

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

The **Atelier for Young Festival Managers** is a unique, intense and rigorous one-week training programme initiated by the **European Festivals Association** (EFA), at the time under the coordination of Hugo De Greef (2006). Addressed at emerging artistic festival directors worldwide, the Atelier follows the motto "*The true role of a festival is to help artists to dare, to engage in new projects*", a phrase coined by Bernard Faivre d'Arcier (former director Festival d'Avignon).

The Atelier enables young festival managers to develop fresh projects, build up a strong network and meet an exceptional group of leading artistic directors coming from pioneering international festivals, who share their experiences in lectures, presentations, group discussions as well as face-to-face interactions, and intense workshops.

The **European Festivals Association** considers as one of its main task to allow the next generation of festival makers and programmers to network and take on as much experience as possible from festival directors with remarkable parcours. "In this respect, to create these connections between participants and presenters under the umbrella of **EFA** is a fundamental asset: networking itself represents an important aspect of the quality of an excellent festival!", Darko Brlek, President of the European Festivals Association.

Based on the great interest in the **Atelier for Young Festival Managers** from networks, foundations, partners, public authorities, and others, EFA is taking this training in the festival field to the next level, especially by extending its partnerships, the geographic range of the hosts and the time-format possibilities.

We are looking forward to offering this training opportunity to an enlarging set of young, dynamic and passionate festival makers worldwide.



Kathrin Deventer
Secretary General



Atelier for Young Festival Managers

"The fact that knowledge is valuable may be clear. It has a value, and it is power, and above all: it bears a responsibility. Knowledge must be transferred, held on to and made useful to others and to coming generations of festival makers. [...] Yet a specialized education in "festival making" seems nowhere to be found."

Hugo de Greef, Introduction to EFA BOOKS 3 *Cahier de l'Atelier*, General Coordinator of the Atelier

The Atelier for Young Festival Managers is an intense, rigorous **one-week training programme** initiated by the **European Festivals Association (EFA)**. It responds to this lack of suitable long-life training opportunity in the field of festival programming and management.

Following two successful editions in 2006 in Görlitz/Germany and in 2009 in Varna/Bulgaria, it will be organised twice in 2011, for the first time – in Spring and in Autumn. It premiers in Asia in **Singapore in May 14-21, 2011**, and will take place in **Izmir / Turkey in October 23-30, 2011**.

"The Atelier is about formulating experiences and passing on knowledge to a next (new) generation of festival makers: knowledge about the arts, artists and festival formulas, thematically focusing on the very essence of arts festivals: the art and the artist."

Kathrin Deventer, EFA Secretary General

Missions and objectives

The Atelier is especially designed for those who are working or have ambitions to become involved in **programming or in programming related departments within a festival**. During **one week**, participants can widen their horizons, broaden their programming skills and develop exciting new ideas under the professional and extremely generous **guidance of renowned festival managers** coming from all over the world to share their rich experience.

This Atelier brought me much more than expected in term of network, knowledge about festival management, inspiration, reflection and self confidence. I really hope that EFA will continue this workshop every year for other young festival managers to take advantage of this wonderful offer!!!

Emilie Labarchède (International Chamber Music Festival Stavanger)

1st Atelier participant

Next to a **high-level reflection in small topical-based working groups, lectures and debates, practical activities and case studies, interactive exchanges** based on papers that participants prepare for the Atelier, **informal talks** and contacts with **artists** and with **leading cultural institutions** from the region create an outstanding opportunity to link insights gained in the working groups with the concrete environment. In Hugo de Greef's words, *"practical know-how combined with a high-degree of conceptual content in the management discipline is the guiding ethos of the Atelier"*.

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

Key focus

Particular emphasis is given to the **artistic aspects of festival management**, including **artistic vision, political and social responsibility** in relevance with the cultural and artistic significance of a festival in a certain region, a certain community, **but also internationalisation, networking, renewal and sustainability**.

Indeed, the Atelier aims to shed light on the **festival as a platform with a strong meaning for the art, the artist and their place in the society**, as Bernard Faivre d'Arcier formulated it in a sentence which became the motto of the Atelier: *“The true role of a festival is to help artists to dare, to engage in new projects...”*. Nevertheless some instruments, such as communication, production or budget, play an obvious role to reach this main purpose. And these instruments – to the extent that they are relevant for the implementation of the artistic programme – are also touched upon during the Atelier.

The Atelier enjoys world-wide **attention of politicians** and foundations, and the support of numerous governmental agencies, which attest the success of this initiative on the **international cultural scene**. The **international dimension** of the Atelier is one of the key features of this EFA initiative. Indeed, this dimension has to be present in the professional approach and policy of a festival and is an essential topic in management training. Further more, through this international dimension, the Atelier encourages a **joint reflection on the role of festivals in today's globalizing societies**.

Finally, the Atelier for Young Festival Managers appears to be one of these rare opportunities for festival managers to link and network and take the time to reflect on the true missions of festivals and on their original role in a globalized, fast and results-oriented world. For the new generation of festival managers, it represents an **outstanding occasion** to imagine innovative and creative ideas of festival formulas and to plan pioneering festival projects.

Presenters and Mentors

Presenters involved and addressed for the Atelier are **authoritative festival directors who are leading or who led festivals and their programming**; this means of course that they are (or were) also responsible for the general running of festivals, including tasks such as communication, production or budget. They are invited to **witness from their experience in the light of the Atelier purpose**, and to share the motivation and explanations of their artistic choices.

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

These leading and experienced festival operators, professionals and artists give lectures, lead workshops and take part in round tables and debates – all of them spending some days with the participants of the Atelier for face-to-face contacts and discussions. There is no doubt at all that participants will be fascinated by success stories – at the same time, they will be learning from failures and from evaluations of past or present achievements.

The general Coordinator of the Atelier is Hugo De Greef. Mentors and Presenters for the 2011 Ateliers are:

- Ching Lee Goh (Founder and Director of CultureLink, Former Director Singapore Arts Festival - Singapore)
- Grace Lang (Programme Director Hong Kong Festival Society - China)
- Hugo De Greef (former EFA Secretary General (2004-2008), General Manager Brugge European Capital of Culture 2002, Founder and former director Kaaithheater, Brussels - Belgium)
- Nele Hertling (Member of the Strategy Group "A Soul for Europe", former Director Hebbel-Theatre, Berlin, General Manager European Capital of Culture Berlin 1988 - Germany)
- Rose Fenton (Co-Initiator network Theatre Festivals in Transition FIT, Co-founder LIFT-London International Festival of Theatre - UK)
- Bernard Faivre d'Arcier (Vice-president Les Biennales de Lyon, former director of the Festival d'Avignon - France)
- Carla Van Zon (Artistic Director Auckland Arts Festival, former Director Creative New Zealand - New Zealand)
- Gérard Mortier (General Director Teatro Real de Madrid, former director Salzburger Festspiele, former director Ruhr Triennale - Belgium)
- Seok Kyu Choi (Founder and Executive Producer of AsiaNow Productions, Jongno-gu - South Korea)
- Norman Armour (Executive Director of the PuSH International Performing Arts Festival, Vancouver - Canada)
- Robyn Archer (Creative Director The Centenary of Canberra (2013), Artistic Director of The Light in Winter - Australian)
- Wai-Lap Kwong (Programme Director Guangdong Modern Dance Festival - China)
- Airan Berg (former Artistic Director of Linz European Capital of Culture 2009 - Austria)
- Per Boye Hansen (General Director of the Bergen International Festival - Norway)
- Jonathan Mills (Director of the Edinburgh International Festival - UK)
- Annemie Vanackere (Artistic Director of "De Internationale Keuze" of the Rotterdamse Schouwburg and of "Productiehuis Rotterdam" - Netherlands)
- Ruth Mackenzie (former General Director of the Manchester International Director, Director of the Cultural Olympiad for the London Olympic Games of 2012 - UK)
- Michal Merczynski (Director of the MaltaFestival in Poznan - Poland)
- Fruzsina Szép (Program Director of the Sziget Festival in Budapest, founding Director of the Hungarian Music Export Office - Hungary)

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

Participants

Not all participants are “young” (in their twenties or thirties), as the name of the Atelier might suggest. Managers in their forties and “young in the festival business” are of course welcomed! For 2011, selected participants are between 24 and 42 years old (average age is 33). Moreover, participants are from **widely diverse cultural and professional backgrounds** – from students in arts management to young managers working for large established organisations to beginning curators running their own innovative international festivals – **and share the same desire to implement excellent artistic festivals.**

Each participant has to write a paper in preparation to the Atelier: “Participants have to describe an artistic project they would like to develop (a programming aspect of a festival, a new festival, a new model for an old festival, a series of programming events...), sketch the context in which their proposed project will take place (geographical, regional, local) and explain the specifications and demands of this particular situation (budget, programme, staff, production...)”

They are asked to **present their paper in several working moments** throughout the Atelier, **to discuss them with presenters in order to receive feedback** and to adapt and improve their project during the Atelier.

The Atelier was the opportunity to meet both experienced festival leaders in an intimate context, as well as the possibility to meet young colleagues. It's very rare in our specific professional context to meet so many young people together. To me, that was food for thought.

Tobias Kokkermans (Festival Van Vlaanderen)
1st Atelier participant

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

4 editions

Every edition of the Atelier has been in line with its hosting city and its festivals. Indeed, it is important for the participants to get to know the facets of the cultural diverse city hosting the Atelier, which is as much a part of the Atelier as the lectures, workshops and discussions. For instance, Varna / Bulgaria offered an inspiring framework to Atelier participants to reflect on the place of festivals, arts and culture in society, as well as venues such as the Archeological Museum, the Opera Theatre, the Puppet Theatre and the Art Gallery.

“After days of clouds and rain, Varna finally smiled with sunny weather for the arrival of both mentors and participants at the second edition of the European Atelier for Young Festival Managers. The cheerful crowd of young people strolled through the streets of the city, described as “the best place to live in Bulgaria”.

Mr. Basitov, Deputy Mayor of Varna, and Mr. Serafimov, Director of the Varna Summer International Music Festival

Görlitz 2006

The first European Atelier for Young Festival Managers took place in the **historical city of Görlitz / Germany** (on the German-Polish border) and gathered 33 participants from 20 countries, from 15-21 May, 2006 for an intense and very productive week of workshops, lectures and cultural events. It was organised by EFA, in cooperation with the Institut for Kulturelle Infrastruktur Sachsen (IKS) and Theorem, and with the support of the Felix Meritis Foundation and the Amsterdam/Maastricht Summer Academy and Dartington International Summer School.

Participants explored and questioned established and cutting-edge festival formats and developed exciting new ideas under the **professional and extremely generous guidance of renowned festival managers**, including **Steve Austen** (Felix Meritis Foundation), **Bernard Faivre d'Arcier**, **Rose Fenton**, **Gavin Henderson** (Principal of Trinity College of Music in London), **Nele Hertling**, **Tzvetelina Iossifova** (Co-Director of the Red House Center for Culture and Debate in Sofia), **Nevenka Koprivsek** (Director of Bunker Productions in Ljubljana), **Brian McMaster** (Director of Edinburgh International Festival), **Gerard Mortier** and **Tom Stromberg** (Director EXPO Hannover 2000 art program).

The reactions at the end of this 1st experience were very **positive** as participants came away with fresh ideas, new energy and self-confidence, and, maybe most importantly, with a **whole new network and endless possibilities for future international exchanges and long-term collaborations.**

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

Varna 2009

The second edition of the Atelier took place in **Varna / Bulgaria**, hosted by the Varna Summer International Music Festival and organised in partnership with the Varna Municipality and the Festival and Congress Centre and gathered **35 participants from 21 countries**, from 26 April to 3 May 2009.

They looked into the current trends of festivals programming and exchanged on the new challenges of festival management nowadays, guided by the **four Atelier Mentors - Hugo De Greef, Bernard Faivre d'Arcier, Rose Fenton and Nele Hertling** - and met **nine other well-experienced festival experts** coming from all over the world: **Robyn Archer, Darko Brlek** (EFA President and Artistic and General Director of Ljubljana Festival, Slovenia), **Agnes Havas** (Founder and General Director of Opera Competition and Festival with Mezzo Television, Hungary), **Tzvetelina Iossifova** (Co-Director of The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate, Bulgaria), **Gundega Laivina** (Programming Director of International Festival of Contemporary Theatre Homo Novus, Latvia), **Jonathan Mills** (Director and Chief Executive of Edinburgh International Festival, UK), **Mark Russell** (Director of Under The Radar Festival, USA), **Marie-Agnès Sevestre** (Director of Festival des Francophonies en Limousin, France) and **Galin Stoev** (Stage director of Company Fingerprint, Belgium/Bulgaria).

The numerous positive reactions of participants and presenters after the Atelier for Young Festival Managers 2009 in Varna/Bulgaria showed the **necessity to implement professional and high-quality training programme in the field of festival management**.

Singapore 2011

EFA organizes for the first time the **Atelier for Young Festival Managers** in Asia, for the 1st time. It will take place in Singapore, from 14-21 May 2011, in cooperation with **LASALLE College of Arts Singapore, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Association of Asian Performing Arts Festivals (AAPAF), the Singapore International Arts Festival and CultureLink Singapore**. **45 managers from 27 countries** will gather and develop new projects, build up a strong network and meet a unique group of 12 directors coming from outstanding international festivals.

Izmir 2011

The **Atelier for Young Festival Managers in Europe** is co-organised between EFA and the **International Izmir Festival** and will take place from 24-31 October 2011.

Atelier for Young Festival Managers

Distinctive features in a nutshell

The Atelier is a distinctive and unique programme:

The Atelier is a distinctive programme:

- it addresses **emerging artistic festival directors**, not administrative staff
- it focuses on **the artistic role of festivals**, not its events character
- it touches **all artistic disciplines**: music, but also dance, theatre, and multidisciplinary festivals
- it is a **one-week intense course**, not only a conference
- it takes **multiple formats**, not only lectures, but also **workshops** or **individual paper discussions**
- it features a **distinguished group of festival mentors** acting as sounding board
- it does not last just for a week, but **creates a sustainable platform** and a stepping stone for **new cooperations and networks, on a worldwide scale**
- it is not a university, but **it is embedded in the city** where the Atelier is taking place

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