

*The Co-Presidency of Finland and Åland
of the Nordic Council of Ministers*

**Nordic Diversity Connections
In Arts and Culture Seminar**

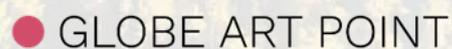
6–8 October 2025

Oulu, Finland

Organized by:



Taiteen edistämiskeskus
Centret för konstfrämjande
Arts Promotion Centre Finland





Programme

Monday, 6 October 2025

ARRIVAL AND GET-TOGETHER EVENING

Venue: **Oulu Theatre, Theatre Restaurant Aulis** (Kaarlenväylä 2, Oulu)

18.30–21.00 Dinner and networking

Host: **Julian Owusu**, dancer, spoken word artist, educator

Music: **DJ Dee-C**

Welcome words:

- **Alma Lehmuskallio**, Artistic Director, Oulu Theatre
- **Priyanka Sood**, Project Manager, Oulu for All Project
- **Lisa Kalkowski**, Producer of UrbanApa Art Platform
#StopHatredNow

Tuesday, 7 October 2025

SEMINAR DAY

Venue: **Oulu City Hall** (Kirkkokatu 2a, Oulu)

08.00 Registration (City Hall entrance hall) and Breakfast Coffee
(Banquet Hall Foyer)

08.30 Opening, Banquet Hall (second floor). The venue is equipped with a hearing loop. Speech-to-text interpretation provided by Evantia. The plenary sessions will be video recorded.

Music: **Hanieh Hadizadeh** (*santur*), **Hamed Jalili** (*tar*)

Host: **Silva Belghiti**, sign language actor (with interpreters)

- **Mari-Leena Talvitie**, Minister of Science and Culture, Finland
(video greeting)
- **Ari Alatossava**, Mayor, City of Oulu
- **Piia Rantala-Korhonen**, CEO, Oulu2026 Foundation

Artistic intervention: **Ksenia Peretrkhina**, Interactive installation “+12”

09.00 Keynote 1: From Oslo to Oulu: a cross-country perspective on diversity efforts and gaps in the Nordic-Baltic region.

- **Sadjad Shokoohi**, Independent Researcher, Dublin, Ireland

09.20 Keynote 2: Why True Democracy Needs Everyone?

- **Ceyda Berk-Söderblom**, Senior Project Manager and Researcher, Trans Europe Halles (TEH), European network of grassroots cultural centres, Lund, Sweden

09.40–11.00 The panel discussion brings in perspectives from across the Nordic-Baltic region to provide a multi-voiced reality check: How do the keynote's observations resonate in their contexts? What perspectives might be missing? What does diversity work look like from their points of view? Moderated by **Ninos Josef**, consultant and development-strategist, Sweden.

Speakers:

- **Alyssa Bittner-Gibbs**, Vice-Chair, Nordic Migrant Expert Forum and Chair, Ålands Natur och Miljö
- **Elham Fakouri**, Project Manager for events and artistic program, Nordic House Iceland
- **Ilannguaq Petrussen**, Filmmaker, board member at EPI, Greenland
- **Izabel Nordlund**, Cultural Affairs Adviser, Saami Council
- **Gražina Sluško**, Senior Specialist at the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania
- **Lība Bērziņa**, Art therapist, Educator, Designer, Inclusive culture promoter in Latvia

11.00–12.00 Lunch, Council Chamber (first floor)

12.00–13.30 Parallel sessions: **4 sessions, 4 topics**

All sessions will begin with 15-min artistic intervention, providing by **TAIKABOX** (Oulu), taking place simultaneously across all sub-sessions.

1. **Privilege and Access in Arts Education**, Banquet Hall (second floor) by *European Arts and Cultural Education network*

The session explores how culture and arts education can become more accessible, equitable, and empowering for all. It begins with a youth-led intervention by the Valve Film School's special needs youth film club. Keynote presentations will reflect on the implementation of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education and set the stage for collaborative reflection and discussion. Key question: *What structures and practices are needed to ensure that arts education is genuinely accessible and empowering for all?* Moderated by **Joonas Keskinen**, Manager of the Art Testers programme at the Association of Children's Culture in Finland.

Ke Leng, Programme Coordinator. Cultural Policies and Development, Culture Sector, UNESCO

Szilvia Németh, Managing Director and researcher at T-Tudok Centre for Knowledge Management and Educational Research and Leader of Creative Learning and Education Foundation, Budapest, Hungary

2. **Data, Research, and Cultural Policy**, Meeting Room 101 (first floor) by *Center for Cultural Policy Research Cupore*

The session explores how cultural diversity can be meaningfully and ethically monitored in the Nordic context. It considers the strengths and blind spots of register-based systems, the limits of using "foreign background" as a proxy, and the risks of ignoring racialised experiences by drawing on sensitive data governance principles (e.g. those concerning the Sámi). The session asks how to combine registers with self-identification, and how to design indicators that are relevant for creators, audiences, governance, and funding. Key question: *What information and safeguards are needed to build fair and legitimate cultural diversity data in the Nordics?* Moderated by **Aleksandra**

Dunaeva, Independent Researcher, Theatre Educator, Diversity Bridge Builder.

Marja Alastalo, University Lecturer, Deputy Head of Department. Department of Social Sciences, University of Eastern Finland

Malin Weijmer, PhD, Senior Project Manager, Kulturanalys Norden

3. Leadership, Power, and Gatekeeping in the Arts, Board Room 109 (first floor, room with hearing loop), by *Globe Art Point and Culture for All Service*

The session invites participants to critically reflect on power structures and gatekeeping practices in the arts and culture sector. After an introduction to the topic by keynoters, speakers and participants will explore what inclusive leadership looks like and how we can work collectively towards a more equitable, antiracist, and safe cultural field. Key question: *How can we challenge traditional structures of power and gatekeeping in the arts?* Moderated by **Anna Litewka-Anttolainen**, Project Manager at Oulu2026 Foundation and Diversity Agent.

Amalie Ørum Hansen, Executive Director, ASSITEJ Denmark
Nicol Savinetti, Chairperson and Founder, IMMART, Denmark

4. Equitable and Accessible Arts Funding, Meeting Room 120 (first floor) by *Arts Promotion Centre Finland*

The session brings together representatives from funding institutions across the Nordic-Baltic region to discuss how arts funding systems can become more inclusive and equitable. Through short keynote impulses and a facilitated roundtable, participants will share concrete tools, models, and challenges related to peer review, institutional practices, and support for diverse applicants. Key question: *What practical strategies and shared tools can support more equitable and inclusive arts*

funding across the Nordic-Baltic region? Moderated by **Emma Beverley**, Director, HIAP – Helsinki International Artist Programme.

Mika Romanus, Director, The Swedish Arts Grants Committee
Henri Terho, Head of Arts and Culture Funding, Arts Promotion Centre Finland

13.30–13.45 | Break (*time for networking, mingling, making new contacts – or simply resting*)

13.45–15.00 **Parallel sessions: 4 sessions, 4 topics**

1. **Privilege and Access in Arts Education**, Banquet Hall (second floor) by *European Arts and Cultural Education network*

(The group work builds on the keynote inputs. Please make sure to attend also the first part 12.00–13.30).

The session is designed to be participatory, with small group work facilitated by international experts in arts and cultural education. The discussions will draw upon the keynote presentations delivered by Ke Leng and Szilvia Nemeth in the preceding part of the program. Discussions will reflect on the implementation of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education. Key question: *What structures and practices are needed to ensure that arts education is genuinely accessible and empowering for all?*

2. **Data, Research, and Cultural Policy**, Meeting Room 101 (first floor) by *Center for Cultural Policy Research Cupore*

In this session, we use the Timeout dialogue method to create a space for open and equal conversation about cultural diversity data in the Nordic region. The dialogue does not seek consensus but aims to deepen shared understanding. Together we reflect on questions such as: *What are the strengths and blind spots of*

register-based systems? How to combine different sources of knowledge—from registers to self-identification—and what safeguards are needed so that diversity data is both fair and legitimate for creators, audiences, governance, and funding.

3. Leadership, Power, and Gatekeeping in the Arts, Board Room 109 (first floor, room with hearing loop) by *Globe Art Point and Culture for All Service*

In the second part of the session, project manager from Globe Art Point will introduce a diversity training module for cultural leaders, *Towards Systemic Change*, a hands-on document designed to create inclusive and diverse art and culture field. Developed through the AAA Erasmus+ project, this training module is the result of an extensive research, international collaboration, and real-world insights from artists and cultural leaders across France, Denmark, and Finland. The document offers practical tools and actionable strategies to help cultural institutions and independent leaders foster equity, diversity, and inclusion in meaningful and lasting ways.

Alex Kollerová, Project Manager, Globe Art Point, Finland

4. Collaborative Futures: Equitable Creative Economy in Arts and Tech, Meeting Room 120 (first floor) by Creative Net project (ESF+)

The session explores how collaboration between the arts and technology sectors can foster a more inclusive and resilient creative economy. Through dialogue and comment speeches, participants share insights from experimental projects and discuss how structural change, digital tools, and new forms of cooperation can support long-term sustainability and diversity in the creative field. Key question: *How can we build creative economies that are both diverse and resilient – and shaped by collaboration across art and technology?* Moderated by **Katri**

Halonen, PhD, Cultural Management Educator and Researcher at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences.

Marja Konttinen, Expert Advisor in the LUME – Creatives in Web3 age (ESF+) project

Ali Abaday, Visiting Expert in the KUVATA Expanded Field of Visual Artists' Income and Work (ESF+) project

15.00–15.30 Coffee break, Banquet Hall Foyer (second floor)

15.30–16.30 Reflection Plenary by **Critical Friends Finland** (CFF), Banquet Hall (second floor)

Critical Friends Finland is an advisory group comprising eight arts and culture practitioners based in Finland, representing a diverse range of artistic expressions, cultural backgrounds, and personal experiences. Its members bring expertise in areas such as cultural diversity, social sustainability, and critical issues, including race, gender, accessibility, and human rights. CFF has been an important sounding board for The Arts Promotion Center during the organisation of the seminar. Moderated by **Kemê Pellicer**, polydisciplinary artist and poet, who also works with facilitation, education, and consultancy.

Speakers:

Isa Hukka does poetry, facilitation, and crip/rampa philosophy

Julian Owusu, dancer and spoken word artist, educator

Monica Gathuo, researcher of women of colour's digital media use and co-founder of ARMA (Anti-Racism Media Activist Alliance)

Ritni Ráste Pieski, Deaunu river sámi storyteller, drag artist, choreographer, dancer and performer

Päiviö Maurice Omwami, curator and philosopher who works as an exhibition curator at the Finnish Museum of Photography

16.30-16.45 Closing remarks

Minna Karvonen, Director, Department for Art and Cultural Policy, Ministry of Education and Culture Finland

19.00–21.00 Evening Reception, Banquet Hall

The City of Oulu is honoured to host the seminar guests. Alongside the city's greetings, guests will enjoy refreshments and live music.

Music by **Ulla Pirttijärvi & Ulda**

Ulla Pirttijärvi & Ulda perform contemporary Sámi music that blends traditional yoik with acoustic instrumentation, reflecting the dialogue between Northern nature and modern Sámi culture.

Wednesday, 8 October 2025

CULTURAL SITE VISITS

Participants will have the opportunity to choose one or two cultural venues to visit in Oulu and learn about their activities. The visits take place at 09.00–10.00 and 10.30–11.30 and include introductions in English as well as time for networking and questions.

All venues are within walking distance of each other. Pre-registration required. Participants may either go directly to the sites independently or together with the group departing from Oulu City Hall at 8.45 and 10.15.

1. CULTURAL CENTRE VALVE, at 9–10 and 10.30–11.30
Hallituskatu 7 (100 m from the City Hall)

Includes presentations by:

Cultural Centre Valve

Valve is a centre of versatile culture and a provider of cultural activities in the Oulu city centre. Valve promotes the accessibility and operational preconditions of arts and culture as well as maintains facilities for event and leisure activity organizers. Valve works closely in cooperation with creators of culture and art, associations, and event organizers.

Saavuta Project

Saavuta project (lit. reach, achieve, access) focuses on enhancing accessibility and inclusivity at cultural events in North

Ostrobothnia. It particularly supports third-sector cultural event organisers across the province.

Multidisciplinary cultural cooperative ILME

At the core of ILME's activities is accessibility to art: reaching out to those who cannot access art themselves. Example projects:

- Community Art Production Centre projects, where artists spend several months in different care institutions creating community art.
- Oulu2026 project "From Here to Art Travel Agency" brings together various travel processes. The idea is to travel from one cultural climate to another. In many of its projects, the Travel Agency goes directly to communities.

Oulu Comics Center

Multipurpose center of Northern comics community. The basis of the Center is to increase comics knowledge and to bring forth both the comics and the makers. The center includes Turku Comics Store, Library of Oulu Comics Center, Comics Gallery! and Cultural Magazine Gallery Oulu. The Comics Gallery! is an open for all application based gallery space.

2. OULU HOUSE OF LITERATURE, at 10.30–11.30

Hallituskatu 9 (100 m from the City Hall)

Antti Leikas, author and Chair of the Oulu Writers' Association, will talk about the association's activities, and Katri Rauanjoki, author, project manager, and Vice Chair of the Oulu Writers' Association, will present the project "New Tools for the Promotion of Translated Literature".

3. EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE OULU2026 & OULU URBAN CULTURE ASSOCIATION at 9.00–10.00

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE OULU2026, at 10.30–11.30

Oulu City Hall (Meeting Room 120), Kirkkokatu 2a

Presentation of the European Capital of Culture Oulu2026, with particular emphasis on the ways in which the principles of

diversity, equality, and inclusion are embedded and made visible within its cultural and artistic programme. The presentation will highlight how these values are integrated into the design, implementation, and outcomes of the initiatives, ensuring that the cultural offering is accessible, representative, and engaging for diverse audiences and communities.

Oulu Urban Culture Association promotes diverse urban culture and supports young adults' opportunities to work in the creative industries. New age groups are continually joining the activities, and the association offers them the chance to carry out cultural projects that interest them. The activities reflect themes that are important to young people and often involve various minorities (e.g., sexual and gender minorities and immigrants).

4. OULU ART MUSEUM, only at 9.00–10.00
Kasarmintie 9, 800 m from the City Hall

A guided tour at the museum. Exhibitions at the moment:

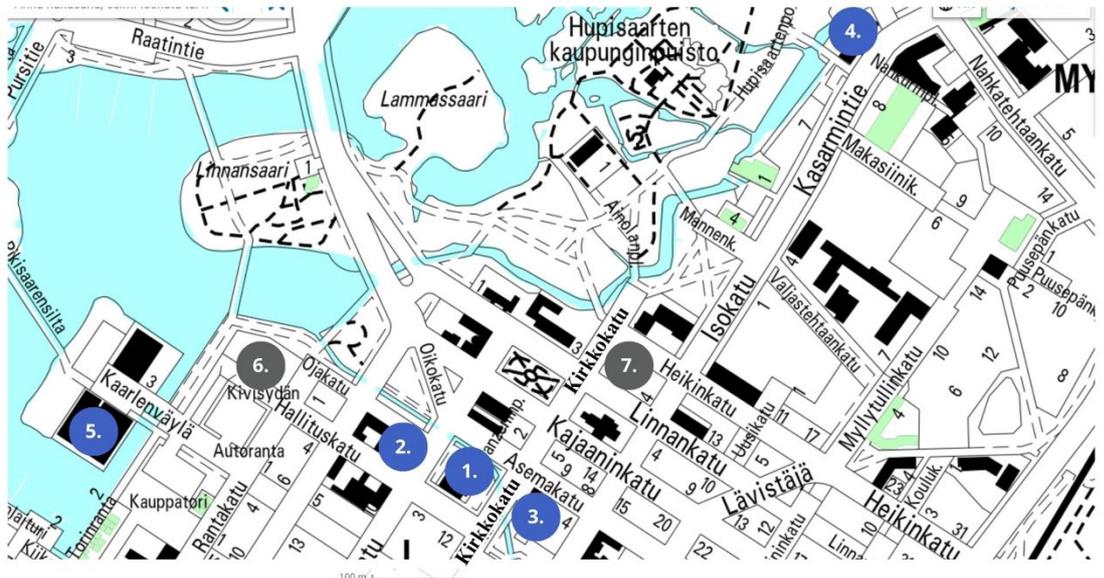
- **Imagine Abstract** (collections of the Oulu Art Museum): The exhibition features works by more than 50 artists from 1965 to 2025 and focuses mainly, but not exclusively, on artists from the North.
- **Antti Holma**: With works from the late 1970s to the present day, this cross-section of the artist's work focuses on works from the 2000s.

5. OULU THEATRE, only at 9.00–10.00
Kaarlenväylä 2, 700 m from the City Hall

On a guided theatre tour, you will get to know Oulu Theatre as an art organisation and as a meeting place for dozens of different working methods and cultures. The tour aims to illustrate the world of theatre in a practical way. It starts from the theatre's lobby and lasts about 60 minutes. The tour can be divided into two routes: one includes walking in staircases and narrow corridors, and the other is a bit shorter tour and accessible (elevators can be used).



Oulu Theatre has invested in cultural diversity and accessibility. The theatre is running a three-year project aimed at diversifying its main stage. The repertoire includes, for example, the world premiere *Perillä – Destination*, a play about multicultural Finland, featuring guest actors with multicultural backgrounds. The performance languages are Finnish, Arabic, and English. The theatre has also begun subtitling all main stage productions that can be subtitled.



VENUES:

1. OULU CITY HALL, Kirkkokatu 2a
2. CULTURAL CENTRE VALVE, Hallituskatu 7
3. OULU HOUSE OF LITERATURE, Hallituskatu 9
4. OULU ART MUSEUM, Kasarmintie 9
5. OULU THEATRE, Kaarlenväylä 2

HOTELS:

6. RADISSON BLU OULU, Hallituskatu 1
7. LAPLAND HOTEL, Kirkkokatu 3

CONTACT INFORMATION

For practical matters, please contact producer **Laura Siitonen**, laura@oulunjuhlaiviikot.fi, +358 41 313 5341.

For questions related to the seminar content and programme, please contact arts advisor **Anna Sidorova**, anna.sidorova@taike.fi, +358 295 330 859.