

FUTURE S

IETM  
Plenary Meeting  
2025  
Berlin

Performing Arts  
Programm  
Berlin

An  
Interactive Reader I



REHEARSING

15.—  
17.5.2025

This Interactive Reader consists of two parts:

## Reader I

offers an overview of the IETM Plenary Meeting and its programme. It includes links to artists, reports, contributing organisations, as well as relevant articles and videos.

## Reader II

highlights the contributions of five artists and cultural workers who led sessions during the IETM Plenary Meeting.

### → Navigation:

- The arrow always takes you to the table of contents
- All weblinks in this document are marked in blue
- Links to videos are also marked in blue

For readers who prefer listening over reading: Jakub Depczyński's text is available as a video with audio, and Sivan Ben Yishai's text as an audio file, in Reader II.

## Imprint

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IETM Berlin Plenary Meeting 2025 co-organised by



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↑ ↓ Impressions from “Who’s there” at ufaFabrik © Karam Ghossein



The IETM Plenary Meeting is the central annual gathering of the [International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts](#), one of the world's largest networks for the independent performing arts. It regularly brings together artists, cultural practitioners, organizations, and institutions from a wide range of countries to discuss current challenges, artistic practices, and developments in cultural policy. The meetings take place in different European cities each year and provide space for exchange, networking, and the continued development of the international performing arts scene.

In May 2025, Berlin hosted this prestigious meeting for the first time in 15 years – a special opportunity to present the local and national independent performing arts scene on an international stage.

The event was organized in close collaboration between the project team of the [Performing Arts Program \(PAP\)](#), the International network for contemporary performing arts (IETM), the [Federal Association of the Independent Performing Arts \(BFDK\)](#), the [ufaFabrik](#), and many Berlin-based partners.

From May 15<sup>th</sup> to May 17<sup>th</sup> 2025 nearly 600 participants from 53 countries took part in the IETM Plenary Meeting REHEARSING FUTURES.

On May 15, the first day of the IETM Plenary, numerous Berlin artists, theatres, companies, and associations welcomed international guests into their venues and studios. Following an open call, IETM participants were able to join 24 tours across the city, showcasing the remarkable diversity and scope of Berlin's independent performing arts scene.

On May 16 and 17, in the context of a conference programme curated for Performing Arts Program Berlin by Anne Schneider and Franziska Pierwoss and for IETM by Roisin Caffrey and Toy Zama, the IETM brought together voices and artistic perspectives that engage productively with the many transformations shaping our present. The focus lay on formats for exchange, the exploration of successful artistic practices, and forward-looking strategies.

Over the course of two days, visitors could take part in a wide range of activities at ufaFabrik:

- 13 networking sessions
- 8 workshops
- 5 working groups
- 4 panel lectures
- 1 film screening

Alongside the discourse programme, participants could join breath and body-work sessions, enjoy a guided walk through the ufaFabrik grounds, and experience the venue's pioneering sustainability practices.

In addition, the evening artistic programme, spread over three days, offered insights into the diversity of Berlin's performing arts scene, featuring a mix of theatre shows, performative interventions, discussions, and participatory formats aligned with the themes of the meeting.

IETM plenary meetings are the most important physical gatherings of our vast global network each year. They give space for inspirations, provocations, exploration and experimentation. Equally, they are a space for a unique networking and community exchange, where new encounters happen, ideas fly and professional relationships which last a lifetime, are forged.

IETM Berlin Plenary was no exception. Held in 2025, a year which will go down in our sector's collective memory as a year of attacks on artistic freedom, of budget cuts, of backlash against green and inclusive policies, and the year of Europe's largest plans for militarization since the Second World War. This was the backdrop of the Berlin Plenary and we responded accordingly; given IETM members and international participants strong thought provoking keynotes, panels and workshop all the themes above and much more. Beautiful, hard yet hopeful moments were shared. Thankfully we kept our unique IETM networking sessions which in the cosy backdrop of the ufaFabrik, are always a favorite.

This paper – a selected collection of descriptions, readers and interviews with some speakers and contributors has been compiled by our partner the Performing Arts Program Berlin. It gives a useful insight into some key views and thoughts presented during the IETM plenary. These are topics which IETM will continue to explore through our meetings, training and research. In our upcoming Advocacy School starting in the later part of 2026, we will seek multiplied globally minded ways to empower our members against backlash and culture wars. On that note I want to draw your attention towards the Reader part II and the text by *Jakub Depczyński: Fifteen thoughts on the far-right, culture and artistic freedom*. Very useful thoughts for us all.

IETM thanks all the partners of the Berlin plenary for their very valuable contributions and our collaboration. The main partners, LAFT, Performing Arts Program Berlin, BFDK and ufaFabrik and all their team members and staff. All the many partners who made the 15<sup>th</sup> May programme possible. All the venues, companies and artists who enriched our meeting with their artistic contributions. All IETM members who attended as well as all international participants.

And, everyone else who made our Berlin encounter come true.

With warmest wishes

Ása Richardsdóttir - secretary general on behalf of IETM  
international network for contemporary performing arts

→ [Watch the IETM after movie here](#)

Dear friends and guests of the performing arts in Berlin,  
dear colleagues,  
and dear everyone,

It was a great pleasure for us that the IETM Plenary Meeting could finally take place in Berlin again after 15 years.

The performing arts community in Berlin is more internationally diverse than in almost any other city. Works from Berlin are performed on stages around the world, and artists and cultural practitioners from every continent have chosen the city as their place of work. Together, they used their collaborative energy to make the 2025 IETM Plenary Meeting a place of togetherness, exchange, networking and shared learning.

Thanks to the support of numerous venues, groups and individuals, the many guests from abroad were able to immerse themselves in the city's vibrant community through several walking tours. Over the following two days, the conference programme at ufaFabrik focused on the power of the arts: through a variety of formats, participants were able to explore concrete artistic strategies that productively address the challenges of our time.

Our thanks go to our colleagues at IETM, BFDK, and ufaFabrik, as well as to all other partners and sponsors and especially to Anne Schneider and Franziska Pierwoss, who curated the conference programme at ufaFabrik on behalf of the Performing Arts Program and in close collaboration with IETM.

Through the LAFT Berlin Performing Arts Program, we will continue our efforts to foster national and international collaboration. In the Performing Arts Guide ([www.pag.berlin](http://www.pag.berlin)), we provide an up-to-date overview of the city's more than 100 venues and numerous festivals. With the annual Performing Arts Market, we offer a platform for presenting artistic works, and through symposia and professional conferences, we explore issues of cooperation and networking.

We look forward to IETM's next visit to Berlin,

Janina Benduski  
Director LAFT Berlin Performing Arts Program



↑ IETM Team and Board

- ↓ From left: Janina Benduski (Berlin State Association for the Independent Performing Arts e.V.), Frido Hinde (ufaFabrik), Anna Steinkamp (Federal Association for the Independent Performing Arts e.V.), Steffen Klewar (Fonds Darstellende Künste)  
© Karam Ghossein



As the umbrella organization for the independent performing arts in Germany, the BFDK represents around 27,000 people working independently in dance and theatre all over Germany with members ranging from theatres, dance performance venues, to collectives and individuals. Besides advocating at the federal level for sustainable improvement in working conditions and social security for those working in the independent performing arts, we also provide training, networking, and formats for discourse around arising issues around the independent performing arts.

As co-organizer of the 2025 IETM Plenary Meeting, we did not only co-design journeys through Berlin's diverse performing arts landscape, but we also contributed to sessions that were especially important to us: a fair improvement of the social and economic statuses of the artists, greening artistic productions, diversifying accesses, supporting networks and above all advocating for healthy and solid framework conditions and structures for the independent performing arts in Germany. Therefore, it was a pleasure and an honor to co-host the 2025 IETM Meeting together with IETM, LAFT and ufaFabrik – particularly in our shared passion for bringing people together and belief in the transformative power of the performing arts for more just societies!

Anna Steinkamp (managing director)



On behalf of the entire team at ufaFabrik Berlin, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the opportunity to host the IETM Plenary Meeting in May 2025 organized and curated by LAFT Berlin and IETM. It was a true pleasure and an honor to welcome 600 participants from across Europe to our cultural center.

The conference was a great success, marked by inspiring discussions, creative exchange, and a strong sense of community among artists, cultural practitioners, and researchers. We were deeply impressed by the diversity of perspectives and the spirit of collaboration that defined the entire event. As a cultural space dedicated to fostering dialogue, innovation, and inclusion, we were delighted to see how the ufaFabrik became a vibrant hub for intercultural conversation throughout the conference. The energy and openness of all participants made this gathering a memorable and enriching experience for everyone involved.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the LAFT Berlin and the IETM Network team for their excellent organization and partnership, as well as to all contributors, speakers, and guests who made this event possible. Hosting this conference has strengthened our conviction that international exchange within the cultural sector is more important than ever.

We very much look forward to continuing our collaboration with the IETM Network and hope to welcome you all again to Berlin in the near future. It would be a great pleasure to host future gatherings and to further support the exchange of ideas and creative practices across Europe.

With warm regards and our deepest appreciation,  
Frido Hinde (executive Director)  
on behalf of the International Culture Center ufaFabrik Berlin

## REHEARSING FUTURES

Within the performing arts, we possess the power to embrace transformation and dance with complexity. The IETM Berlin Plenary Meeting 2025 was therefore rooted in the very resources that define our work: cultivating community, amplifying multiple perspectives, and creating spaces to process our experiences through language, body, and emotion.

Artists hold specific and invaluable competencies that are of great relevance in these times: they approach complexity with curiosity and joy, create sensorial spaces where diverse perspectives meet productively, and connect people across disciplines, backgrounds, and generations. They practice hands-on research, guided by improvisation, flexibility, and the courage to transform. Irritation, provocation, and the constructive handling of failure are as much a part of artistic processes as embodied knowledge, multiperspectival thinking, and the ability to create resonance.

With a deep belief in the power of the arts and of collaborative processes, we aimed to create a platform where these capacities could inspire new ways of engaging with the tensions and conflicts of our time through artistic means. Therefore, a central focus of the conference programme at ufaFabrik concentrated on concrete artistic practices and approaches that engage joyfully and critically with processes of change while consciously countering global authoritarian tendencies.

Both the citywide tours on May 15<sup>th</sup> and the evening programme were made possible through the remarkable support and generosity of Berlin's independent performing arts community. They emerged as a truly collective act—an embodiment of collaboration and solidarity within the local scene. Artists, venues, and associations across the city opened their spaces, shared their knowledge, and co-created moments of encounter that reflected the diversity, openness, and imaginative strength of Berlin's artistic ecosystem. These contributions not only shaped the Plenary's atmosphere but also embodied its guiding spirit of REHEARSING FUTURES—practicing together the kind of interconnected, resilient, and visionary world we wish to build.

Even though our local contexts differ, the global rise of authoritarian power operating through neoliberal mechanisms affects nearly all our artistic practices. Berlin, known for its vibrant and diverse performing arts scene with over 100 venues presenting work of every scale and style, continues to be a place of artistic freedom and experimentation. Yet, this scene has also faced major challenges: budget cuts of over 13% in 2024 have hit both small and large institutions, creating insecurity and threatening the vitality of artistic work.

## REHEARSING FUTURE

At the same time, Berlin's arts landscape has been profoundly shaped by artists arriving from regions of conflict over the past 15 years. These global movements have enriched the city's artistic fabric while also revealing how financial cuts can have international consequences, endangering cross-border collaborations and the survival of a rich, diverse ecosystem.

Across Germany, the rise of right-wing populism has created an atmosphere of fear, particularly for artists addressing political themes. International members of the local scene have faced censorship and accusations of antisemitism – a troubling development that has drawn international attention. Yet, the performing arts remain one of the fields that still tries to offer genuine spaces for debate, solidarity, and artistic freedom.

We soon realized that we didn't want to focus only on analyzing negative developments, but rather on showcasing and celebrating the many initiatives and strategies already offering creative, tangible responses to them. We wanted to highlight practices that can be shared, adapted, and inspire others. To this end, we invited a number of outstanding artists, speakers, and experts to design hands-on workshops for the Plenary.

Curator and activist Jakub Depczyński spoke with Sarah Whyatt, research director of Freemuse, about Poland's "Anti-Fascist Year." Feminist economist Emma Holten from Denmark shared her critique of neoliberal mechanisms in the cultural, educational, and social sectors. Sebastián Squella presented his work with prisoners in Chile, using art to reflect on social structures. Ezenwa Okoro introduced his approach to legislative theatre in Nigeria, and Gerald Odil described how current government policies in Uganda are dismantling queer artistic practice.

Philosopher Yasmeeen Daher, lawyer Alexander Gorski, author Sivan Ben Yishai, and choreographer Mey Seifan discussed the concrete effects of political influence on the arts in Germany—as well as their strategies for dealing with them—while Caspar Weimann presented the performative answers of [onlinetheater.live](#) in dealing with toxic masculinity.

Whether through an interactive parkour featuring ten artist groups or during one of the many workshops—such as Eyk Kauly's session on improving communication between deaf and hearing people, or the Open House Sustainability exploring sustainable digital practices—the Plenary Meeting demonstrated the transformative power of the performing arts.

## REHEARSING FUTURE S

Beyond the official programme, which as usual included sessions of the IETM Working Groups and other popular IETM formats, the plenary offered numerous informal networking opportunities.

We placed great importance on accessibility and care: the development of communication guidelines, an awareness concept, an easy read guide, the presence of the [Queer Mamas](#) awareness team and access support by Emanuele Valariano throughout the event, meant we were able to create safer spaces that encouraged open dialogue.

This interactive reader once again gives space to selected individual voices, insights, and reflections. It brings together articulated statements and impulses from participating artists: reflections on our fragile democracies, thoughts and actions against authoritarian encroachments, and visions of the vital role the arts can play in times of uncertainty and transition.

With radical optimism, we invited participants to join us in turning our collective knowledge into the necessary superpowers for brighter futures.

We wish you inspiring reading and extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the IETM Berlin Plenary Meeting a reality.

Franziska Pierwoss and Anne Schneider  
(Performing Arts Program Berlin)

# May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 Venues and artists of Berlin

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## Walking Tours

### Performing Arts Market Berlin

Dock11+ Uferstudios

Pitching Sessions of 27 artists and groups\*, business lunch with experts from [Kreativ-Transfer/Info Plus](#) (Dachverband Tanz Deutschland), [Goethe Institut](#), [NPN \(Nationales Performance Netzwerk\)](#), touring artists and [On the Move](#) as well as valuable networking opportunities.

\* [Artists](#): Band Practice, Bobs and Bangs, Camila Rhodi, Cristiana Casadio, Fatima Çalışkan, Felix Baumann (Von B bis Z), Fronte Vacuo, Hang Su + MaM.Manufaktur für aktuelle Musik, Ini Dill, Initiative LUNA PARK e.V., Julia B. Laperrière, Lamis Ammar, Kathrin Wagner, Katja Tannert, Max Howitz, Min Yoon, Mu Wang, Panni Néder, Post Theater, Robin Leveroos (Macromatter), Rodrigo Zorzarelli, Romuald Krężel, Shani Moffat, Still hungry, Vöcks de Schwindt, Yotam Peled & the Free Radicals, Silvia Ospina

### Performing Arts

in Kreuzberg and Neukölln Berlin

Dock11

[English Theatre – International Performing Arts Center](#), [TATWERK PerformativeForschung](#), [Vierte Welt](#) and [Heimathafen Neukölln](#)

Presenting, producing and developing contemporary circus

### [Chamäleon Berlin](#)

with Anke Politz, Hendrik Frobel, Geordie Brookman, Alexandra Henn

### Puppet Theatre

on the Move:

Three Berlin

Stages, One Tour

Guided tour with

[Figurentheater](#)

[Grashüpfer](#),

[Schaubude Berlin](#)

and [Das Weite](#)

[Theater](#)

### Maled it

Drag Kings,

Gender

Performance

&

New Narratives

with [Marilyn Nova](#)

[White /](#)

[Elena Gorlatova](#)

### [Dance for young audiences –](#)

Aesthetic insights and exchange with artists and stakeholders of the Berlin independent scene

\* [Artists](#): Isabelle Schad, Elena Basteri, Doreen Markert, Livia Patrizi, Lars Hecke, Inge Zysk, Cintia Rangel, moderated by Dagmar Dorms

### [Tanz im August](#) and sustainability:

Rehearsing ecological festival practices

with

[Ricardo Carmona](#),

[Alina Lauer](#),

[Luzie Barzen](#)

### [LAKE Studios](#) Berlin

Shared Practice & Talk with artistic director and choreographer [Marcela Giesche](#)

### Humor

as a cultural, aesthetic and political tool in times of crisis

with

[Raul Vargas Torres](#),

[Felix Baumann](#),

[Kysy Fischer](#),

[Alica Minar](#)

### [Laughter Club:](#)

Clown and physical comedy in Berlin

with

[Shani Moffat](#)

at [Nirgendwo](#)

Please find more information on the organizers of all sessions via the links

# May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 International Collabaoration

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## Walking Tours

Brunch at ITI  
Presentation of Internationales  
Theaterinstitut ([ITI Germany](#)),  
particularly its projects,  
touring artists and ITI Academy  
  
with Felix Sodemann and Malin Nagel

Fostering Connections –  
Berlin Cultural Policy Reception  
[Bundesverband Freie Darstellende  
Künste \(BFDK\)](#) in co-operation  
  
with  
[Landesverband freie darstellende  
Künste Berlin e.V. – LAFT Berlin](#)

Between resistance and  
togetherness –  
practices in transnational  
artistic realities  
  
Parkour with Berlin theatre artists,  
whose work revolves around social  
and political pressure (or oppression)  
embedded in a transnational  
cultural sphere from ITI Germany  
and [Goethe Institute im Exil](#)

with  
Felix Sodemann,  
Carmen Herold, Mirza Metin,  
Mariann Yar, Saed Asad Sangabi,  
Daria Iuriichuk

From Damascus to Berlin and Vice Versa  
Artistic Paths Between Revolution, Diaspora,  
Challenges and New Beginnings.  
  
A talk moderated by Mey Seifan ([Tanween Collective](#)),  
Rana Yazaji , Liwa Yazji, Anis Hamdoun and Ziad Adwan

# May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 Digital Focus

## Walking Tours

[HAU](#)  
[Digital Art Showcase](#)  
Performance, Technology,  
Gaming Culture &  
Networking with the  
presentation of outstanding  
HAU4 artists:  
allapopp, Anan Fries, Choy  
Ka Fai, Interrobang, Janne  
Kummer, Keiken, Lena  
Biresch, machina eX, on-  
linetheater.live, Patrick  
Blenkarn & Milton Lim and  
Theresa Reiwer

[IETM PIC Working Group](#)  
Participatory and Immersive  
Creation working group –  
Activating communities through  
immersive and participatory  
practices at [tak Theateraufbau  
Kreuzberg](#)

Inside the Trojan  
Horse —  
Immersive Theatre  
and Parcours  
Performances in a  
Haunted House.  
  
[PostTheater at  
Theater-  
discounter Berlin](#)

Emerging Technologies on Stage in Times of Crisis —  
How and Why!  
  
Discussion moderated by Margherita Pevere  
and Marco Donnarumma from [Fronte Vacuo](#),  
[Tanz digital](#)

# May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 Sharing and Connecting

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## Walking Tours

Taking Flight with Us –  
The Art of Collaboration Beyond Crisis  
Interactive workshop-networking session at  
Stadtmuseum Berlin from [Sisyphos](#),  
der Flugelefant (SdF)  
with  
Chang Nai Wen, Oona Philomena Wächter,  
Michael Tibes, Lisa Sarachman, Sophie Eliot

[Gob Squad and  
the Neighbourhood,  
HAU to Connect](#)  
Walk & Talk

Forever Young?  
On emerging artists, aesthetics  
and concerns  
with  
Lena Kollender and  
Mateusz Szymanówka,  
[Sophienseele](#)

Rotating World Cafe  
with [Apricot Productions](#)  
With Nadine Freisleben  
and Angela Fegers

[Sasha Waltz & Guests](#)  
Workshop with Orlando Rodriguez and  
Rosa Dicuonzo at Radialsystem

How the search for grants  
turned us into cultural researchers  
Talk with Philipp Urrutia, [OfW](#)

# May 15<sup>th</sup> 2025 Rural areas

## Walking Tours

[IETM AREA Working Group](#)  
Arts in Rural European Areas Group -  
The Future is Rural at [tak](#)  
[Theateraufbau Kreuzberg](#)

[The Association of Independent  
Performing Arts of Brandenburg \(FDKB\)](#)  
presents regional performing  
arts festivals and venues  
and speaks about performing arts  
structures in rural spaces

Anja Demidova  
**Am I Comfortable  
Enough?**  
Neue Bühne  
Friedrichshain

People  
watching:  
**Play dead**  
Chamäleon  
Theater

andcompany  
&Co:  
**MarsOnEarth:  
Die Mars-  
nahme**  
Floating  
University  
Berlin

A. Minar&Co,  
F. Baumann,  
von B bis Z,  
Raul Vargas  
Torres, Kysy Fis-  
cher:  
**Fest of Fools**  
English Theatre

cie.toula  
limnaios:  
**Jeux**  
Halle  
Tanzbühne  
Berlin



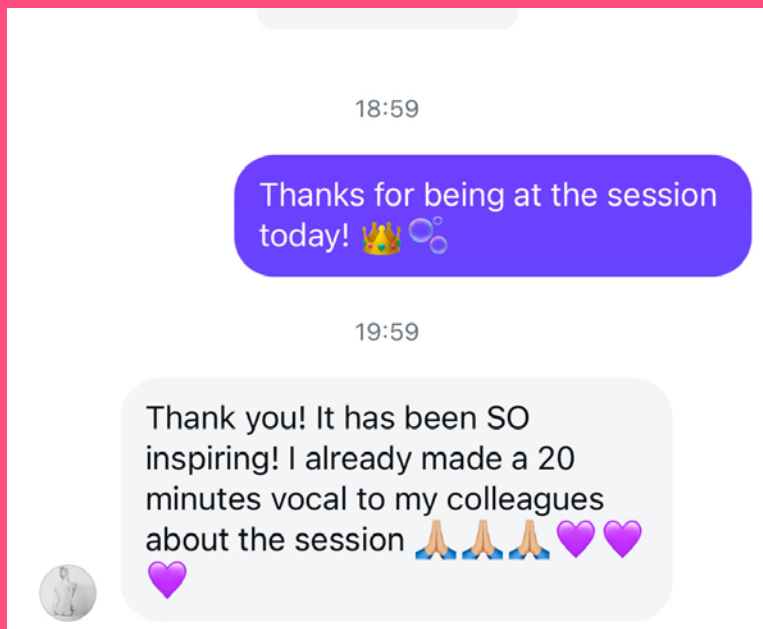


↑ Offensive Kulturbus - Offensive Tanz © Janosch Weiss



↑ Vorstellung Baobab\_Offensive Tanz © Theater o.N.

fabrik Potsdam, Session with Landesverband Freie Darstellende Künste Brandenburg ↓ © Johanna Manzewski (LV FDKB)



↑ Screenshot from Marilyn Nova White





↓ ↑ Performing Arts Market ©Ken Buslay



# May 16<sup>th</sup> 2025 IETM Plenary Meeting at ufaFabrik

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+

Breath Work

WELCOME +  
Who's there?

Perspectives on  
artistic freedom  
at risk

Inputs and Panel

Hacking  
the  
manosphere

Workshop

Digital doesn't  
mean  
dematerialised

Workshop

Legislative theatre  
in focus

Workshop

Creative  
Europe  
Information  
Point

Introducing to IETM

Tour  
ufaFabrik

Queer Hacking  
of an institution

Workshop

Intervisions  
–  
A Parkour

Indigenous  
Perspectives in  
performing arts  
ecosystem

Talk and Workshop

Creative Europe  
Information Point

Create &  
collaborate  
with  
Switzerland  
and Malta

Networking

Pitchorama

Tour  
ufaFabrik

Dabke

Workshop

IETM Environmental  
Working Group

Film: The art of staying many

## Artistic Programme

Milla  
Kroistinen:

GRIT  
(For what it's  
worth)

Uferstudios 14

Jules Petru Fricker:

Trancestors – on  
the paths of our  
queer trailblazers

Dock 11

andcompany  
&Co:

MarsOnEarth:  
Die Marsnahme

Floating  
University  
Berlin

People  
watching:

Play dead  
Chamäleon  
Theater

A. Minar&Co,  
F. Baumann,  
von B bis Z,  
Raul Vargas Torres,  
Kysy Fischer:

Fest of Fools

English Theatre

She She Pop:

Everything possible

HAU 1

ithAKT:

Antigone

Tak Theater Aufbau Kreuzberg

cie.toula limnaios:

Jeux

Halle Tanzbühne Berlin

# May 17<sup>th</sup> 2025 IETM Plenary Meeting at ufaFabrik

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Breath Work

Who's there?

Breakfast  
with the Global  
Connectors

Knowing your  
rights in  
challenging times

Inputs and  
Workshop

IETM Artists  
Working Group

IETM Producers  
Working Group

Navigating  
Practices of Change  
Talk & Workshop

Creative Europe  
Information  
Point

Introducing to German Associations

Tour  
ufaFabrik

Perspectives on political  
approaches to the economics  
of the arts in Europe

Input and Panel

Rehearsing futures  
Lecture Performance

Art knows no boundaries,  
but language does

Workshop

Tour  
ufaFabrik

General Assembly

Talks and Listens

Talks and Listens

Talks and Listens

Talks and Listens

## Artistic Programme

Milla Kroistinen:  
**GRIT**  
(For what it's worth)  
Uferstudios 14

Jules Petru Fricker:  
**Trancestors –**  
on the paths of our  
queer trailblazers  
Dock 11

andcompany  
&Co:  
**MarsOnEarth:**  
**Die Marsnahme**  
Floating  
University  
Berlin

People  
watching:  
**Play dead**  
Chamäle-  
on Theater

Colacioppo,  
Si,  
Ritterbusch,  
Moser,  
Schmittner  
**Violence**  
Acker  
Stadt Palast

She She Pop:  
**Everything possible**  
HAU 1

Cintia Rangel  
**Baobab**  
Theater o.N.

cie.toula limnaios:  
**Jeux**  
Halle Tanzbühne Berlin

ithAKT: **Antigone**  
Tak Theater Aufbau  
Kreuzberg

Sascha Cowan  
& Hadrien Daigneault-Roy  
**FAGGOT\*S**  
Ringtheater

Die Körpergemeinschaft  
**Kommensialität**  
Cordillera Raum für Körper und Utopien

Schnitzler,  
Roeder,  
Kühn, Aller  
**Pandoras**  
**Podcast**  
Neuköllner  
Oper

Cintia Rangel  
**Baobab**  
Theater o.N.

People  
watching:  
**Play dead**  
Chamäleon  
Theater

andcompany  
&Co:  
**MarsOnEarth:**  
**Die Marsnahme**  
Floating  
University  
Berlin

Sascha Cowan &  
Hadrien Daigneault-  
Roy  
**FAGGOT\*S**  
Ringtheater

Colacioppo,  
Si,  
Ritterbusch,  
Moser,  
Schmittner  
**Violence**  
Acker  
Stadt Palast

She She Pop:  
**Everything possible**  
HAU 1

ithAKT:  
**Antigone**  
Tak  
Theater Aufbau  
Kreuzberg

Schnitzler, Roeder, Kühn,  
Aller  
**Pandoras Podcast**  
Neuköllner Oper

Jules Petru Fricker:  
**Trancestors –**  
**on the paths of our**  
**queer trailblazers**  
Dock 11

# Keynotes, workshops, and artistic perspectives during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of May

REHEARSING FUTURES invited participants to explore how artistic processes can transform the ways we collaborate, organize, and imagine change—preparing us to navigate today’s uncertainties. The programme at ufa-Fabrik therefore brought together multiple perspectives and artistic approaches in the frame of three clusters.

## Overview

### Artistic Freedom, Agency & Resistance

This cluster focused on artistic and critical reflections on freedom of expression, political influence, and the arts as a space of resilience and transformation.

Inputs from artists and cultural workers Jakub Depczyński (Poland), Mey Seifan (Syria, Germany), Gerald Odil (Nigeria), Sivan Ben Yishai (Israel/Palestine, Germany), Sebastián Squella (Chile) and feminist economist Emma Holten (Denmark) were followed by discussions.

A workshop from Palestinian philosopher Yasmeen Daher and the German lawyer Alexander Gorski on political interference and artistic autonomy in our legal system was accompanied by the film screening of “The Art of Staying Many,” all of which addressed vulnerability in uncertain times, the need to rethink social and cultural infrastructures, and presented applicable examples to follow.

This cluster highlighted hands-on practices and artistic experiments that actively engage with social, ecological, and political change.

Joanne Kee (Australia), Nimi Ravindran (India), Sophia Stepf (Germany) and Katja Sonnemann (Germany) offered a space for a collaborative exchange regarding practices of change. In an interactive parkour several artists from different countries shared their artistic approaches: participatory performance, and gaming formats connecting public space and debate, as well as interventions exploring collectivity, care, and social choreography.

Ezenwa Okoro introduced his Legislative Theatre from Nigeria as a tool for civic dialogue and Caspar Weimann (Germany) presented digital counterstrategies from onlinetheater.live against toxic masculinity.

Eyk Kauly (Germany) showed how to create new communication pathways between deaf and hearing communities, and Diversity Arts Culture and United Networks presented their work regarding an accessible theater landscape for all.

Dabke performer Nancy Nasr al Deen (Lebanon/Germany) and breath therapist Miriam Jakob (Germany) enriched the programme with their work on embodied strategies for transformation.

## Sustainability, Ecology and Indigenous Knowledge

Recognizing that future rehearsal also means rethinking our ecological relationships, this cluster addressed sustainability both in artistic practice and production structures. From sustainable approaches to digital performance and touring with Gwendolenn Sharp—founder and director of The Green Room (France)—to shared indigenous practices from northern Argentina and guided sustainability walks across the ufaFabrik grounds, experiencing local practices of circular economy and community-driven environmental design was the core of this cluster.

Throughout both days, the plenary offered multiple networking sessions, workshops, and informal meeting spaces where participants could connect, reflect, and collaborate. The ufaFabrik's open and sustainable setting served as a living example of how artistic, ecological, and social practices can intertwine — embodying the very ethos of REHEARSING FUTURES.

In addition to the official programme, which once again featured sessions of the [IETM Working Groups](#) and other well-known IETM formats such as [Pitchorama](#), the plenary provided a wide range of informal networking opportunities. You find the whole programme of the IETM Plenary Meeting 2025 [here](#).



↑ Participants during the Plenary Meeting  
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↓ Participants during the Dabke session  
© Karam Ghossein



“The global erosion of artistic freedom is a pressing issue that affects everyone in the cultural sector, regardless of role or affiliation - and it has profound implications for society as a whole. Power-holders are increasingly using the arts as a testing ground to undermine democratic structures, fostering a climate of fear and division. Even countries that once ranked high in democratic values and freedoms—across Europe and beyond—are now showing signs of regression in their commitment to protecting artistic expression. This includes silencing artists through direct and indirect censorship, politicising public funding, and failing to provide fair and inclusive conditions for all artists - especially those who are displaced or in exile - to belong, participate, and thrive professionally. Crucially, the mechanisms of oppression and authoritarianism do not remain confined within national borders; they have the capacity to spread, cross boundaries, and contaminate other contexts.”

Extract from the [IETM report](#) by Elena Polivtseva on the panel “Perspectives on Artistic Freedom at Risk”

Moderated by freemuse research director Sarah Whyatt, three cultural workers from Poland, Germany, and Uganda shared their perspectives on the status of freedom of expression within the arts. Jakub Depczyński is a curator and cultural worker who co-organized the [anti-fascist year](#) in Poland 2019–20. Mey Seifan is a Syrian artist based in Germany focusing on trauma in her performative practice, and was involved in actions in response to Berlin’s [anti-discrimination clause](#). Gerald Odil is a queer arts producer and part of the Kampala-based artists collective Anti-Mass, and spoke about how Uganda’s [Anti-Homosexuality Act](#) has affected his work and forced him to leave Uganda. Jakub Depczyński’s contribution can be found as a text in the Reader II and as a video [here](#).

→ [Watch an interview with Gerald Odil](#)



↑ Gerald Odil and Jakub Depczyński in conversation with Sarah Whyatt and Mey Seifan  
© Karam Ghossein

As a playwright, Sivan Ben Yishai’s work actively embraces the discomfort of exposing hypocrisies within society, through the search for a language that is both precise and unsettling, and capable of mirroring society in all its contradictions. During the session “Rehearsing Futures” in her lecture “Solidarity or the High Art of Getting Dirty” she spoke about solidarity and empathy in challenging times. In the same session, Sebastián Squella from Chile shared his thoughts about theatre and democracy. Both lectures and an audio recording of Sivan Ben Yishai’s essay can be found in our Reader II.

The session “Knowing your Rights in Challenging Times” with Yasmeen Daher and Alexander Gorski offered information on how to navigate legal challenges related to artistic freedom by exploring some guidelines that can be applied to varied contexts. Alexander Gorski—a Germany-based legal expert who specializes in supporting cultural workers and artists who are facing legal repression—lead the session in conversation with Palestinian political philosopher, writer, and activist Yasmeen Daher. Daher is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Potsdam, and part of the International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies at the faculty of economics and social sciences.

Their conversation weaved legal strategies with political thought and personal experience to confront the mechanisms of censorship and the internal pressures of self-censorship.

The documentary film “The Art of Staying Many” captures a series of events organized by Fonds Darstellende Künste (federal funding body for the performing arts) in response to the rise of right-wing politics in Germany, leading up to the 2024 state and local elections. As the film moves between various locations—Leipzig, Bitterfeld-Wolfen, Berlin and Erfurt, among others—it features insightful commentary from both local and international voices, reflecting on the current political climate and its implications for the performing arts in the German context.

→ [Watch the trailer of The Art of Staying Many](#)



“Expanding political turmoil, rising authoritarianism and continuing economic austerity are pushing the arts and culture sectors across the Western world into an area of devaluation, heightened threats and overall marginalisation. ... Emma Holten (a feminist activist, gender policy consultant and an author of the book DEFICIT – on the value of care) was introduced to share the deeper thinking around the notions of value and the influences through which the economy operates within the political schema. It was both helpful and inspiring to convene at a point of mutual understanding around the history of economy as a science, which paved the path to understanding its current role in our political systems.”

Extract from the [IETM report](#) by Tina Hofman of the session “Perspectives on political approaches to the economics of the arts in Europe.”

Follow the link to the report to learn more about the discussion between Elena Polivtseva (Independent Researcher, Belgium) and Emma Holten, Janina Benduski (Director of Berlin’s Performing Arts Program, Germany), Julie Ward (former MEP and member of the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament, United Kingdom) and Uroš Veber (president of the Slovenian advocacy NGO Asociacija) which supports cultural non-profit organizations and artists, Slovenia.



↑ Emma Holten during her input  
© Karam Ghossein



↑ Janina Benduski speaking with Elena Polivtseva (right) and Uroš Veber (left) © Karam Ghossein



Caspar Weimann is one of the initiators of [onlinetheater.live](#) and an expert on radicalization within the online sphere.

In the summer of 2024, [onlinetheater.live](#) infiltrated anti-feminist content bubbles on TikTok with a specially developed video campaign. Titled MYKE, the campaign is based on a year-long research process offering insights into the world's largest theatre, the internet, and asks the participants to take a deep dive into TikTok's 'manosphere.' During the workshop "Hacking the Manosphere - Performance Strategies Fighting Online Authoritarianism" Caspar Weimann guided participants in practical exercises to build their own social media character inspired by the methods used in MYKE, equipping them with tools to resist digital authoritarianism. Caspar's introduction can be found in the Reader II.

→ [Watch an interview with Caspar Weimann](#)

In the session "Navigating Practices of Change" Joanne Kee (Australia), Nimi Ravindran (India), Katja Sonnemann (Germany), and Sophia Stepf (Germany) created a space for collective learning based on their intersectional feminist approaches of collective care by telling each other about their successes and failures, strategies and methods of engaging courageously for change. With a focus on carefully listening to each other and avoiding quick answers, they explored how to shift structures by taking a critical stand towards power, as well as on one's own relationship to power. Afterwards, the participants engaged in peer exchange sessions to explore more ways of navigating change.

→ [Watch an interview with Joanne Kee](#)



Theater has always been a means of investigating humanity, sharing stories, and examining our role in the local, political, and global community. These contributions are deeply meaningful, but sometimes leave open the question: in addition to personal transformation and social critique, can theater also be a tool for concrete social and political change? By sharing the methodology of Legislative Theatre, Ezenwa Okoro gave inspiring answers to these questions. His very concrete introduction to the methodology can be found in the in the Reader Part II where he gives an insight into his workshop titled: Legislative Theatre in focus – artistic tools to foster civic engagement .

→ [Watch Ezenwa Okoro talk about artvocacy](#)



+ Ezenwa Okoro ©Karam Ghossein

Motivated by the idea that everyone should be able to experience a performance together—without separating hearing and deaf audiences—performer Eyk Kauly developed workshops in Visual Sign, a unique art form based on mime that can be understood by both hearing and deaf participants: a language perceived through the eyes. In the session “Art Knows No Boundaries, But Language Does – A Workshop on Visual Sign,” participants were invited to explore and express their own stories using the body language they already employ unconsciously in daily communication. These ‘visual signs’ were then transformed into artistic expressions, allowing each participant to communicate creatively across the boundaries of spoken language.

→ [Watch an interview with Eyk Kauly](#)



+ Eyk Kauly during the session © Karam Ghossein

The working session “Queer Hacking of an Institution” run by Oval Office Bar focused on sharing practical knowledge of creative and solidarity strategies, designed to disrupt and transform institutional structures into more inclusive, non-commercial, and diverse spaces. Oval Office Bar is an association for queer night culture situated in the basement of the Bochum State Theatre. Members of the collective offered an insight into how a self-organized initiative established itself within the more hierarchical structures of an institution, and has continued to grow over the years. The bar hosts drag shows, lectures, singing sessions, and organizes protests to promote political self-empowerment. It also offers a variety of events designed to help people meet new friends in a safer space.

↓ Oval Office Bar during their session  
© Karam Ghossein



The Intervisions parkour was an interactive experience that exposed participants to artistic works engaging with political, social, and environmental challenges. Artists, cultural workers, and academics from diverse backgrounds came together to experiment and co-create a parkour that invited participants to immerse themselves in a wide range of perspectives, working methods, and concrete artistic tools for addressing contemporary issues. Comprising fourteen stations, the parkour offered insights into varied artistic practices and created opportunities for exciting, intimate, and unexpected encounters.

Moderated by Iris Minich ([MischPULK](#), Germany), the parkour featured:

[artist Tatiana Luján Valdez](#) (Argentina) sharing the *Pa la Pacha* ritual as a communal practice of reciprocity for possible futures

[artist collective andpartnersincrime](#) (Germany) cooking with participants and engaging in a talk about their practice as *Maintenance art*

[The No Fun Collective](#) (Czech Republic) using gaming strategies for collective imagination

[artist Diana Wesser](#) presenting a collective glossary about classism in the performing arts (and beyond)

[siddhartha lokkanandi & Erin Honeycutt](#) from the Hopscotch Reading Room sharing recommendations for non-western literature

[United Networks](#) presenting their [Hospitality-Rider](#),

[Litchi Ly Friedrich & Georgina Philp](#) sharing the history and practice of Ballroom at [House of St. Laurent](#)

[Prof. Dr. Nicola Scherer](#) from the University of Applied Sciences Niederrhein (Germany) performing a call to action with the band [New Soul Generation](#)

➔ [Watch a video of the Intervisions Parkour](#)



↑ ↓ Intervisions Parkour © Karam Ghossein





↑ ↓ Intervisions Parkour © Karam Ghossein



Dabke - Folk dance as resistance:

Dabke is a traditional Levantine folk dance originating from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Jordan, has long been tied to expressions of solidarity and resistance. In this introductory workshop, Nancy Nasr al Deen guided participants through the basics of Dabke and explored how this powerful collective dance can serve as a tool for empowerment. Typically performed in a line or circle, Dabke is a vibrant social dance featured at weddings and community celebrations.

✈ [Watch an extract of the Dabke session](#)

Experiencing Breath

Before heading into workshops and panels, Miriam Jakob facilitated sessions of breath and body work. Miriam has a background in choreography and is trained as a breath therapist using the Breath Experience method, inspired by the work of Ilse Middendorf (author of “The Perceptible Breath: A Breathing Science”). The Breath Experience method is a form of somatic education, based on connecting with the breath by focusing and sensing its movement within the body.

↓ Nancy Nasr Al Deen teaching Dabke © Karam Ghossein





The Plenary Meeting offered an open space for sustainability: a room welcoming everyone interested in questions on sustainability, where participants were invited to bring their own projects and to share them in an informal setting. Throughout the day, the room also hosted the following workshops and working sessions:

Gwendolenn Sharp from the [Green Room](#) (France) lead the workshop “Digital Doesn't Mean Dematerialised: Greening Our Online Practices.” From video calls to streaming, websites, and cloud storage, our digital tools seem invisible - but they carry a heavy environmental footprint. The energy and water required to power the infrastructure behind our digital practices contributes to climate breakdown, with direct impacts on already-vulnerable regions and Indigenous lands, where resource extraction and data centers are often located. In this workshop at the IETM Berlin Plenary Meeting 2025, participants explored how to align their digital practices with their environmental and social values. Participants left with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions and adopt less impactful digital practices, from email habits to hosting choices, grounded in ecological awareness and aligned with their values. Find the report by Lian Bell [here](#).

The session “Indigenous Perspectives in Performing Arts Ecosystems” invited participants to reimagine the future by listening to those who carry generational memory knowledge rooted in coexistence with the planet. Merindah Donnelly (BlakDance, Australia) and Thomas E.S. Kelly (Karul Projects, Australia) started the session with a video conversation discussing the myth of separation between humans and nature, and how this operates within cultural institutions. Following this discussion, Martha Hincapié Charry (Germany/Colombia) led a participatory fishbowl workshop that invited reflections on decolonizing power structures, strategies to move beyond performative activism, and tools to embody genuine climate justice, representation and reparation.

➔ [Watch a video conversation with Merinda Donnelly and Thomas E.S. Kelly](#)

During the Sustainability Walking Tour of ufaFabrik Werner Wiartalla explained how ufaFabrik has been working since 1979 to make their grounds both environmentally friendly and sustainable: both in terms of continuous optimization of the old buildings and through the work they do with their tenants and partners. Werner is an engineer and a specialist in learning-by-doing, who shared extensive hands-on experience—from installing mobile solar units on the green roof to implementing rainwater-based toilet systems.



↑ ↓ ufaFabrik Sustainability Walking Tour with Werner Wiartalla © Karam Ghossein



# Thank you

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