departure and arrival, past and future. Through hypnotic sounds, echoes, ritual gestures, and storytelling, the performers create an immersive space where memory and the present collide.

Performers: **Rabii Brahim, Manuel D'Onofrio |** *Direction*: **Anna Serlenga |** *Dramaturgy*: **Tolja Djokovic |** *Choreography*: **Hafiz Dhaou, Aïcha M'Barek |** *Lighting design*: **Manuel D'Onofrio |** *Music*: **Manuel D'Onofrio, Rabii Brahim |** *Texts*: **Tolja Djokovic, Rabii Brahim, with fragments freely drawn from works by Bayo Akomolafe, Anna Akhmatova, Mahmoud Darwish, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Forough Farrokhzad |** *Costume design*: **Lucia Gallone |** *Production*: **Federico Amoruso |** *Production/co-production*: **Corps Citoyen; BASE Milano; Operaestate; Milano Mediterranea; Ettijahat – Independent Culture |** *With support from*: **Archive Milano and ZONA K |** *Co-funded* **by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Book here



Photo credit: Zahed Bata/Darkroom Amman

22:00 ● Recyclart

Music

Rust – Transit

Rust brings together the hypnotic sounds of Arab musical traditions and contemporary electronic music. The Lebanese–Syrian duo of Petra Hawi (vocals) and Hany Manja (electronics, electric oud) explores the soundscapes of electro-tarab, creating an immersive world of warm melodies, expressive voices, and pulsating rhythms. Their latest album, *Transit*, explores home, migration, and memory, featuring the poetry of Egyptian poet Nada Elshabrawy.

Blending composition and live improvisation, every performance is unique, intimate, atmospheric, and constantly evolving.

Co-production: **Ettijahat – Independent Culture |** *Co-funded by* **the Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Book here

Photo credit: Achref Guesmi

Saturday 7 November 2026

13:00–15:00 ● WIELS Auditorium

Public Panel Discussion 3

Solidarity as Practice – Art, Resistance, and the Future of Transnational Cultural Collaboration

(discussion in English)
In times of shrinking resources and growing pressure, this session asks what it means to sustain solidarity through artistic collaboration, how networks can endure beyond funding cycles, and what new forms of connection and collective practice might allow cultural work to continue, resist erasure, and secure its place in the future.

Speakers: **Kelly Diapouli,** *curator, cultural manager, and artistic director of Larnaka 2030;* **Cindy Mezher**, *cultural practitioner, strategist, and facilitator; and* **Abduljabbar Alsuhili,** *journalist, actor, and cultural practitioner.*
Moderator: **Toni Attard,** *CEO of Culture Venture.*

Book here

16:00–17:30 ● WIELS

Long Table

Come to the table! – Festivals as Spaces for New Ideas

(discussion in English)
Long Table is organised by The Festival Academy in collaboration with Ettijahat.
The Long Table is a performance. Inspired by the intimacy of a shared dinner table, we kick off the conversation with a provocation centred on the following question: "Can art festivals foster new ideas and provide a foundation for transformative action, or are they inevitably complicit in reinforcing existing power relations and the status quo?"
The format was conceived by Lois Weaver in 2003 in response to the separation between panellists and audiences in conventional panel discussions. The Long Table is an open format, and everyone is invited to contribute on equal terms. This event is part of a series of Long Tables organised by The Festival Academy, following previous editions at the Global Artivism Convening in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, in November 2025 and at the Theater der Welt festival in Chemnitz, Germany, in June 2026.
The Festival Academy is a global capacity-building infrastructure based in Brussels that supports cultural leaders who run festivals as spaces for civic engagement, dialogue, and societal transformation. With a community of over 1,700 festival leaders across more than 140 countries, The Festival Academy supports a distributed global ecosystem of cultural actors collectively reaching more than 40 million audience members annually.

With Alia Alzougbi *(artistic director and CEO of Shubbak Festival, London);*
Karen El Haddad and Makram Al Halabi *(co-founders of Mirsat, Brussels);*
Aymen Gharbi *(artistic director of SEE DJERBA, Tunisia); and many more.*

Book here

Theater der Welt Long Table. Photo credit: @thefestivalacademy

Closing Night

Book here

21:00 ● Beursschouwburg – Silver Space

Music Performance

Deena Abdelwahed – Diwan Midi

Diwan Midi offers a contemporary exploration and reinterpretation of Arabic music through the MIDI qanun, a prototype instrument developed at IRCAM. Deena Abdelwahed is rethinking the performance of electronic music by drawing on the intuitive approaches of Arabic music, in which improvisation plays an essential role.

Vocals, percussion, MIDI instruments: **Deena Abdelwahed |** *Vocals:* **Widad Mjama |** *MIDI percussion:* **Imed Alibi |** *MIDI qanun:* **Nidhal Jaoua**
Production: **IRCAM–Centre Pompidou |** *With support from:* **Pierre Boulez Foundation; Centre national de la musique |** *Co-production:* **Ettijahat – Independent Culture |** *Co-funded by the* **Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Photo credit: Bachir Tayachi

22:15 ● Beursschouwburg – Silver Space

Music Performance

Mezar

Mezar reinterprets diwan and Sufi poetry inherited from the Arab-Andalusian tradition through a contemporary musical language combining Afro-Oriental rhythms, electric guitars, analogue textures, and experimental soundscapes. The band plays Bedouin blues infused with the trance rhythms of its Afro-Oriental heritage.

Composition, vocals, and cigar box guitar: **Chakib Kouidri |** *Keyboards, violin, and vocals:* **Elsa Corgié |** *Bass and vocals:* **Mounir Hachemaoui |** *Drums:* **Pablo Giusiano**

Photo credit: Virgile Robert Leroudier

23:30 ● Beursschouwburg – Silver Space

Music Performance

Lynn Adib – Malakout

Syrian singer, composer, and improviser Lynn Adib brings together jazz, Arabic traditions, and sacred forms in a distinctive, fluid sound. From maqam and Byzantine chant to free improvisation, her music moves between traditions, cultures, and sonic worlds. Her album Malakout was recorded with an ensemble of musicians whose distinct artistic voices shape its sound. Together, they revisit the album's repertoire in an intimate live performance where voice, dialogue, and collective expression meet.

Rooted in spirituality, memory, and transformation, Malakout opens onto a rich and immersive sonic landscape.

Vocals, flute, mejwez: **Lynn Adib |** *Keyboards, arrangements:* **Léo Jassef |** *Percussion:* **Adriano "DD" Tenorio | Guillaume Latil**
Co-production: **Ettijahat – Independent Culture |** *Co-funded by* **the Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Photo credit: Alice Fave

00:45 ● Beursschouwburg – Silver Space

DJ Set

prnc

prnc is a Palestinian DJ based in Brussels, weaving raw underground energy into sets that are as intimate as they are electric. Moving through driving grooves, trance-soaked rhythms, Arabic pop, traditional melodies, and fractured electronic textures, he builds sonic worlds where boundaries blur and bodies take over. For prnc, the dancefloor is a space for freedom, queer expression, and resistance.

Photo credit: Yousif Lam

Tuesday 10 November 2026

20:00 ● Espace Magh

Performance

Rémi Sarmini – May Your Will Be Done

Inspired by Michelangelo’s Pietà, *May Your Will Be Done* is a multilingual theatre production that explores grief, justice, forgiveness, and the transformation of vengeance into care. Through a dialogue between faith, memory, and resistance, the work questions whether vengeance can truly heal pain or only perpetuate it.
A project presented by Mirsat.

Direction and dramaturgy: **Rémi Sarmini | ***Performers:* **Samar Kokash, Ilias Largo, Marah Kewifati, Antonin Busson | ***Music:* **Marah Kewifati (cello), Antonin Busson (trumpet) | ***Production manager:* **Ahmed Mourad Khanfir | ***Audiovisual recording:* **Abdelmajid Amine Kelbouza | ***Production:* **ART VEDA BE – Brussels | ***Co-production:* **Ettijahat – Independent Culture | ***Co-funded by* **the Creative Europe programme of the European Union**

Book here

Photo credit: Philip RSG

Ticketing

Admission is **free** for all events except the performance at Espace Magh.

Please Book online

Tickets for the performance at Espace Magh

Venues and accessibility information

Atelier Bouwmeester
Ravensteingalerij 54–59, 1000 Brussels
+32 2 553 01 11

The venue is not wheelchair accessible. Access is via stairs only.

Beursschouwburg – Silver Space
Auguste Ortsstraat 20–28, 1000 Brussels
+32 2 550 03 50

The Silver Space is accessible via the building's lifts. Visitors with reduced mobility are advised to contact the venue in advance or ask at reception for guidance and assistance upon arrival.

Bruxelles Laïque / Vrijzinnige Vereniging Brussel VZW
Avenue de Stalingrad 18–20, 1000 Brussels
+32 2 289 69 00

The panel discussions take place on the first floor. An accessible lift is available.

Continental
De Brouckèreplein 41, 1000 Brussels
The venue is accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Espace Magh
Rue du Poinçon 17, 1000 Brussels
+32 2 274 05 10

The seating area in the main hall, the brasserie, and the exhibition space are accessible to people with reduced mobility.

La Tricoterie
Rue Théodore Verhaegen 158, 1060 Brussels
+32 2 537 96 69

The Salon is accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Recyclart
Manchesterstraat 13–15, 1080 Sint-Jans-Molenbeek
+32 2 502 57 34

All spaces are located on the ground floor and are wheelchair accessible.

WIELS
Avenue Van Volxem 354, 1190 Forest
+32 2 340 00 53

Visitors with reduced mobility can enter at the rear of the building via the car park and use the lifts.

Ettijahat – Independent Culture

Ettijahat – Independent Culture was founded in Damascus, Syria, in 2011 and relocated to Beirut, Lebanon, in 2013. It has since grown to become one of the most prominent and prolific organisations in the Arab world and Europe supporting independent artists, cultural creators, and displaced communities from Syria and the wider region.

With headquarters in both Beirut and Brussels, Ettijahat maintains deep ties across the Arab region while operating at the intersection of two intertwined worlds: the realities of cultural production in the Arab region and the institutional frameworks of the European arts and culture sector.

For over a decade, Ettijahat has developed sustained programmes supporting artists working under conditions of displacement, precarity, and political constraint through residencies, production grants, mobility support, advocacy, and the creation of transnational networks. Rawabet was developed alongside other programme frameworks and forms part of Ettijahat's 2024–2026 strategic plan, which centres on supporting the mobility of artists from the Arab world who now live in exile. Rawabet is the most ambitious expression of this commitment to date, bringing together partners across six European countries to support emerging artists through a full three-year development process.

This dual anchoring in Europe and the Arab world plays a central role in shaping the organisation's approach. Ettijahat does not position itself as a bridge between two separate worlds, but rather as a space where the two landscapes meet—with all the contradictions and possibilities this interaction entails.

Ettijahat.org

Rawabet

Rawabet (Arabic for “links”) is a programme grounded in the belief that cross-border collaboration can foster meaningful cultural exchange while challenging geographical and institutional boundaries.

In 2024, six European cultural organisations joined forces with a shared commitment to strengthening the role of artists from the Arab world living in Europe: Ettijahat – Independent Culture (Brussels), which leads the programme; Gezmataz (Genoa); Masahat for Arab Culture in Exile (Oslo); Transversal Project AB (Malmö); Centre National de Création Musicale VOCE (Corsica); and coculture (Berlin).

At its core, Rawabet affirms the role of artists as pioneers of social imagination and their vital contribution to the cultural landscapes they inhabit. Artists and cultural practitioners reflect the complexities of the present, draw on rich histories, and actively help shape more collaborative futures. Through community-engaged practices, they contribute to building cultural ecosystems grounded in dialogue, equity, and innovation. These ecosystems enable us to reflect on the complexity of the world and its challenges and contribute to the development of cohesive and inclusive platforms for critical and creative engagement.

Focusing on the performing arts, music, and multidisciplinary practices, the programme seeks to strengthen connections between artists from the Arab region and Europe, as well as between institutions working beyond traditional formats. It creates a space for experimentation, learning, and exchange, drawing on diverse approaches to audience engagement and sustainable cultural production. By encouraging encounters across disciplines and geographies, Rawabet expands opportunities for collaboration rooted in shared values.

Structured as a three-year transnational initiative (2024–2026), Rawabet supports artistic creation and circulation while addressing questions of accessibility and equity within European cultural spaces. It reimagines these spaces as platforms for cooperation and social innovation, guided by principles of fairness, solidarity, and sustainability. The programme also explores democratic approaches to cultural production, fostering new narratives about the role of artists and cultural workers in European societies.

Rawabet brings together artists and cultural practitioners who have relocated to Europe from North Africa and the Mashreq since 2015, alongside European artists and organisations interested in collaborative and socially engaged practices. It also reaches out to diverse audiences, including newly arrived communities, offering opportunities to encounter artistic work shaped by migration and mobility.

Responding to a shifting cultural

landscape, Rawabet acknowledges the challenges faced by artists today: shrinking support for cultural mobility, increasing pressures on freedom of expression, and an increasingly complex environment for transnational collaboration. In this context, the programme seeks to create sustainable frameworks that support artistic development and critical dialogue.

Co-funded by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, Rawabet has demonstrated the potential of long-term, collaborative cultural initiatives over the course of three years. It provides concrete support through production grants, residencies, and circulation platforms. Sixteen artists received production grants of up to €12,000 each in the performing arts and music. Thirty-one artists participated in residency and exchange programmes in Corsica and Malmö, which encouraged experimentation, facilitated professional networking, and provided opportunities to present their work. These residencies led, among other outcomes, to the production of four music albums. The programme also encompasses four thematic festivals in Berlin, Genoa, Oslo, and Brussels, focusing on migration, mobility, and visibility.

They bring together diverse audiences and showcase emerging and established artists.

Together, these interconnected initiatives illustrate how Rawabet creates space for artistic voices to be heard, shared, and valued. Its outcomes reflect a model rooted in genuine partnership: artists engaging with audiences across Malmö, Oslo, Corsica, Genoa, Berlin, Brussels, and beyond; performances and events reaching more than 5,500 attendees; and artistic productions that combine individual vision with collective exchange. The programme culminates with a festival in Brussels from 5 to 7 November 2026, marking a key moment of public engagement and visibility.

Ultimately, Rawabet functions as a dynamic network in which artists collaborate with local communities, audiences encounter new perspectives, and partnerships enable achievements beyond the capacity of individual organisations. The performing arts and music become tools for dialogue that expand cultural understanding and demonstrate the importance of sustained support for artists as key contributors to contemporary culture.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Presented by

15 In the Midst of Change في صميم التغيير

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