

Open Call for Culture Lab Europe

# Spaces For Solidarity

16-18 April 2020 in Rijeka, Croatia

The European Cultural Foundation invites you to participate in Culture Lab Europe, which will take place from 16-18 April 2020 in Rijeka, Croatia – the European Capital of Culture for 2020.

We are looking for cultural activists and mediators who are engaged in initiatives that create spaces for solidarity and public debate, and who are keen on European collaboration.



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## Where did solidarity go?

Europe is under relentless pressure and is fragmenting. Political, demographic and economic changes have widened the gaps between people, opening up fertile ground for populism, radicalisation and fear. Borders of all kinds are hardening. Just when we need to find ways to discuss these changes, social media is entrenching viewpoints, decontextualising information and spreading falsehoods. There are fewer physical safe spaces available for people to meet and openly discuss ideas with people outside their own bubble.

In this Europe of increasingly polarised communities we need individuals, organisations and practices that can support spaces to learn, debate, build new ideas and negotiate new ways of living together. This is where culture can help to close the gap.

## We need shared European public spaces!

A society can only be truly democratic if there is a public space where different perspectives can be shared and to which everyone has equal access. At this crucial juncture, Europe doesn't have spaces where divided populations can gather and where democracy can be upheld.

European democracy will only work if it is underpinned by a European public space that consists of many connected online and physical spaces. Spaces that are safe, cultural and public and where Europeans across national borders can share their ideas, thoughts, experiences, news or experiments on topics of European relevance.

## Culture Lab Europe

All across Europe, citizens (including those who are not formally recognised as such) are realising they are not alone and are organising their communities. They are creating new online and offline spaces where working together and generating solidarity is what matters. In these spaces culture functions as a language to describe reality, to express feelings and opinions. Culture works to strengthen social ties and helps to imagine alternative ways of living and engaging with others in understanding, trust and peace. Connecting these spaces will provide a crucial infrastructure for a cultural movement that can reclaim European democracy.

Culture Lab Europe has been set up as a live platform to strengthen this movement. Cultural activists and mediators will establish connections with colleagues from across Europe and work on common initiatives that can strengthen European Public Space. Culture Lab Europe provides a safe and inspirational working environment based on principles of free and open culture.

Through facilitated group work, peer to peer learning, inspirational talks and innovative methodologies, participants are triggered to think outside the box, collaborate and scale their work up to a European level. They are encouraged to seek funding for the initiatives they have developed during the event. A small number of funders interested in the topic of European Public Space will be invited to Culture Lab Europe. After the event, a thematically linked Open Call for grant proposals will be launched by the European Cultural Foundation.



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## Who are we looking for?

We are looking for cultural activists and mediators who are:

- » engaged in non-partisan initiatives that provide digital or physical space for citizens to share ideas and engage in debate
- » well connected to relevant (local) communities and stakeholders such as decision makers, educational institutions or media
- » committed to sharing their knowledge and experience and working on collaborative projects with peers from across Europe.

We are committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. Therefore we especially encourage applications from people and communities that face discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, (cultural) background, people with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

## What we offer

Culture Lab Europe is a unique opportunity to:

- » be inspired by initiatives tackling the pressures facing European societies
- » build connections with other cultural change makers across Europe
- » develop initiatives contributing to a European space for public debate, fostering solidarity amongst people living across our continent
- » meet funders and be part of their initiative for European public space.

Participation in Culture Lab Europe is free of charge. Travel, accommodation and meals are covered.

## Partnerships

Culture Lab Europe is co-organised with [Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture](#). It is part of the project [Culture for Solidarity](#) – a 2.5-year artistic investigation into the root causes of fragmentation in Europe by [Krytyka Polityczna](#) (Warsaw), [ZEMOS98](#) (Seville) and the [European Cultural Foundation](#) (Amsterdam). It is co-funded by the European Commission's [Creative Europe programme](#). The aim is to encourage greater solidarity, by highlighting cultural practices that bring unusual groups of people together, connecting these practices and scaling them across the continent.



Port of Diversity



Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



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## Selection

Through this Open Call, 30 participants will be selected based on:

1. the relevance of their work to the theme of Culture Lab Europe and
2. their motivation to participate in the event and collaborate on common initiatives with other participants.

In addition, ten artists, activists and researchers who took part in the activities of Culture for Solidarity – as well as up to ten local grantees of Rijeka European Capital of Culture, who were selected by the population of the city – will also take part in Culture Lab Europe.

The overall composition of the group will also be based on:

1. diversity criteria, such as gender balance and geographical spread and
2. matching potential.

## Eligibility criteria

- » Representatives of organisations as well as individuals are eligible to apply
- » Participants should be over 18 years old on 15 April 2020
- » Participants should be (legally) able and willing to travel to Rijeka (Croatia)
- » Participants must be available on 16, 17 and 18 April for the full days, which means most will travel on 15 and 19 April
- » Participants should have sufficient English proficiency to interact with others on a professional level.

To submit your application, please fill in the online form here:  
<https://www.culturalfoundation.eu/culture-lab-europe>

The application form must be completed online and cannot be saved during the inputting process. For this reason, we have provided a WORD template with the main questions in the application form. We strongly recommend that you prepare your application in advance then cut and paste the content into the online form.



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