

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION
**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AND CONFERENCE**

13 · 14 · 15 · 16 | 5 | 2009

VILNIUS

Artistic Trends in Festivals Laboratories for Creativity, Promoters of Innovation

Organised in the framework of the EFA General Assembly 2009
Hosted and co-organised by Vilnius Festival in the framework of the European Capital of Culture 2009
For EFA members and invited guests

14 May 2009, National Philharmonic Hall

Conference Outline

Almost by definition, culture is one of the most rapidly changing fields in society. Artistic festivals are heralds of innovation in the arts. A festival has an essential mission to constantly look for its contemporary quality, to be prepared to changes, permanently choose for innovative means, pick up trends in the arts in order to play an alert artistic, cultural and social role. How and under which circumstances innovation is translated in a festival's work, is one of the most vital questions: In terms of programming, format, concepts, artistic approaches, partners, collaboration with artists, with agencies, what are today's artistic trends in festivals? How and why do trends in festivals change? Who sets trends? What are the future trends? And what future for festivals: Still the trendsetters of our creative ecology of tomorrow?

Which trends? Which trendsetters? What future?

Trends in programming practice

Festivals create key moments of the arts and the development of an artistic scene in a specific location. In the programming practice, are there trends in the formula related to the size, scope, artistic/social labels? What kind of festivals are emerging? Which ones have a future, which ones focus on sustainable development?

Trends in the relation artists- festivals

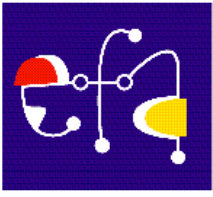
One of the main missions of each festival is to pick up trends - and introduce new, experimental work of young / unknown artists, a creative motor in the arts and for the artist, an arts laboratory stimulating creativity in society, an innovator making space for the 'unknown' and the 'unexpected'. What changes in the work with the artists? Do festivals tend to work with the same artist for a longer time or rather change frequently?

Trends in the surroundings of festivals

A future challenge for any arts festival is to avoid that it only exists as one function among many instruments in a city - an activity multiplied by the hundreds - another instrument which serves what is known as the Tourism and Heritage Industry. Is it due time to consider reinventing the festival - to avoid a process that has to do in the first place with marketing, tourism?

Trends in trendsetters

Trends change, the meaning of innovation changes. Who determines what is 'new' and what gets a chance to be presented? In terms of programming governance: are there conglomerate/decision making centres? Is it the artistic director? Agencies? Politicians/funding programmes? Sponsors? The media? Critics?



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Trends in broadening programmes to outreach activities

A festival is more than a showcase of productions. It has a broader set of responsibilities which are linked to a specific place and its specific needs. Do outreach activities become the 'second life' for an arts festival?

Trends in relation with other festival formats

What is the relation between a festival and other urban happenings such as European Capitals of Culture? City happenings? Fairs? What is the major challenge for classical, sometimes 'elite' arts festival?

Trends in the relation arts - audiences

The audience, more and more, becomes part of the festival: through social platforms, through active involvement in the artistic process. Festivals are laboratories for the artists; but also for the audience? How does the active inclusion of the audiences change the work of a festival?

Trends in networking

To initiate new productions - and to create new concepts - is a constant task for festival makers. What are the platforms that support the internationalisation today? Do tools/the modus operandi (traveling, meeting, networking) change? What role for an international network such as EFA in this context?

How does the conference approach these questions?

The above mentioned aspects will be explored in an inspirational keynote speech, a stimulating round table, a series of very concrete presentations and in participatory working groups.

All contributors and conference participants will discuss along the line of the overall guiding questions:

1. What changed in the artistic trends in festivals (past, current, future trends)? 2. In the broader creative ecology of today: why can a festival be considered a trendsetter (if at all)?

Interventions from the floor

To enable a lively and stimulating discussion between the audience, round table participants, key note speaker and presenters, conference participants are invited to join in the discussion.

In this framework, EFA invited representatives from different sectors and backgrounds - sponsors, Lithuania governmental representatives subsidising festivals, media representatives and journalists and others - to contribute to the discussion with their special experiences giving a very specific perspective on the topic "Artistic Trends in Festivals".

All EFA members and invited guests are invited to share their ideas!

Why this conference?

2009 is celebrated as the **European Year of Creativity and Innovation**. At the occasion of the Year, EFA launched the FestLab for Creativity and Innovation - to foster collaboration and exchange of experiences amongst EFA members and highlight the innovative and creative potential of festivals.