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Generating New Narratives

The upcoming festival in Malta will give the opportunity to update the network of European cultural initiatives working in the field of migration, exile and inclusion. It will bring together native communities and newcomers.

Organized in Malta 2018





Organizer: DIYALOG

Partner: Sustainable Design Collective and African Media Association Malta

Format: festival, extended exhibition, panels, screenings, readings, talks

Istanbul / Valletta 2018





2018

Project Summary

The Istanbul association diyalog in collaboration, African Media Association Malta and the Sustainable Design Collective Malta is organizing a festival with the title Mahalla dedicated to mobility, exile and cultural identity.

The general vision of the festival is to question a dystopian reality of excluding “the other” in the form of the migrant, the opponent, the poor, the animal, and the environment.

The Title, Mahalla, refers to the word mahalla used in many languages and countries meaning neighborhood or location originated in Arabic māhallā. from the root meaning ‘to settle’, ‘to occupy’ derived from the verb halla (to untie), as in untying a packhorse or camel to make a camp.

Different artistic positions (Fine Arts, Literature, Film, Music, Performing Arts) will be introduced and combined to form new narratives regarding culture, identity and the construction of it on a personal, national, international and intellectual level trying to overcome the divisions that still exists between nations, religions and ethics, between newcomers and host communities.

The upcoming festival will bring together native communities and newcomers. It will be a platform with concrete results how these initiatives and cultural mediators want to operate in Europe and beyond in future.

The participants of the Festival in Malta are able to pick up the idea of transforming Dystopia in any kind of form or media. The main task is to reflect how communication styles are working out narratives about identity, cultural references, territorial borders, the right for or restriction of mobility, the possibilities of personal development and the participation in public representations connected to the results of communication in a globalized world characterized by a certain dualism regarding the access to resources, mobility, technology and safety. The concept for the artistic production is free for metaphorical interpretations in any direction.



2018

Program

The Mahalla Festival will invite artists from different disciplines and cultural workers and initiatives to present their experiences and narrations in round tables, lectures, workshops, screenings, exhibitions, readings and concerts. The Festival 2018 will focus on the following topics and formats:

Language and Migration

Readings, Film-Screenings, Lectures

Maltese language is descended from Siculo-Arabic and is the only Semitic language that has always been written in the Latin script. In addition half of the vocabulary is derived from standard Italian and English words make up to 20% of vocabulary.

Against this background this section of the festival dedicated to literature will present in readings and lectures examples about the question, what does it mean writing in another language and researching a non-linear process of translation.

In lectures and readings the participants will present translation and migration as related phenomena: as mobility of texts, international transfer of knowledge and transformation in the field of cultural literacy.

Communities and Diversity

Film-Screenings, Presentations, Social Events

Freedom to express one's cultural identity can be a powerful way to maintain a community's mental and even physical health. Freedom of expression



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is also a right and, as our language of assistance moves from needs-based to rights-based, respect for the empowering forms of cultural expression should inform our thinking and planning.

This section addresses strategies and concepts that brings together asylum seekers and local citizens, migrants and native residents, united by a desire to express adventures of journey, the other and the self with creative tools.

In Workshops of Short-Film-making, Photography and Story-telling participants will explore their environments and memories and will learn in small groups to develop methods of individual and/or collective storytelling in different media.

The results of these workshops established and realized in Malta and by partner initiatives in Europe and beyond will be presented during the festival. The results will be compared, discussed and evaluated in public talks; future concepts and improvements will be evolved in how to learn and use creative tools as filmmaking in mixed groups to create an environment of diversity.

New City Cultures and Cultural Institutions

Lecture, Exhibition, Concert

Cultural organizations in Europe (e.g. museums of art, theater) are just starting to address the cultural diversity of their cities in their programs, personnel decisions and targeted audiences.

This section of the festival presents examples and innovations by cultural institutions that integrate issues of immigration and cultural diversity into their program and their city cultures, and thereby reduces infrastructural exclusion in the cultural sector.



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It means as well approaches to rethink cultural heritage, its collection and presentation into a source of inspiration to local communities and newcomers and vice versa.

Mobile Citizenship

Lecture, exhibition, screening

If landscapes are not ruled by centralized governments anymore but by regional forces, the individual should not be a citizen of a fixed country any longer. Instead, its „nationality“ should change with the individual moving. By spending holidays in Las Vegas or escaping a conflict area to a hosting location, persons would become temporary citizens of these areas, holding the same rights and duties as the old-established population.

What are the conditions, opportunities and perspectives of this mobile citizenship are the questions of this section.

This section presents as well examples of cultural projects, decolonized hubs, urban concepts, floating islands and hanging tents as future models and condition for mobile citizenship.

Future Demands and Requirements in the Cultural Field

Round table and final panel

In the round table and final panel the participating cultural initiatives, creative professionals and cultural players will express future requirements



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when working in the field of migration, exile and cultural identity - financially, logistically and in content.

Steps will be identified how to update the existing network of initiatives and players beyond ordinary platforms in social media, websites or occasionally gatherings.

Strategies will be developed that can create future cultural identities in local communities beyond national borders and nationalism. A final manifesto will be published.



mahalla

Organizer

diyalog is a experienced Istanbul intercultural association organizing cultural events to support diversity and inclusion since 2006.

Same examples:

Since 2009 the Istanbul based association diyalog developed in cooperation video workshops for local communities. These video workshops were realized in Turkey, Hungary, Afghanistan and Northern Iraq. The results of the film workshop serial “Searching Traces” involving the topic of migration from Syria to Istanbul were screened at the Pera Museum, at the Documentarist Film Festival and at Studio-X Istanbul, a space of the Columbia University, in Istanbul in 2015 and 2016. They were part of the Film Festival “Gravity for all” of the Villa Romana in Florence 2016 and at the Mahalla festival in Istanbul in the parallel program of the 15th Istanbul Art Biennial in September 2017.

The Searching Traces workshop will be as well part of the Mahalla festival taking place in Malta in fall 2018 organized by DIYALOG. The festival will be dedicated to migration, exile and cultural identity and will be a start-up-event for cultural initiatives, stakeholders, cultural mediators and artist to exchange their experiences in this field, to help creatives with migration background to settle in the host communities and to develop a new narration on the creative potential and intercultural chances of migration and mobility in different media (film/video, literature, architecture, fine arts and theater).

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