

[Draft 2 December 2009]
European Festivals Research Project (EFRP)
and
The Institute of Cultural Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland

invite proposals for presentations at the EFRP research workshop

Artistic festivals with a social and intellectual agenda

Poznań, Saturday 24 April and Sunday, 25 April 2010

The proliferation of festivals in the past decade has brought a rapid development of new concepts and shifts in the prevailing festival typology. After several thematic workshops, held once or twice a year since 2005, we want to focus in the Poznań workshop on festivals that address complex intellectual topics and large social issues, combining debates, lectures and workshops with performances, concerts, film projections, exhibitions and installations. Among topics such festivals address are free thought (Stavanger), science (Genova), philosophy (Modena), economy (Trento), food (Bologna), creativity (Florence), politics (Edinburgh), spirituality (Torino), journalism (Peruggia). Several festivals address climate change, feminism (City of Women, Ljubljana), globalization, migration and urban interculturality (Jewish festival, Budapest; Festival of Four Cultures, Lodz).

These festivals have sought to engage new contributors to debates about the future of contemporary society but to do so through transcending the programmes of political parties and their ideological foundations. Such festivals bring together experts, politicians, academics, students and ordinary citizens in a reflection on these new agendas inspired by artists who help to sharpen the debate through the power of the metaphor.

Through this workshop we hope to address questions such as: How do the artistic components of such festivals contribute to such festivals achieving the subtle transformation in attitudes that can result in major change in social and cultural capital? Another is to reveal whether such artistic activities directly stimulate 'deliberative learning and knowledge acquisition' of citizens and ultimately whether they build a sense of involvement and responsibility of the wider civil society? Other themes that the workshop aims to explore are: Why are such festivals especially popular in Italian cities? Why have universities, museums and learned societies in particular chosen to engage with these agendas and their diverse communities through the medium of a festival?

Researchers are invited to submit short proposals (250 words) of their research presentation by 1 February 2010 to Dr Dragan Klaić, EFRP Chair at draganklaic@gmail.com. Accepted proposals are to be developed into PowerPoint presentations of maximum 10 slides. In the Poznań workshop, each presenter will have 15 minutes for their PowerPoint presentation with ample time being reserved for discussion. PowerPoint presentations (in English) should be sent by April 5.

As a condition of participation presenters consent to have their PowerPoint presentations published on the EFRP public depository at www.efa-aeu.eu for the future benefit of the wider community of those interested in festivals research.

The organisers will provide hotel accommodation and meals for the presenters at the EFRP workshop. Participants will be responsible for their own travel costs. Colleagues whose

proposals are accepted are advised to arrive on Friday, 23 April and depart on Sunday, 25 April after lunch. LOT flies to Poznań from Warsaw, SAS from Copenhagen and Lufthansa from Frankfurt and Munich. Wizz, Ryanair and several other low-cost airlines fly directly from numerous other European destinations.

This workshop is part of a larger programme entitled: *Celebrating Europe: how international festivals strengthen civil society*. The full programme includes a round table discussion *The social and cultural capital of cities – Festivals and their contribution to urban development strategies*, with invited experts, festival operators and representatives of local government (Thursday, 22 April 18-20 h) and an academic conference *Europe of festivals – civil society benefits?* with invited Polish and foreign speakers (Friday, 23 April, 10-18h). An additional cultural programme including a theatre visit will be provided.

For further information, contact: dr Joanna Ostrowska at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (j_ostrow@amu.edu.pl) or dr Dragan Klaic, EFRP Chair (draganklaic@gmail.com)

The European Festival Research Project (EFRP) is an international, interdisciplinary consortium, which is focused on the dynamics of artistic festivals in contemporary life. One of its principal aims is to understand the underlying causes of the current proliferation of festivals and its resource implications and diagnostic perspectives. EFRP focuses on those festivals that are driven by a firm artistic vision, involving international programming and which benefit from substantial support from public authorities.

The consortium instigates research papers, studies, training, publications and debates and articulates tentative conclusions, trends, forecasts and recommendations for festival operators, public authorities (as subsidy givers) and potential sponsors. All research outcomes are being made accessible in a public depository at the web site of the European Festivals Association (<http://www.efa-aeu.eu/efahome/efrp.cfm>). Periodically EFRP organises intensive research workshops on specific topics where the results of research are presented and discussed. Such workshops have taken place in Nitra (2005), Leicester and Le Mans (2006), Barcelona (2007), Helsinki and Moscow (2008) Novi Sad and Leeds (2009). Further workshops are being planned for 2010. An edited book on festival politics, programming, impacts and governance will be produced by the consortium and associated researchers in 2010. Contact: Dr Dragan Klaic, EFRP Chair (draganklaic@gmail.com) or Christopher Maughan, EFRP Coordinator (ccm@dmu.ac.uk).

Institute of Cultural Studies, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (PL) is part of the Faculty of Social Sciences (<http://www.amu.edu.pl/en/about-us/faculties/faculty-of-social-sciences>) in the third biggest university in Poland, which is also third in the country's ranking. Its research and teaching are focused on the critical analysis of contemporary culture and civilization in all aspects, particularly the artistic ones. It has eight units: 1) participation in culture, 2) methodology of scientific research, 3) business ethics, 4) culture of the city, 5) semiotics of culture, 6) visual culture, 7) artistic culture, 8) performance studies.

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Celebrating Europe: international festivals strengthening the civil society
background briefing paper for the 3 events in Poznań on April 22-25, 2010

Festivals are occasions to celebrate being together. People gather on their own free will and want to be together with others. It is as simple as that. New and authentic social bonds may be born this way.

When in 1947, soon after the traumatic experience of 2nd World War, the Edinburgh Festival of Arts came to life, its principal aim was to 'enliven and enrich the cultural life of Europe' and 'provide a platform for the flowering of the human spirit'. What was crucial there was the deep belief that artistic culture could be very important factor in the healing of post-war trauma and in reintegration of the continent. Such a belief was shared by the organizers of many other festivals and festivities of the epoch, although this was not always stated explicitly. The effect of all those efforts was, as Bernard Focroulle noticed, that „since the end of WW 2 festivals have multiplied in Europe just as monasteries and cathedrals burgeoned in the Middle Ages”.¹ The great majority of post-war festivals' organizers were underlining the international and especially the European dimension of these events. They sought to create platform of exchange and multilateral cultural collaboration and for rebuilding of empathy. The aim was to overcome political, ethnic, cultural and linguistic barriers. The reconstruction of common European cultural space was one of the most important effects of festivals' coming to life and their quick, fruitful development.

In every epoch, and especially in times of tumultuous changes and fundamental, deep, historical shifts, the need for large gatherings of people may manifest itself in many places and contexts. The fullest and most clear manifestations occur, however, amongst crowds participating in spectacular artistic events. Art gives easy and complete possibility of uncovering the truth of our emotions, the direction of our thoughts, of guiding the

¹ Bernard Focroulle, "At the heart of European identities". In *The Europe of Festivals. From Zagreb to Edinburgh, intersecting viewpoints*. Ed. Anne-Marie Autissier, Toulouse: L'attribut 2008, p. 11.

development of our values. All this shared excitement tends to renew a shredded social fabric. Can festivals, however, continue to be great laboratories of the creativity and community mobilization in view of leveling impact of globalization and the assaults of the commercial, industrial cultural goods? What is the creative function of arts in a drastically changing globalized society? Art has always aimed at unifying individual emotions in an integrated feeling of collective identity, through an experience of self-truth through beauty. This transcendence is not always possible. However, people join the festive events to meet, share and reaffirm their status of citizens.

It is worth mentioning that when Europe was still divided by the “Iron Curtain” into two separate parts the existence of arts festivals was particularly important. The turnovers of 1989 were the beginning of a “flood” of festivals on the Eastern side of the former “Iron Curtain”.

Our panel, the academic conference and the EFRP research workshop, all with ample discussions, shall seek to answer the question: do European international artistic festivals have a chance to enrich European public sphere and contribute to the emergence of a Europe-wide civil society?

Many of the festivals’ organizers relinquish nowadays the idea of “artistic competition” and try to build the program of events they run as a kind of intellectual stimulus which can help to cope with some concrete, particular problems, as reflected in the festival program and concept. When many of the organizers give up the idea of an artistic ranking or of a “hit parade” and choose to shape the artistic event as the encounters and the occasions to integrate the local community and involve outside visitors, can such complex events stimulate not just a society of “art consumers” but also a society of disputing, critical culture and a society of civility?