

## CONCEPTS OF CULTURAL PROGRAMS OF EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE Rijeka 2020 / Umeå 2014 / Matera 2019 / Bodø 2024 / Wrocław 2016 / Kaunas 2022

### Rijeka 2020

The main goal of the cultural program was to bring the city of Rijeka closer to Europeans, while referring to current European cultural and social issues. The idea was to transform Rijeka and the surrounding region into the so-called "Port of Diversity" - a place where people from all over Europe, including hundreds of artists, had the opportunity to meet and enjoy Europe's extraordinary cultural diversity, as well as embody common European values: respect for human rights, tolerance and openness, democracy, and freedom of speech. The assumption was to include the residents of Rijeka and Rijeka region in the organization of the program.

The cultural and artistic program of Rijeka - European Capital of Culture 2020 - began on the 1st February with an opening ceremony at the Port of Rijeka. In 2020, Rijeka hosted over 300 cultural programs with over 600 individual events. Nearly 350 partner organizations participated in the program, and partners and artists came from over 55 countries in Europe and around the world.

The program was defined by three themes: water, work and migration. They were to be the symbols of entwined identities of Rijeka and the modern Europe.

**Water** - connected symbolically with the city itself ("rijeka" means "water"). The city of Rijeka is also a port. Water is also a symbol of care for the natural environment.

**Work** - refers to the industrial side of the city. Brings our attention to the fact that we live in an era of searching for new technologies and working conditions.

**Migration** - refers to the historical background of the city as a city of migrations, experiencing significant changes in population in the past, but also a place of intertwining cultures, and at the same time - tolerance.

These themes were woven into a program of exhibitions, shows, operas, conferences, concerts, festivals, visits by international and Croatian artists, projects undertaken by local associations, renovation of spaces and sculpture installations, book promotions and meetings with the inhabitants of Rijeka, the region, Croatia and Europe.

### Flagships

The main program was divided into seven intertwined thematic segments called flagships. Each project included a series of separate events and has been developed in cooperation with domestic and foreign partners. In addition, complementary to the main program, a number of important events and special projects were initiated, which expanded the thematic scope and helped to present the best European art.

**The Kitchen of Diversity** – the project was dedicated to migration and minorities (national, ethnic, religious, gender, age, people with specific physical and mental conditions, different lifestyles) and their contribution to culture. The project consisted of programs designed for inclusion. The program included, among others: Porto Etno - World Music and Gastronomy Festival, One City football and cultural project: *One Goal*, *European Short Story Festival* and *Hay Festival* with special program *Europa28: Visions of the Future*.

**Dopolavoro** – a project dedicated to new technologies and their impact on human activity. As part of the project, a large international exhibition devoted to new economic activities and new forms of work related to the sea - The Sea is Glowing was organized. It was accompanied by a series of individual exhibitions, performances and events, such as the robotic opera ReCallas Medea, a concert by Compressorhead band consisting of robots, and an interactive robot installation by American artist Christian Ristow.

**Times of Power** program - a project devoted to European history in the context of various forms of power - from destructive to creative. The inspiration was the complex history of Rijeka - a city that has undergone numerous socio-political changes over the last 100 years. The program covered many different events, including the presentation of contemporary ballet by the leading Greek choreographer Andonis Foniadakis, the festival of the Needcompany group - one of the most important international, multilingual, and interdisciplinary European theatre collectives, the Anachronic BathHouse audio-visual installation by one of the world's leading authors of contemporary music - Heiner Goebbels, a series of modern and contemporary art exhibitions presenting Rijeka and European history (including permanent exhibitions of the new museum spaces of the Municipal Museum in the Sugar Palace and on the Galeb ship).

The **Sweet & Salt** flagship is dedicated to the place where the freshwater river Rječina and the salty sea in the Gulf of Rijeka come together. It is a place where the city meets the industrial port infrastructure and nature. The project was dedicated to conceptualizing and bringing to life this underutilized but still attractive part of the city in the heart of Rijeka. Various artistic and cultural activities and events planned in this area were to serve this purpose (e.g., in places such as the Exportdrvo warehouse, a sun terrace and a playground for children at Molo Longo, terraces of skyscrapers, the former Hartera paper factory, the Delta Ivex building). A number of interventions have been planned to change the perception of these places by the residents, including also by the architectural group SKROZ. An international thematic exhibition *Fiume Fantasy* was organized, dedicated to the history of the city and the region in a global context. Salt sculptures of sound and water (*The Sound Carbuettor*) were created. The *Spring Forward* contemporary dance festival as well as the spectacle for children and teenagers, *Children of the Port*, based on the book *Rijeka Rock Anthems*, were organised.

**Lungomare ART** – is a series of ten permanent contemporary art installations inspired by the Kvarner Bay and installed in nine locations along the coast of the bay and on the islands, representing contemporary art that comes out of museums to meet the local community. The installations were created by renowned artists, designers and architects from Croatia, Europe, Japan, and Chile. They were selected by the Czech curator Michal Koleček. They refer to the traditions and history important for individual local communities. In addition to aesthetic values, the installations also have a functional value - some of them have become new resting places, playgrounds, places to talk and learn.

**The Children's House** – a project dedicated to children, parents and grandparents. It included a festival of children's creativity, a specially designed interactive exhibition, a children's magazine called Brickzine, and many other programs such as puppet shows, film, literary, and art programs. The Tobogan Festival provided a series of workshops and spectacular outdoor events, a series of programs dedicated to the character and work of the legendary professor Balthazar - a cartoon character (such as a large interactive exhibition and artistic intervention in the Uragan boat). The cultural program included a number of puppet shows, such as the *Bombonier varietel* cabaret, film workshops, and the *Good Children's Books Month*.

Under the **27 Neighbourhoods** flagship, residents of 27 towns, cities and villages across the Primorje-Gorski Kotar District have connected with their neighbours from the 27 EU Member States. Sharing experiences, customs and ideas, they created a network of cooperation and cultural projects that were included in the Neighbourhood Festival. In reality, the following Croatian towns: Lovran, Opatija, Matulji, Kastav, Pehlin, Drenova, Škurinje, Turnić i Mlaka, student campus in Trsat, Jelenje, Čavle, Praputnjak, Kostrena, Crikvenica, Novi Vinodolski, Rab island, Unije island, town of Cres, town of Krk, Malinska, Vrbnik, Gomirje, Mrkopalj, Fužine, Delnice, Brod na Kupu i Gornji Kutu have been connected with 27 organisations, cities or towns from the European Union: Immenstad (Germany), Prague (Czech Republic), Trieste (Italy), Ružomberok (Slovakia), Selnica ob Dravi (Slovenia), National Museum of Archaeology (Malta), Urban Gorillas (Cyprus), Roma Education Fund (Romania), Camp (France), Bilbao (Spain), Riga (Latvia), Estonian Museum of Natural History (Estonia), Kaunas (Lithuania), Kinvara (Ireland), Gornja Bela Rečka (Bulgaria), GreenWise People (United Kingdom), Oulu (Finland), Lydenskab (Denmark), Pomerania (Poland), Disorder (Sweden), Stichting Bewegend Beeld (Netherlands), Global Water Partnership Mediterranean (Greece), Center for Ecological Learning (Luxembourg), 4iS (Portugal), Pecs (Hungary), Mons (Belgium), Vienna (Austria). The project enabled cultural exchange, launching a network of informal contacts that still exists today. The created cooperation platform strengthened local communities living in remote areas, and thus favoured the development of good interpersonal relations and the creation of an atmosphere of satisfaction with diversity.

**Programme PLUS** - consisted of a series of special events and projects showing the diversity of European cultures, providing an artistic offer at the highest level, including an event inaugurating the cultural program of Rijeka as the European Capital of Culture 2020, as well as the International Carnival Parade in Rijeka, which gathered carnival groups from various European cities. Among the representative artistic projects were several gala concerts at the Rijeka Theatre, such as performances by opera stars Karita Mattila and Elina Garanč, an exhibition by the great Croatian contemporary artist David Maljković at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, and the Unknown Klimt exhibition: Love, Death, Ecstasy which was presented at the Rijeka City Museum.

## **ADDITIONAL PROGRAM**

The goal of additional program was to support cultural organizations and civic initiatives of the wider local community and to develop international contact networks, e.g. through minor socio-cultural activities and activities raising environmental awareness. The aim was to improve the quality of life in the community and offer all residents the opportunity to actively participate in the activities.

**Cultural Diplomacy** – an initiative aimed at improving the international visibility of the city and the region as a cultural centre and initiating a strategic international partnership. The international conferences organized in Rijeka in 2020, such as the conference "The role of cultural heritage in socio-economic development and the preservation of democratic values", conferences of international associations, such as the NEMO Network of European Museums, as well as presentations abroad, helped to foster closer cooperation between experts in the field of art and culture.

**The Classroom** program is an integrated educational program to build the capacity of the cultural sector and strengthen the local community by simultaneously developing transversal skills and specialist knowledge and experience. Activities included workshops, summer schools, mentoring, creating lifelong learning programmes, study visits, vocational training, seminars, conferences, assemblies, and meetings. The main themes are space and technology; management and leadership; audience and community development.

**RiHub** is a newly established cultural centre in Rijeka, a place of contacts and knowledge exchange. The aim of this initiative is to foster better cooperation between the residents and the local self-government. RiHub served as a platform for presenting successful civic initiatives from around the world in order to inspire the people of Rijeka to take action (for example: Night Mayor of Amsterdam, Bologna Facebook Districts, and Municipal Gardens of Ljubljana). Officials specially delegated by the city authorities tested existing ideas and encouraged residents to submit new ideas. Cooperation with different groups of citizens has resulted in specific projects dedicated to solving specific problems or improving life in the city. The special Retox program launched under RiHub was devoted

to innovative environmental civic initiatives. On its basis, a discussion panel was organized on climate change, waste management and the ban on the use of plastics. The Culture Lab Europe program supported organizing workshops on solidarity and participatory programs bringing together European, regional, and local communities.

**Citizen's cooperation programs** - The Civic Initiative, Green Wave, Citizen's Council - were aimed at involving citizens in the creation, implementation and monitoring of social, cultural and environmental projects in and thus contribute to improving the quality of life in the city. These programs were already partially implemented before the year of the event.

**Volunteers** - volunteers have made a significant contribution to the organization of each major event or major project. Volunteers had the opportunity to participate in major shows, concerts, exhibitions and many other events taking place in Rijeka in 2020. They took part in opening new spaces of cultural institutions in Rijeka. Due to this project, volunteers had a chance to meet new people, participants of the program and guests of Rijeka, to cooperate with producers and artists, organizers, and stars. Volunteers were recruited through the Croatian Cultural Center in Sušak.

## Umeå 2014

The cultural program was based on the concept of celebrating the Northern European region and its unique seasonal conditions (where darkness reigns for the most of winter), as well as crossing borders and cultural diversity. During the year when Umeå was the European Capital of Culture, every day there were cultural events dedicated to art and design, music, theatre, sports, as well as the traditions of the indigenous people of the North. The emphasis was put on reviving the traditions of the Sámi, a people who originally inhabited the region of Lapland. The Bildmuseet (Art Museum) featured 8 Sámi artists (one for each season of the people's calendar), while the Västerbottens Museum focused on various aspects of Sámi life and culture. Nearly 300 events took place - over 100 projects, over 35 festivals, over 20 conferences and over 80 events.

Co-creation was the main rule followed in creating the program. Anyone willing could join in and submit a project. Many events were organized by associations, organisations, cultural institutions, and other entities that received support. It allowed for many cultural projects to have a chance to be continued after the titular year.

The cultural program was based on 8 themes entitled: 'Northern Light', 'Sami Invitation', 'Stories of the North: Ears for Europe', 'Burning Snow: Melting Ice', 'The Growth of Identities', 'She's Got the Beat: The Gendered City', 'Talking Architecture: Speaking Design', and 'Treasures in Leisure'.

The events were divided into the 8 seasons of the traditional Sámi calendar, which is linked to the different periods of reindeer herding:

### **1. Deep Winter (Dálvvie), 30 January- 27 February**

The events during the opening (31 January- 2 February) largely referred to the theme of the Sámi, the people who originally inhabited the region of Lapland. The ceremony was accompanied by the *Burning Snow* sound and light show on a frozen river with the projection of Sámi huts (resembling tipis), reindeer, and the smells of cooking. The darkest and coldest season of the year provided the perfect backdrop for ice sculptures and Lit City's laser shows. It was also the time when you could admire the aurora borealis in the sky, as well as ride in the snow in huskies and horse sled rides, sledges, snowmobiles, as well as cross-country skis and snowshoes. The inauguration was graced by Victoria, the Crown Princess of Sweden.

### **2. Early Spring (Gijrradálvvie), 28 February- 29 April**

This season is a better time for winter activities around Umeå as the weather becomes milder and daylight hours start to lengthen. During this time there was a grand celebration of Sámi Week with art shows, handicraft exhibitions, lectures, films, theatre, and dance at the Västerbottens Museum and other places. In the last week of March, Umeå hosted the *Open Grand Slam 2014*, one of Sweden's biggest indoor rock music festivals, while the annual *Spring Forward Festival*, dedicated to modern dance, was held

at NorrlandsOperan in Umeå on the last weekend in April. Meanwhile, international and Swedish authors flocked to the city for Littfest (international literature festival).

### **3. Full Spring (Gijrra), 30 April 30- 19 June**

It's the season when the rivers and lakes become ice-free, the people of Umeå swap snow-related activities for water-related activities: fishing, canoeing and boating. Västerbottens Museum focused its cultural offer around the idea of revival of traditional Sámi crafts - textiles, leather goods, silverware, bone carving - *Made in Sápmi* initiative (2 March-28 May). The sound arrangement was provided by NorrlandsOperan - an orchestral interpretation of local hardcore band Refused - *The Shape of Punk To Come* project (8-9 May). An event being a "collision of sport and music" - *Stadionmusik* (June 18-19) was also included.

### **4. Early summer (Gijragiessie), 20 June - 10 July**

During this season the days are the longest as Arctic Sweden is illuminated by the northern sun and it is the best time to dine al fresco at boat restaurants moored on the river (grilled fresh herring was promoted as a local dish). Pagan roots were alluded to through the grand celebration of Midsummer's Eve, including maypoles, dances, traditional songs, food and drink. International choral festival - *A Choral Midsummer Night's Dream* (17-21 June) - was held.

### **5. Summer (Giessie), 11 July - 28 August**

This warmest season of the year was devoted to festivals. The most important of them was the U x U festival - a mix of music, film and art. The event was held at Hedlunda Park (19 July) and other venues, including a river barge. NorrlandsOperan staged Richard Strauss's Opera Elektra in the open air at the old military barracks on 14, 16, 19, 21 and 23 August.

### **6. Early Autumn (Tjakttjagiessie), 29 August- 9 October**

Traditionally during this season, reindeer are storing fat for the winter, and surplus males are killed for food. That's why locally sourced foods such as mushrooms and venison dominated the autumn events in Umeå. The dishes were offered by Rex Bar och grill. One could also taste a variety of dishes at the Food Festival (17-21 September), where the autumn harvest was presented at thematic stands, with a focus on Sámi food and culinary competitions. *The Contemporary Circus Festival* (29 August - 7 September) was dedicated to showcasing human dexterity through acrobat performances and street dancing. The *Survival Kit* festival (20.09-19.10), organized as a result of the collaboration of 30 Swedish and international artists, was dedicated to survival skills. As Umeå is the hometown of many world-renowned fashion designers such as Johnny Johansson, Petter Hollström, Sandra Backlund and Helena Hörstedt, one of the organized events was Umeå Fashion Week (October 7-11), with in-store events and fashion shows.

### **7. Full autumn (Tjakttja), 10 October - 20 November**

The arrival of long nights favours the search for entertainment in music and film. The Jazz Festival (22-25 October) provided performances by jazz musicians, both well and less known. The Film Festival, hosted by the Väven cultural centre, was dedicated to inspiration in the northern lands. *Sápmi Indigenous Film & Art Festival* (10-12 October) presented short films by indigenous peoples from around the world. In the Bildmuseet, the exhibition of the painter Anders Sunna who based his work on the experiences of his own family, was devoted to the forced resettlement of Sámi.

#### **8. Early Winter (Tjakttjadalvve), 21 November - 29 January**

With the onset of winter, the city organized a festival of lights - *Umeå Autumn Light* (24-30 November) - to dispel the approaching winter darkness.



## Matera 2019

The cultural program included a diverse range of cultural activities of high artistic quality. Many national and international artists took part in the program and in total there were more than 1,200 events, around 66% of which took place in the city of Matera and the remaining 34% in the Basilicata region. The program consisted mostly of contemporary art projects, live performances and education. These three categories accounted for 58% of the total number of events, but there were also events related to design and architecture, gastronomy and street art. Many of them (over 50%) were so diverse, that they could not be reduced to one specific category, and interdisciplinarity became one of the characteristics of Matera 2019 production.

### Opening ceremony

The traditional marching bands of the Basilicata region - a source of local pride - and bands from all over Europe (2019 musicians in total) were involved in the event. They marched together along the main routes from Murgia and Gravina converging in Matera. The musicians were welcomed by the locals. The city was specially decorated for the occasion. After sunset, the city was illuminated with thousands of lights and technological installations of the **Lumen/Social Light** project. The outstanding jazz artist Stefano Bollani, together with other musicians, performed during the jam session. President of Italy, Sergio Mattarella, gave an official speech opening the event.

Starting from the opening ceremony, different initiatives took place each day in different locations in the city of Matera and the region of Basilicata. Many of them took place at the same time.

**Five basic themes** covered the events and projects of the cultural program: Ancient Future, Continuity and Disruption, Reflections and Connections, Utopias and Dystopias, Roots and Routes.

**Ancient Future** - the theme reflected musings on the eternal relationship of humanity with the universe and nature, striving to verify the existing model of life and searching for a new one.

**Continuity and Disruption** - the theme referred to the search for the identity of the city, which has changed over the course of history - from decline and infamy to recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and tourist attraction. At the same time, it referred to the issues of social inequality, racism and migration.

**Reflection and Connection** - the theme refers to the classic Latin motto "make haste slowly" (*festina lente*), in the context of the accelerated pace of life characteristic of the 21st century, and to reflections on the quality of everyday life and basic values.

**Utopias and Dystopias** - the theme reflects a discussion on the legitimacy of prejudices about southern Italian cities and stereotypes (tourism is the only way to achieve

economic stability, technology and industrial monoculture is the only chance for development, food and wine are the main identifiers of the region).

**Roots and Routes** - the theme refers to the culture of mobility in the context of unifying Europe and its driving force in the region.

### Major events

As part of the wide-ranging initiative PURGATORIO Public Call for "Divina Commedia" by Dante Alighieri, a wide-ranging theatrical performance referring to Dante's Divine Comedy (Purgatory part) was staged. The initiative involved local theatre companies and residents of Matera, who were cast in different roles and engaged in different ways: singing, dancing, creating sets and costumes. The scenery for the performance was the city of Matera itself.

The program was designed so that every day in 2019 one could do 5 activities: visit the exhibition; attend a live show; wander along natural trails created and prepared in an innovative way; meet a native of Matera or Basilicata with whom you could talk about the past, present and future of our civilization, and take part in the closing exhibition by bringing an object symbolizing your own idea of culture.

The program included 5 main exhibitions that focus on Matera and the Basilicata region: **"Ars Excavandi"** dedicated to cave cities around the world (organized by architect and urban planner Pietro Laureano, UNESCO expert; inaugurated in Matera on 19 January); **„Renaissance seen from the South"** referring to the most important cultural events (curated by Marta Ragozzino, director of the Polo Museale della Basilicata, opened in Matera on 19 April); **„The poetics of prime numbers"** on science and mathematics with a focus on Pythagoras (curated by Piergiorgio Odifreddi, one of Italy's leading scientists, opened 21 June in Metaponto); **"Stratigraphy. Anthropocene Observatory"** - an exhibition exploring a new geological era defined by human activities (curated by photographer and filmmaker Armin Linke, opened in Matera on 6 September 2019); **"Open Future"** presenting a collection of various objects revealing the passions and lifestyle of people who appreciate the culture of Italy and Europe.

In addition, more than 60 original projects were implemented (more than one per week), half of which were developed by the creative sector entities of the Basilicata region in cooperation with national and European partners, and half by cultural institutions from different parts of Europe in cooperation with local partners.

The city and region were involved in the **Open Design School**, an interdisciplinary laboratory composed of professionals from the Basilicata region, the rest of Italy, and Europe, who designed and created the facilities (stages, sets, and signage) necessary for the organization of events in 2019. All this took place along 5 unique urban routes, which are also linked to the 5 themes of the program. The nature of this initiative was open - each stage of work actively involved residents and encouraged them to participate.

Another highlight of the program was I-DEA's 'archive of archives' project, featuring 5 international artists who used the main archives of the Basilicata region as inspiration to create 5 large, memorable public installations.

The regional aspect of the program was emphasized by the "**Capital for a day**" project, which gave each municipality of the Basilicata region the opportunity to carry out activities in accordance with the assumptions of the Matera 2019 project concept, including references to the work of outstanding 20th-century figures associated with the region. This project integrated well with the initiative carried out jointly with the Matera-Irsina Diocese "**Paths: discovering the traces of religiosity in the Matera-Basilicata territory**". As part of the latter, over 100 events highlighting the religious heritage of the region took place in all the dioceses of Basilicata - many of them concerned sacral music.

The key factor of all projects was a high degree of community involvement and participation, both from permanent citizens and visitors (treated as temporary citizens). The scale of the residents' involvement could be visible in several large collective projects: not only the artistic ones, but also those aimed at permanently improving the quality of the city. The **Gardentopia** project was dedicated to forgotten and abandoned areas on the outskirts of the city centre, suburbs, devoid of tourists and socially unattractive. It is a green utopia striving to transform these forgotten places into flowerbeds, gardens and vegetable gardens available to all residents. The project included workshops and discussions organized in the gardens of Matera and the Basilicata region. **Lumen - Social Light** - an illumination project which aimed to prepare the concept of lighting up the city based on the ideas of residents, who thus became part of the project. In addition, every citizen could propose and implement small projects for the benefit of the local community.

Everyone had the opportunity to join the community as part of the special initiative "The Passport Matera 2019". Obtaining a passport for the price of 19 EUR gave the guests access to all the events of the official Matera 2019 program. What's more, it also allowed them to obtain temporary citizenship, which was associated with rights and obligations: the right to register and the obligation to bring the cultural object to Matera. The collection of these objects made up the fifth and final exhibition of the "**Open Future**" program.

## **Bodø 2024**

The cultural program is to a large extent related to current environmental issues, including the relationship between culture and the natural environment. The city is to become an ecologically sustainable capital of culture, promoting the idea of a sustainable circular economy, and the program is to refer to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, it is intended to celebrate the culture and traditions of the indigenous people of Northern Europe, while taking into account the contribution of immigrant culture. More than 600 events are planned to take place across the region. The citizens are to participate in the activities.

The program and the projects that make up it oscillate around 3 key themes, which were selected as a result of the work of a working group of artists and cultural institutions:

**The Art of Nature** - a theme based on the idea that art and nature are supposed to interpenetrate each other; the presented art takes into account the perspective of the Arctic region, expressing the idea of being one with nature and the environment, expressing responsibility for the environment, emphasizing the awareness of being a part of it.

**Fish and Ships** - the theme concerns the communication of the history of the region shaping the collective consciousness of its inhabitants, including the strong connection with the sea and fishing, as well as the impact of experiences related to World War II and the Cold War.

**Transition** - the theme concerns the development of cities and their transformation and adaptation to changing conditions. It was inspired by the closing of the NATO base in the region, which triggered necessity of the cultural transformation of the city and the region.

The events in the program have been divided into 5 seasons determining the cycle of the sun's movement.

**Here comes the sun (13 January)** - the return of the sun associated with a new beginning - it is a time for historical reflection on the region. The following projects are planned to be implemented in this period: *Bodø2024 Opening week; Ságstitt2024; Feeding Europe; Weather or Not; Biegke Biehteme - Who Owns the Wind?; NorlandiART Magic Centre.*

**Spring optimism (20 March)** - spring equinox, meaning optimism - time to build unity, a common European identity and strengthening democratic society. The following projects are planned to be implemented in this period: *Leave Nothing but Footprints; Via Querinissima; Connecting Waste; Project67; Cold War Hotspots; European Cabins of Culture; Lyskraft.*

**Midsummer Madness (22 May)** - means full daylight for several weeks and what is associated with it - more cultural activity. The following projects are planned to be

implemented in this period: *Midsummer Mythology; Wind in your Hair; The Extra Mile; InSpire; Children's International Day; Eurogym 2024.*

**Autumn storms (22 September)** – the equinox, means autumn storms, the return of darker nights – a time to be used to discuss important European current topics. The following projects are planned to be implemented in this period: *The joy in the Book (My European Story, Messy Corners, Living by the World's End); Arts of Democracy; War Travels; K-Lab.*

**Arctic lights (29 November)** - stands for the arctic dark winter – a time to celebrate colours and lights. The following projects are planned to be implemented in this period: *Nordland by Light; Our dancing days (#dance2024, International Dancing Day, On Display Global); ARCTICulations of Faith; Kaleidoscope.*

## Major events planned:

### Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony will take place in early February on a specially created stage in the waters of Bodø harbour. The shape of the scene will refer to an otolith, a cod ear's stone (cod being a fish associated with the region), on the basis of which you can decode the history of each fish: learn how old it is, where it was, in what environment and climate (as well as annual growth rings of trees). Queen Sonja plans to attend the opening ceremony. The event is expected to attract up to 20,000 live and online viewers. The contract for the preparation of this spectacular show was awarded to the Berlin company Phase 7 together with the Nordland Theatre.

### Events dedicated to Sámi culture.

- **Sámi theatre trilogy** - with the aim of bringing Sámi drama to a wider audience. Themes of the love of nature and outdoor living, humanity's ancient relationship with animals, nature and climate will be explored.
- **Árran 360°** - a hybrid of indigenous storytelling and innovative technology will be held in the world's largest lavvo (traditional tent). The project was first shown at the Venice Biennale 2022.
- **Pop-up Sámi museum** - the initiative under which the City Museum will be transformed into a Sámi museum for the year. One of the exhibitions consists of 200 artefacts, coming from all over the Sápmi region. The exhibition will open in February 2024.

**Kjerringøy Land Art Biennale** - the newest edition of Kjerringøy Land Art Biennale (K-lab) will open in July 2024 following some preview events. It is the only land art biennale in Europe held regularly since 2007. K-Lab is an artist-run, international, interdisciplinary, and site-specific platform for land art. Kjerringøy is located on the Karlsøyfjorden about 30 km north of Bodø. It is a group of well-preserved authentic trading buildings which

have become part of the Nordland Museum. It's now a popular tourist site and filming location. The project will invite artists working in various media, such as sculpture, painting, dance, performance, sound, text, photography, video, etc.

**Nordland by Light** - planned for November 2024 as one of the last major events of Bodø's year will be the first light festival in the history of the region. The festival begins by turning out the lights across Nordland, inspired by the growing trend of dark sky tourism. Most of the programme will be temporary installations and performances. They also envision permanent light installations as part of the Bodø 2024 legacy.

### Live music

- **Concert in Pluragrotte** - planned for Easter Friday, this concert in a submerged cave will be a true world-first. All participants—musicians, technicians and the limited audience—will have to be accredited cave divers. The concert, which is part of the concept of sustainable development, will be streamed through a multi-camera production so it can reach a global audience.
- **Querini Opera** - is the performance of the opera set up in 2012, which will make its international debut in Venice in 2023. Performances will be held in Bodø and Tromsø. One-third of the residents on the island of Røst are involved in the project as volunteers.
- **Spire** - a talent programme for young classical musicians aged 19 to 27, in partnership with Nordland Music Festival. The main mentor is Eldbjørg Hemsing, one of Norway's most famous violinists.
- **Pure Music** - project scheduled for March 2024, Pure Music as the world's most sustainable concert.

### Other cultural events

**Midsummer's Eve bonfire event** - a spectacular bonfire event in Bodø to celebrate Midsummer Night's Eve.

**Art Trail / War Travels** - a large-scale investment aiming to offer a better experience for those travelling along the Nordland Railway.

**Messy Corners/Det kontroversielle Hamsun** - an exhibition profiling the controversial legacy of one of Norway's most famous novelists - Knut Hamsun who was an ardent supporter of Nazi Germany.

**Feeding Europe** - aiming to promote Arctic cuisine. The part of the program is Arctic Food festival in Mosjøen but also Arctic food roadshows with top-class food from local and visiting chefs.

**From The North** - an exhibition featuring a unique collection of rare Arctic travelogues shown together with paintings and drawings by Peder Balke (1804-1887), one of Norway's most famous landscape painters.

**Sound of Silence** – this initiative held in March 2024 in Bodø and Vega will include: a big international UNESCO conference focusing on endangered seabirds, but also art, music (including a specially composed new symphony) and activities for the whole family.

**NAISA - North American Indigenous Studies Associations** - the largest scholarly organisation for indigenous issues and communities, moves from Toronto to Bodø in the summer of 2024.

The conference program during the celebration - **Talk 2024/Snakk 2024** - covered the following topics:

- Cultural, Social and Smart City development - a conference concentrating on the issue of urban development
- Ecological economy – one of the answers to the climate and resource challenges - conference concentrating on the issues of environmental protection
- High North Dialogue - policy makers' debate
- Northern Expo – an event dedicated to jazz from the region of Northern Europe
- The Culture of Freedom (ICORN) - concentrating on the issue of freedom in the arts and migration
- ARCTICulation - One Key to the Future - a conference concentrating on the importance of the Arctic region for Europe.
- Young voices conference - a conference developed and led by young people.

The cultural program will be complemented by a **program of building the cultural potential** of institutions of sectors related to culture in 4 areas:

- Competencies (survival and development skills)
- Links (national and international cooperation, cross-border cooperation)
- Culture (shared history and values)
- Character (personal development, resilience).

## **Wrocław 2016**

The city's cultural program was based on Wrocław's experience in rebuilding the city and building a new social fabric on post-war ashes. A flourishing, developed city, experiencing a period of prosperity, was ruined by the war and lost its inhabitants. The essence of this story was to build a new culture and identity of the city by the new residents on the basis of the multicultural heritage left in this place. This story was to show that, respecting the achievements of their predecessors, today's inhabitants of Wrocław built a new city. With all respect due to them, to otherness and multiculturalism and to history, they have created an open Wrocław, with interesting culture and aspirations, contemporary and intriguing. ESK 2016 program was a time to

show it to the world, its contribution to the development of Europe, telling a story about how life can grow from ruins and human tragedies.

The goal of artistic activities within Wrocław 2016 was to create open, dynamic and friendly spaces - *Spaces for beauty*, to fulfil the need for contact with culture and art in a few ways:

**City Festival** - events of a unique, celebratory nature, which took place only once. For those who wanted to celebrate and take part in an important ceremony.

**Reflection on culture** - conferences, seminars, debates, congresses. For those who want to talk about culture.

**Special Edition** - renown festivals and events. Good brands of Wrocław's culture. For those who know and appreciate the culture of the city or just want to get to know its richness.

**Creator and creation** - presentations of creators and their works. The process of creation. The artist at centre stage. For those who want direct contact with works of art and their creators.

**Publicizing culture** - projects seeking new recipients, disseminating and promoting what is important in culture. For those who want to see culture everywhere.

**Education and animation** - active culture. Projects that broaden knowledge and develop skills. Requiring activity. Social and community projects. For those who want to actively participate in culture, co-create, test themselves in action.

**Source** - publications, books, portals, games and others. For those who reach for the content themselves.

The Wrocław 2016 program has been defined as an archipelago of eight curators. Eight different voices, eight perspectives and eight fields of culture: opera, theatre, music, visual arts, literature, film, performance and architecture were to create a unique archipelago of arts. Such approach was innovative and in a way experimental for the city. It was the first time that so many moderators from various fields of art collaborated so closely on one project. Not only with each other, but above all with residents, non-governmental organizations, municipal institutions, local governments, government and international institutions.

### **Opening ceremony**

As part of the show titled "*Awakening*" on 17 January 2016, tens of thousands of people, in order to metaphorically "awaken" different parts of the city, walked from four districts to the Wrocław Market Square in the largest parade in the history of the city. Under the



guidance of four Spirits - Many Denominations, Innovation, Reconstruction and Flood, they talked about the history of the city. Several kilometres long parades were formed by residents, over 1,300 artists and 200 choristers, 50 soldiers, 20 members of the orchestra, about 300 cyclists, 30 light installations, over 1,400 costumes, 30 giant puppets and 5 trams. The culmination of the parade was a spectacle in the Market Square and the ringing of bells signifying Wrocław's becoming the European Capital of Culture 2016.

### **Major events:**

The Wrocław 2016 program included a number of events: major events in the eight above-mentioned fields, but also small projects integrating the inhabitants of the city. In total, about 2,000 events were held, attended by over 5 million participants. Among the most important were:

**WuWA. Wohnung und Werkraum Ausstellung** - Workplace and House Exhibition. WuWA is one of the six model European housing estates, established in Wrocław in 1929 in the area of Zielonego Dębu Street. It was designed by the most prominent representatives of the then Wrocław avant-garde, associated in the German Artists' Union (Deutscher Werkbund), and is one of the most interesting architectural experiments of the last century, and at the same time an object of great cultural value.

**European Film Awards** - the most important awards granted on the Old Continent, the idea of which is to promote European cinema and European artists. It is also a summary of the passing year in European cinematography. Members of the European Film Academy (currently around 3,000 members) select the best European film in a two-stage vote and grant awards to the European filmmakers in several categories. The first Polish winner of the award of the year was Krzysztof Kieślowski for *A Short Film About Killing* in 1988, and in 2014 Paweł Pawlikowski for *Ida*. The 29th European Film Awards ceremony was held in Wrocław, attended by several hundred guests from the European film industry. From September to December 2016, the New Horizons cinema screened films awarded at previous editions and nominated in 2016.

**European Night of Literature** - as part of this innovative project promoting reading among the general public, unpublished works of contemporary writers from various countries were presented. During one night, as part of the opening ceremony of the UNESCO World Book Capital in Wrocław, public readings were performed by famous personalities in unique places in the urban space, often not associated with literature.

**UNESCO World Book Capital 2016** - this extremely prestigious title allowed Wrocław to join such cities as: Madrid, Bangkok, Amsterdam, Buenos Aires and Toronto, and on 23 April 2016 begin the term of the UNESCO World Book Capital. Within its framework, the idea of "meeting", so important for literature and reading, resounded simultaneously

in all the languages of the world. This title, awarded by UNESCO, goes every year to one city presenting the most interesting program to promote books and reading.

**Spanish Night with Carmen – zarzuela** show. The grand spectacle of the Wrocław Opera, based on Spanish musical traditions, was staged for an international audience of several tens of thousands. The climax of the performance was a great show of the most beautiful *zarzuelas*, a genre of music extremely popular in Spanish-speaking countries, similar to traditional operetta and contemporary musical. The performance was enriched with film projections presenting the most beautiful regions and cultural monuments of Spain. 500 artists performed on the stage of the City Stadium in Wrocław: the orchestra, ballet, choir and soloists of the Wrocław Opera, as well as vocal and dance groups from Wrocław and Lower Silesia. These groups were selected in competitions organized by the Opera, which ended the period of two-year *zarzuela* workshops, conducted by dance and singing instructors from Spain. The cooperation with the Spanish Ministry of Culture allowed including the guest performers - Spanish bands and artists from Madrid and San Sebastian.

**microGRANTS ESK 2016-** The program was in the form of a competition in which every resident of Wrocław could propose their idea for an artistic, social, cultural, or educational activity. The competition was held cyclically, in even months. In each round, the jury composed of representatives of various areas of social life selected the eight most interesting proposals, in addition, two ideas were selected in an online vote.

The projects were created jointly by the inhabitants of Wrocław and the Office of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016, and their implementation also outside the very centre of the city allowed the inhabitants of even the farthest corners of Wrocław to look for beauty, define it and reveal it in various spheres of their lives - thus realizing the slogan "Spaces for beauty". The program offered assistance in project coordination and professional administrative, substantive, technical, legal, promotional and financial support.

**Theatre Olympics** - an international theatre festival, presenting the achievements of the most outstanding theatre artists from around the world since 1993. The initiators of the Olympics were Theodoros Terzopoulos and Melina Mercouri (originator of the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture). The motto of the 7th edition of the Olympics was "*The World as a Place of Truth*" - paraphrase of the title of the speech by Jerzy Grotowski. Each day was dedicated to one artist. Among the invited masters were: Tadashi Suzuki, Theodoros Terzopoulos, Robert Wilson, Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, Romeo Castellucci, who presented performances already previously recognized, as well as premieres and co-productions prepared for the European Capital of Culture.

Wrocław has become the centre of in-depth reflection on history, the present, and the prospects for the development of the art of theatre.

## **Kaunas 2022**

From temporary to contemporary – this slogan was an invitation to join Kaunas in creating the change that was the journey towards becoming the European Capital of Culture. It is a journey from a temporary capital to a modern, creative and open European city. Places where history lives and at the same time the future is actively created. The ambitious cultural program was intended to shape a unique and community-based vision of the Modern Capital.

The Modern Capital is both a city and a district where culture is not limited to incidental use of its goods, but is a way of functioning, learning, creating innovations and building a community with respect to one's own historical memory and the historical memory of others, care and pride in cultural heritage, and building a modern, shared city.

Guided by these goals, thanks to the work of the project curators and hundreds of domestic and foreign partners, a cultural program for Kaunas 2022 was developed and divided into 9 thematic sections:

**Modernism for the Future** - promotes community awareness by a connection to the modernist heritage of Kaunas, new projects strengthening the relevance of this heritage on a European scale.

**Emerging Kaunas** - program designated for young people of various ages from infants to young adults seeking to help them build a city they want to live in.

**Cultural Partnerships** - over 100 unique artistic projects designed within the network of cultural institutions and individual creators for the needs of Kaunas 2022.

**Memory Office** - a collection of personal stories to revive the memory of multi-ethnic Kaunas and strengthen bonds and interaction between the different communities living in it.

**FLUXUS LABAS! /We the People** - projects aimed at increasing the community spirit of the inhabitants of Kaunas and Kaunas district through cultural activities. Residents were encouraged to form creative community.

**Tempo Academy of Culture** - informal training program for persons and organisations involved in the creation of the project, interested in developing new skills and implementing innovative cultural projects.

**Designing Happiness** - development of new understanding of a concept of comfortable city and urban living based on the recommendations of designers and environmentalists. Promotes the idea of city for everyone and educates modern urban citizens.

**Kaunas District Program** - projects developed with the participation and recognition of identity of local communities, together with Kaunas District residents, cultural organizations and local and visiting artists.

**Mythical Beast of Kaunas** - an entertaining part of the program, preparation of the storylines for the central events of the program, based on existing and new legends and stories about Kaunas.

### **Opening ceremony**

The opening of Kaunas 2022 took place on weekend 19-22 January 2022. The whole project, consisting of a series of minor artistic events in 50 locations and with the participation of over 800 artists, entitled *The Confusion*, began on January 19 in the Kaunas district and then moved towards the centre of Kaunas. The climax - opening ceremony took place on 22 January 2022 in Žalgiris Arena. The final show of video, light, movement, and music was extended by an invitation to the urban game. People gathered near the Arena could continue the evening with the game of the secrets of the city and the Beast of Kaunas. More than 100 events took place during the opening weekend, including premieres, exhibitions, concerts and performances, all connected by the new myth of Kaunas and the rise of the Beast as a leading theme.

The structure of the urban game was used here to introduce viewers and residents to the events and topics that followed in the year of the ECoC.

### **Major events:**

In total, as part of Kaunas 2022, in the year of holding the title of the ECoC, about 1,400 events were held, attended by almost 1.4 million participants. Among the most important are:

**International Performing Arts Con Tempo Festival** – the largest street art festival in Lithuania, gathering artists and performers from around the world.

**The great ship of culture “Nemuno 7”** - a unique space for contemporary art, landscape architecture, a place of artistic residencies in the space of an old dredger.

**Fluxus Festival** - parade of conjurers, street festival of performers, city carnival.

**Kaunas Literature Week** - international literature festival, presentation of European and world literature, meetings with authors.

**AUDRA Contemporary City Festival** - international festival of modern music, concerts, dance workshops, art installations.

**Modernism For the Future 360/365 Exhibition** - illustration of the value of modernist architecture and its attractiveness for contemporary recipients, city inhabitants, specialists and enthusiasts of architecture. The exhibition aims to strengthen the European and intercontinental modernist narrative about heritage and to show that this heritage, like any work of art, transcends the boundaries of individual cities and countries.

**Contemporary Neighbourhoods** - an ongoing cultural project developed in Kaunas District with the aim of mobilizing and strengthening local communities and supporting the cultural sector of the district.

For more information, please check the website of the European Commission dedicated to the subject of European Capitals of Culture: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-of-culture>