



**ASIA-EUROPE  
CULTURAL  
FESTIVAL**

# **ASIA-EUROPE CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

# **WORK PLAN**

**2025-2027**

## ABOUT THE FESTIVAL ..... 3

- Our Vision.....4
- Our Mission.....4
- Our Values.....4

## CURATORIAL VISION ..... 6

- Goals & Actions.....9

## PROGRAMMES.....10

- Showcasing .....11
- Dialogue and Knowledge Exchange .....11
- Panel Discussions.....13
- AECFest Camp .....13

## AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT.....14

- Goals & Actions.....15

## ACCESSIBILITY .....18

## SUSTAINABILITY..... 20

- Goals & Actions.....23



Last Portrait,  
AECFest 2024 Italy  
ph Monia Pavoni

The Asia-Europe Cultural Festival (AECFest) is a multidisciplinary arts festival that celebrates the artistic diversity of Asia and Europe and promotes dialogue and exchange amongst artists from the two regions. Presented by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the festival travels each year to a different country of Asia and Europe offering a diverse range of contemporary art forms and practices, including performing arts, music, exhibitions, film and roundtable discussions.

Since 2018, the festival has served as a testament to the rich tapestry of cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe, fostering artistic collaborations and igniting connections between the two continents known for their diversity and creativity. The festival is dedicated to showcasing works that embody deep collaborations between artists across 51 countries of Asia and Europe\*. The featured projects emphasise cross-cultural partnerships, celebrating creativity that transcends borders and fosters mutual understanding between Asian and European arts communities.

**\*ASEM Partner Countries**

Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom, Viet Nam.

## Our Vision





To be a collaborative space that inspires and enables arts communities in Asia and Europe to create and exchange.

## Our Mission

- To support and showcase artistic innovation and excellence in the arts
- To ensure representation of socially and geographically underrepresented arts communities
- To provide skills development and broader community engagement locally
- To create more sustainable cultural relations and exchanges within the sector, from government to grassroots initiatives

## Our Values

### VALUE

	<b>Creativity</b>	We value artistic excellence, innovation and curiosity.
	<b>Collaboration</b>	We work across borders, fostering dialogue, mutual trust and understanding between cultures.
	<b>Inclusivity</b>	We are open and supportive of diverse forms of cultural expression.
	<b>Fairness and Equity</b>	We believe in providing fair and equitable opportunities.

*"A unique contemporary, travelling, international, multidisciplinary festival celebrating cultural diversity and fostering cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe."*



The Rite of Spring, AECFest 2024 Italy  
ph Monia Pavoni

## Curatorial Vision

*"We aim to build cultural understanding through creativity and artistic expression."*



Sound of X, AECFest 2024 Italy  
ph Jem Calija

The AECFest curatorial approach focuses on the themes of collaboration, sustainability, and innovation in the arts. By showcasing and supporting artists from a wide range of countries we aim to build cultural understanding through creativity and artistic expression.

### **Support Artistic Collaborations**

- We bridge geographical and cultural divides to foster dialogue and innovation, inspiring new narratives and artistic languages with artists from Asia and Europe.
- We present works that highlight the richness and depth of collaboration and cultural exchanges between Asia and Europe.

### **Embrace Inclusive and Evolving Perspectives**

- We are dedicated to challenging deeply rooted biases by actively questioning conventional narratives.
- We present works that challenge mindsets and promote more inclusive, diverse, and equitable ways of thinking.

### **Celebrate Cultural Identities**

- We connect diverse arts communities by exploring cultural identities, fostering a deeper sense of belonging through art.
- We showcase works that challenge stereotypes surrounding culture, race, and gender, or that highlight the complex experiences of displacement and migration.

### **Address Social, Digital and Economic Inequalities**

- We advocate for social change, inspiring collective action by bringing together artists that tackle various socio-economic concerns.
- We present works that spark conversations about equity and justice.

### **Intertwine Contemporary Approaches with Heritage Practices**

- We value cultural traditions and heritage, while engaging with contemporary practices.
- We present works that reimagine cultural traditions by creating innovative and creative expressions.

### **Inspire Climate Action**

- We harness the power of creativity and innovation to raise awareness on the climate crisis.
- We present works that inspire the communities to act and rethink their role in creating a more sustainable future.

### **Explore Art and Technologies**

- We foster innovation and push the boundaries of creative expression.
- We present works that investigate how creativity and innovation drive new forms of expression and interaction.



The Golden Temple, AECFest 2023 Singapore  
ph Suhaimi Abdullah

## Goals & Actions



### Co-commission artistic works

Present a min. of 2 co-commissioned works in collaboration with other organisations in Asia and Europe in the next 3 years cycle.



### Develop new leadership and artistic talent

Expand the residency programme by supporting more artists for a longer period of time.



### Increase diversity of artists

Present a min. of 2 works per year from underrepresented groups.



### Partner with other international and local organisations

Increase co-presented and co-funded activities.



### Launch a new AECFest Camp

Pilot a new platform for networking of cultural professionals.



### Strengthen cultural representation and artistic expression

Present a min. of 1 work per year addressing relevant international issues.



Biomodd [TTO15], AECFest 2024 Italy  
ph Monia Pavoni

The festival is structured around three main components: *showcasing* a diverse range of artistic expressions; providing platforms that foster *exchange of knowledge*; and design the *AECFest Camp*, an immersive space for industry professionals to network, share insights, and develop new ideas.

## Showcasing

The festival offers a wide array of shows, from theatre to music, exhibitions and installations.

- We present projects already premiered and we co-commission new works.
- We give space to both conceptual and experimental practices, as well as mainstream works.
- We give priority to projects with a multidisciplinary approach.
- We support emerging artists, allowing them to increase their visibility and connect with other festivals and arts organisations to widen their networks.
- We present a wide range of voices and perspectives and prioritise projects led by artists who face social, geographical, or economic disadvantages.

## Dialogue and Knowledge Exchange

The festival serves as a vital platform for knowledge exchange and capacity building by bringing together artists and cultural professionals from Asia and Europe. Through workshops, panel discussions, and residency programmes we provide mentorship opportunities and promote cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration.

### Residency Programme

As we constantly advocate for cross-cultural collaborations and knowledge exchange, implementing a residency programme is essential in providing time, space and resources for Asian and European artists to research and develop new artistic projects.

Our hybrid residency programme is designed to bring together creative individuals from different disciplines, backgrounds, and countries to work on joint projects. This provides space and time to build cross-disciplinary partnerships,

allowing artists to exchange ideas, experiment with new techniques, and draw inspiration from each other's expertise. Participants, selected by invitation only together with our international partners, benefit from mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to resources that support their creative exploration.



*"We aim to spark meaningful conversations around contemporary and pressing topics related to art and culture."*

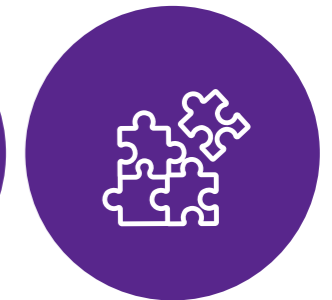
VECTOR#5, AECFest 2024 Singapore  
ph Goh Shu Qing

### Panel Discussions

Panel discussions are an integral part of our programmes, as we recognise the importance of key players and stakeholders in shaping the arts and culture sector. These sessions provide a platform for diverse perspectives and foster continuous dialogue, promoting mutual understanding, learning, and respect within and across arts communities.

By including these discussions in the festival, we aim to spark meaningful conversations around contemporary and pressing topics related to art and culture.

## AECFest Camp



A new festival component catered to cultural professionals will be launched in 2026. The AECFest Camp will provide an exclusive, by invitation-only programme, designed for professionals to engage in both development and networking opportunities. Attendees, carefully selected for their expertise or relevance to the festival's focus, are granted access to special sessions such as site visits, specialised workshops, and expert-led discussions.

These activities are tailored to provide deeper insights into the festival's themes. In addition to these professional development opportunities, participants can enjoy the festival's shows or exhibitions, enriching their experience with firsthand exposure to the creative works being presented. The primary aim of AECFest camp is to foster meaningful connections and collaborations, offering an intimate setting where professionals can network, exchange ideas, and expand their knowledge.

# Audience Development



Q&A with artists, AECFest 2023 Singapore  
ph Suhaimi Abdullah

Ensuring maximum accessibility for our audiences is crucial to the festival's success, as it reflects our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

## Goals & Actions

- Continue to grow new and diverse audiences
- Expand the number of international art professionals attending the festival
- Engage ASEF Governors and expand the number of government representatives attending the festival

### AUDIENCE

### ACTIONS



#### Arts and cultural sector (artists, arts professionals, arts students)

- Co-curate and co-produce our programmes with international partners.
- Disseminate the AECFest Work Plan to stakeholders and organise online sessions by invitation to discuss the future of AECFest with potential new partners.
- Launch AECFest Camp.
- Expand AECFest physical presence at international festivals and platforms.
- Engage and be more active in international industry-based networks such as the International network for contemporary performing arts (IETM), On the move (OTM), European dance development network (EDN), European network on cultural management and policy (ENCATC).



#### Governments

- Engage Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) member countries through direct communication with ASEF's Governors.
- Engage with UNESCO and its regional offices, EUNIC network (European Union National Institutes for Culture) and other Asian cultural institutes to disseminate expression of interest for projects to be featured in our programme.



#### General public

- Revamp the festival website.
- Enhance our social media presence.
- Make the events as accessible as possible to audiences with disabilities thanks to a venue's accessibility plan and the use of modern technologies.
- Engage with local organisations able to provide a better understanding of the communities and audiences in the hosting country.






*"We create better connections  
with our audiences for a more  
dynamic and inclusive festival."*

# Accessibility



Sign language interpreter, AECFest 2024 Italy  
ph Monia Pavoni

We value the diversity of our audiences and artists and we are committed to presenting programmes that are inclusive and accessible to all members of society. We are working with our partners to ensure that every person, regardless of ability, may have equal access to our events in a safe, respectful environment supportive of human dignity.

AUDIENCE	ACTIONS
 <b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with local disability advocacy groups to help identify specific needs and improve the overall accessibility of the events.</li> <li>Include access enquiry information on our communication assets.</li> <li>Create a user-friendly website and social media channels (with easy navigation, language translation, available transcripts, alternative texts, etc.).</li> </ul>
 <b>Venues accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with our local partners to provide wheelchair accessible venues.</li> <li>Provide free tickets to the accompanying person.</li> </ul>
 <b>Individuals with hearing impairments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sign language interpreters for performances or talks where possible.</li> <li>Provide captioning services for videos.</li> <li>Provide the use of assistive technology where possible.</li> </ul>
 <b>Individuals with visual impairments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide audio-introductions of performances on our website.</li> <li>Provide touch tours for at least 1 show a year.</li> <li>Provide poetic audio description when possible.</li> </ul>
 <b>Sensory Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sensory rooms when possible.</li> </ul>

# Sustainability



Framing the Future,  
AECFest 2023 Singapore  
ph Lihn Pham

We have an individual, collective, and institutional responsibility towards the land, its resources, and everything that lives on it. By including social and environmental justice amongst AECFest values, we seek to reduce the negative impact of our activities and promote positive outcomes that support a livable future.



We uphold rigorous standards for managing events sustainably.



We embrace inclusive practices that support artistic communities.



We strive to engage diverse audiences and actively work to eliminate participation barriers.



We inspire festivalgoers and stakeholders to adopt behaviors that prioritise the planet's future.



We thoughtfully consider the varied sociopolitical and economic contexts of artists and their works when curating the festival.









We recognise that addressing environmental challenges requires an interdisciplinary approach that accounts for power dynamics and social inequities.

*"We present works that inspire the communities to act and rethink their role in creating a more sustainable future."*



## Goals & Actions

OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS
 <b>Waste Reduction (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement waste management strategies (prevention, reuse and recycling) for our events and office operations.</li> <li>Raise awareness of the topic and educate staff and participants.</li> <li>Digitalise programmes and online ticketing system.</li> <li>Print on recycled paper.</li> <li>Use e-business cards.</li> <li>Prioritise reusable dishware and prohibiting the distribution of water bottles.</li> </ul>
 <b>Reduction in Carbon Footprint (SGD 13: Climate Action)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote digital meetings and hybrid formats.</li> <li>Encourage the use of low-emission transportation options where possible.</li> <li>Choose local accommodations within proximity to the event venues.</li> </ul>
 <b>Sustainable Procurement (SGD 12: Responsible Consumption and Production)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise renting equipment.</li> <li>Favour local suppliers, especially those who are also committed to sustainable practices.</li> </ul>
 <b>Raising awareness and facilitating pro-environmental behavior (SGD 13: Climate Action)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include at least 1 sustainability themed project per year in the programme.</li> <li>Integrate sustainability criteria in partners selection.</li> <li>Implement sustainability KPIs into commissioned projects.</li> <li>Prioritise local and seasonal vegetarian food, including vegan options.</li> </ul>
 <b>Increasing the presence of vulnerable/marginalised groups (SGD 10: Reduce Inequalities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise vulnerable and underrepresented groups projects and artists.</li> <li>Engage with stakeholders able to connect with local communities.</li> </ul>
 <b>Value-based working methods (SGD 8: Decent work and Economic Growth)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sustainability training for staff.</li> </ul>



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[asef.org](http://asef.org)  
[culture360.asef.org](http://culture360.asef.org)