

# Open Demo Day 1

Arts Festivals Summit 2026

EXCENTRIC x European Festival  
Association



16-19 May 2026  
Budva, Montenegro



**EXCENTRIC**

Excelling Human-Centric Collaborative Ecosystems  
for Smart Digital Transformation in CCI

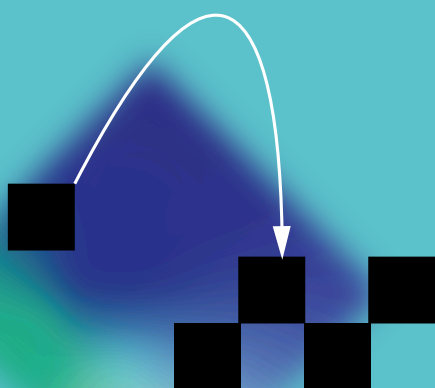


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# Open Demo Day 1

EXCENTRIC will be present at the Arts Festivals Summit 2026 in Budva for the project's first Open Demo Day. The Summit – one of Europe's key professional gatherings for arts and festival leaders – is organised by EXCENTRIC partner European Festival Association.

During the Summit, two of our EXCENTRIC pilots – Oulu Culture Foundation and Krakow Festival Office – will present early prototypes and pilot approaches, inviting festival professionals, researchers, and policy stakeholders to engage through feedback, discussion, and hands-on exploration. As pilots with a natural connection to the EFA community of festival makers, they open conversations that resonate across the wider EXCENTRIC pilot cohort.

SCAN HERE TO  
EXPLORE MORE



# EXCENTRIC Programme

Overview of EXCENTRIC activities during the Arts Festivals Summit, alongside EFA's programme ([see their website for full details](#)).



## SATURDAY, May 16

14:00-19:00 | Registration - [Avala Hotel](#)

19:00-22:00 | Opening (with standing dinner) at [Citadel Budva](#) (18:45 - MEETING POINT Avala Hotel – Registration desk)

## SUNDAY, May 17

09.00-11.00 | Conversation starters! – Conversation 3: Smart Culture: Tapping into Data Intelligence and Collaboration for Festivals and Cities - Avala Hotel

13.00-15.00 | Lunch at [Hotel Mogren](#)

16.00-19.00 | Walk and Talk in small groups (MEETING POINT Avala Hotel - Registration desk)

## MONDAY, May 18

9.30 | Departure by bus to Cetinje

10.30 | Arrival in Cetinje and short walk to the [National Museum of Montenegro](#) (summit venue)

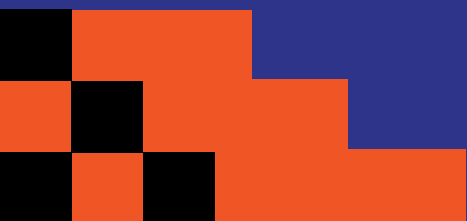
11.00-12.00 | Keynote: 'About Europe', through the lens of the arts by [Ana Schnabl](#)

12.00-12.20 | Snack break

12.30-14.30 | Let's talk: the balancing acts, in parallel – Workshop 4: Measuring what matters: Social impact and shared data practices in festivals

14.30 | Bus to cable car with a lunch box

15.30 | Cable car to discover the Montenegrin bays



## Sessions Descriptions



### Smart Culture – Tapping into Data Intelligence and Collaboration for Festivals and Cities

*Arts Festivals Summit, Conversation 3 (Avala Hotel, Budva)*  
17 May 2026, 09:00 – 11:00

#### Outline

Cultural organisations generate a wealth of data yet often operate alongside a vast ocean of wider intelligence – from urban dynamics to national tourism trends. Much of this data remains untapped simply because the cross-sector partnerships needed to activate it do not yet exist. Presented by the EXCENTRIC project, this session explores how festivals can move beyond siloed spreadsheets to build collaborative data practices that address operational challenges and help them become stronger partners within their ecosystems.

We will kick off the discussion with the Oulu European Capital of Culture (2026) pilot, exploring their ongoing efforts to connect internal festival data with external intelligence – such as traffic, mobility, and weather – to support smoother operations and audience experiences.

Expanding from this concrete cultural producer's perspective, the conversation will open up to the realities of ecosystem collaboration. Lutz Henke (visitBerlin) and Agnia Nast (Visit Estonia) will bring in destination viewpoints at the city and national levels. They will explore what kind of information tourism stakeholders find genuinely useful, and how festivals can align with these broader networks to turn shared data into actionable insights. What does it take to align different stakeholders, build trust, and find mutual, resilient benefits?

Finally, taking a bird's-eye view, experts from France, the Czech Republic, and Hungary will join the discussion and respond to these approaches, discussing what it takes to implement and sustain data-sharing models on a regional, national, or sectoral scale. Designed as a multi-layered conversation, this session brings together producers, city representatives, and policymakers to share data challenges and explore how collaborative intelligence can practically boost the festival sector.

## Agenda

### **Introduction: The EXCENTRIC Vision & Why Data Matters for Culture**

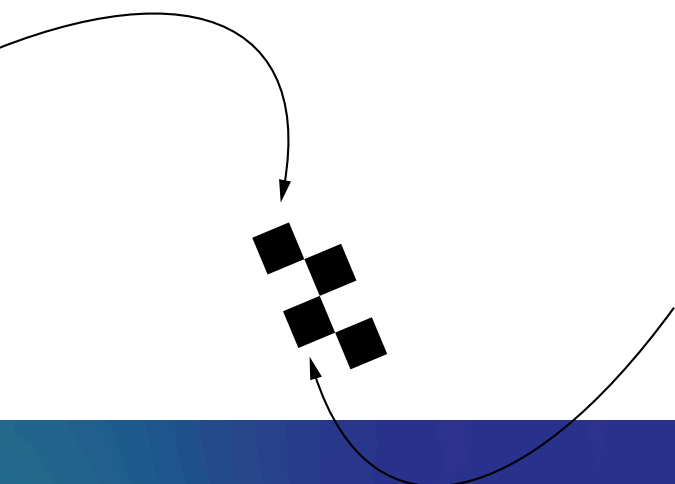
*Session Host: Olga Tykhonova, EXCENTRIC/Museum Booster*

A brief framing of the EXCENTRIC project, highlighting the shift from isolated data collection to collaborative data ecosystems. How can data intelligence tools foster human-centred digital innovation and generate actionable insights for the wider cultural sector?

### **Pilot in Focus: Oulu European Capital of Culture 2026**

*Speaker: Järvelin Oskari, Oulu Culture Foundation*

A practical look at how Oulu2026 is developing a pilot to enhance asset management and visitor flows. By connecting internal festival data with sensor data and external intelligence – such as traffic patterns, mobility data, and weather forecasts – Oulu2026 aims to optimize the visitor experience, manage crowds safely, and build a more resilient operational model for large-scale cultural events.



## **Data Collaboration and City-Scale Intelligence**

*Speakers: Lutz Henke, visitBerlin and Agnia Nast, Visit Estonia*

To realize the potential of collaborative ecosystems, we must look at the insights that can emerge if we join forces to transform data into actionable insights:

### **Lutz Henke (Director of Culture, visitBerlin)**

*Topic: Mutual benefits of strong data collaboration in urban*

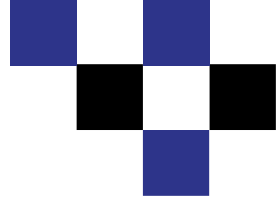
*ecosystems:* How can we translate the cross-pollination of data into strategic value for cities as tourism destinations? Lutz Henke will share reflections and provocations on how visitor flow data and broader tourism datasets might support more informed decision-making – from crowd management to strategic planning. The presentation will explore what kinds of information destination marketing organizations may find most useful from cultural institutions, and how stronger collaboration around data could contribute to more targeted, sustainable, and impactful outcomes across the urban ecosystem.

### **Agnia Nast (Head of Tourism at Visit Estonia)**

*Topic: Festivals don't need more data, they need better reasons to collect it:*

Agnia Nast brings a national tourism perspective into the discussion on festivals, destinations and collaboration. Drawing on more than 16 years of experience in international tourism development and destination strategy at Visit Estonia, she reflects on how festivals influence travel decisions, destination visibility, and regional tourism impact. Her contribution explores how tourism boards and festivals can better understand each other's goals, what kind of visitor insights are most meaningful from a destination perspective, and how data can support smarter decision-making rather than simply become another layer of complexity.

Through practical tourism examples, she will discuss why people increasingly travel for experiences, events, and meaning – and why understanding those motivations matters for both destinations and festivals.



## **Scaling the Impact: National Perspectives and Expert Feedback**

How do these pilot projects and frameworks translate to the national level? EFA experts will react to the EXCENTRIC models and discuss practical implementation for festivals and regional authorities:

### **Alexandra Bobes (Director, France Festivals)**

*Description:* France Festivals manages one of the few large, consolidated datasets on the festival sector at a national level. Alexandra will provide feedback on how EXCENTRIC's collaborative data models connect with the data services provided to French festivals and local authorities, mapping a pathway from pilot experimentation to sector-wide implementation.

### **Natalia Oszkó-Jakab (Festival Director & Hungarian Tourism Program Foundation)**

*Description:* Drawing on her work channelling local event data into a national database in Hungary, Natalia will provide insight into how the EXCENTRIC project's ambitions can scale. She will explore how local data pilots can inform and integrate with national cultural strategies.

### **Tereza Raabová (Cultural Economist & Strategist)**

*Description:* Bringing her experience working with the Czech Ministry of Culture on the development of the official Czech cultural policy, Tereza Raabová will offer practical reflections on what kinds of insights can become actionable for national stakeholders, municipalities, and cultural organisations alike.

## **Questions and Open Discussion**

We invite the audience to share their own data challenges & explore potential collaborations.

# Speakers

## Järvelin Oskari



Oskari Järvelin is a Technical Producer at the Oulu Culture Foundation (Oulu2026), delivering Oulu's European Capital of Culture 2026 programme with thousands of events across Oulu and 39 partner municipalities under the theme of Cultural Climate Change.

In the Horizon Europe project EXCENTRIC, he develops one of the six real-world pilots: Oulu2026's Venue Master application, focused on practical tools for audience-flow measurement with visitor-flow prediction as the next step.

With over 15 years of experience in event technology and web development, Oskari works at Oulu2026 with programme partners and production teams across the region to move from scattered data to usable insights by bringing practical value to a field where data-driven ways of working are still emerging.

# Lutz Henke



Lutz Henke is a curator and cultural scientist from Berlin. As Director of Culture at visitBerlin, he has a deep connection to the city's many facets, including its stakeholders and public and cultural policies. He implements innovative programs in Berlin or worldwide and directs various special formats, including 49h ICC and the Metropolitan Conference for the Immediate Present: Q Berlin Questions.

# Agnia Nast



Agnia Nast is a tourism strategist and destination development expert with over 16 years of experience in aviation and international tourism.

After starting her career at Lufthansa, she joined Visit Estonia, where she has spent the past 14 years working across international market development, strategic partnerships and tourism growth initiatives. Over the last decade, she has collaborated with tourism businesses, destinations, airlines, and international partners across markets ranging from North America to Asia, helping to strengthen Estonia's international tourism competitiveness and tourism revenue.

Today, leading a Visit Estonia tourism team, she focuses on tourism intelligence, strategic development, and how destinations can use meaningful data, collaboration, and visitor insights to make smarter long-term decisions.

She holds an MBA in Business Management, a BA in Public Administration, and has also completed studies at the Estonian School of Diplomacy.

Having spent years translating Estonia to audiences across different cultures and markets, she has learned that tourism is rarely only about destinations – people travel for stories, emotions, identity, curiosity, and increasingly, for meaningful experiences.

# Session host

Olga  
Tykhonova



Olga Tykhonova (UA/AT) is the Head of Research & Strategic Development at MUSEUM BOOSTER. Working at the intersection of art, social design, and creative technology, she boosts organizational innovation and collaborative practices within the cultural heritage and museum sector. Olga has been serving as a research curator for initiatives like the Future Museum and Museum Leadership House, as well as designing incubation and accelerator programs for EU Horizon projects such as DOORS (Digital Incubator for Museums) and EXCENTRIC. Convinced that instituting differently requires collective practice, she dedicates her work to cultivating new models of sharing, curating unexpected encounters and multi-constituent relationships across cultural ecosystems.

Trained as an art-historian (CUNY, NYC) and as a Former Fulbright and Edmund S.Muskie scholar, her long-term research focuses on art institutions as a medium and artistic forms of knowledge production. Alongside her institutional work, Olga maintains a curatorial practice and has been contributing to international juries and granting committees, including the Ars Electronica Prix and the TAICCA Innovative Content Grant.

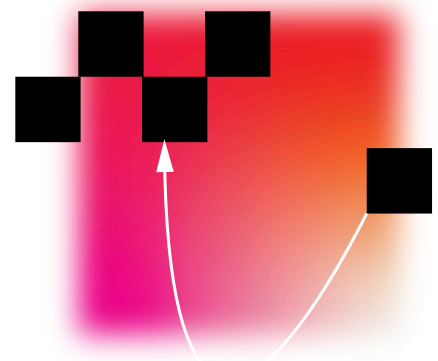
# Measuring what matters: Social impact and shared data practices in festivals

*Arts Festivals Summit, Workshop 4 (Cetinje, National Museum of Montenegro)  
18 May 2026, 12:30 – 14:30*

## Outline

Festivals create value in many ways: through audiences, artistic production, community relations, partnerships, local economies, and cultural participation. Yet many of these effects are difficult to capture through conventional indicators alone. This session, presented by the EXCENTRIC project, explores how cultural and creative actors can develop meaningful data practices and impact assessment approaches that reflect the complexity of their work, while remaining attentive to economic, cultural, social, and environmental value.

We will dive into the early-stage journey of the Krakow Festival Office (KBF) as they develop a Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework to align their operational scale with their core mission. To provide a reality check on the road ahead, KBF will be joined by a constellation of practical “Sparkle Cases” – including Edinburgh Festivals and Arts Council Ireland – sharing hard-earned lessons and navigating the “good and bad weather” of impact measurement. Finally, EFA community member Péter Inkei will bridge the gap between grassroots practice and EU policy, discussing how to translate these frameworks into shared accountability and political action. Join us to explore how collaborative data infrastructures can create meaningful, measurable value for your festival ecosystem.



## Agenda

### **Introduction: EXCENTRIC and the Shift Toward Social Value**

*Session Host: Stefano Russo, EXCENTRIC/Erasmus University Rotterdam*

A brief framing of EXCENTRIC, a Horizon Europe project focused on Collaborative Data Ecosystems in the cultural and creative industries, where festivals are understood as key actors within broader cultural ecosystems. In this context, data is approached not only as a technical resource, but as part of the sector's digital transformation, shaping relationships, practices, collaboration, and value creation. The project explores how meaningful data practices and data ecosystems can support cultural and creative actors and stakeholders while remaining attentive to their specific values, needs, and complexities.

### **Pilot in Focus: Krakow Festival Office (KBF)**

*Speaker: Margarita Vladimirova, Krakow Festival Office, and Andy Gawin Warby, EXCENTRIC Researcher-in-Residence*

A candid look at early-stage, work-in-progress efforts from the EXCENTRIC pilot. KBF and their support partner, Andy Gawin Warby, will contextualize the “what” and the “how” of their emerging SROI framework. They will discuss the complexities of capturing social value across a large-scale, mission-driven festival portfolio, setting the stage for their collaborative data journey.

### **The “Sparkle” Cases: Realities from the Road**

*Speaker: James McVeigh, Head of Innovation and Marketing, Festivals Edinburgh and Monica Corcoran, Strategic Development Manager, Arts Council Ireland*

Impact measurement is rarely a straight line. To ground the discussion in operational reality, we will hear from practitioners who have experience in working on SROI and impact assessment. James McVeigh (Festivals Edinburgh) and Monica Corcoran (Arts Council Ireland) will share the good and the bad weather they've encountered – highlighting practical challenges, unexpected findings, and what it actually takes to maintain these frameworks over time.

## Panel Discussion & Q&A, incl. Expert Commentary

After offering insights into their respective practice cases, the presenters will move into a discussion exploring questions and provocations around evaluation, accountability, expectations, and the complexities of measuring impact, creating space for critical reflection and exchange.

In addition to our presenters, EFA expert Péter Inkei (Founder, Budapest Observatory) will act as active commentator, reacting to the models presented and mapping the pathway to sector-wide implementation. How do these methodologies translate from local festival operations to broader urban strategies and European political recommendations? Operating at the intersection of academia and the cultural sector, Péter will outline how local shared data practices and impact assessments can feed into high-level policy, validating the intrinsic value of festivals on a European scale.



# Speakers

## Margarita Vladimirova



Margarita Vladimirova is a cultural manager, creative (re)searcher and practitioner with a background in music, visual arts, cultural studies, art education and cognitive science. She is interested in creativity as both an individual cognitive process and a collective social resource. She sees art and culture as generators of meaning and creative forward motion across fields, connecting education, scientific research, technology, industry and social innovation.

Margarita represents Krakow Festival Office (KBF), one of Poland's leading municipal cultural institutions, developing festivals and long-term cultural initiatives that connect artistic excellence with public value, audience development, urban culture, and international collaboration.

She began her path in culture 20 years ago as a volunteer at film and art festivals and has worked professionally in the creative sector for 15 years. She has developed over 70 cultural projects, exhibitions, festivals, and educational programmes, from local formats to large international events, as well as socially engaged workshops with children, adults, people with disabilities, and incarcerated individuals.

Before joining KBF, she managed and curated the Academy of Fine Arts Gallery in Kraków, where she delivered exhibitions, public programmes, and art-based learning initiatives. She also worked on international heritage and research projects at the Institute of European Heritage, part of the International Cultural Centre in Kraków.

At KBF, she works with Sacrum Profanum, an experimental festival of contemporary music; the emerging Culture Quarter in Kraków's Wesoła district; the Observatory for Culture Trends; and FEST FORUM, a national network of festival organisers developed by KBF with the support and participation of the European Festivals Association (EFA). As project manager and Programme Board member, she co-creates FEST FORUM as a space for knowledge exchange, collaborative research and reflection on the future of festivals.

In the EXCENTRIC SROI pilot, she brings the perspective of a cultural practitioner to impact measurement, asking how festivals can better understand and communicate the value they create for and with artists, audiences, communities, and cities.

# Andy Gawin Warby



*Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA),  
Fellow of the Institute for Corporate  
Responsibility & Sustainability (ICRS), Associate  
Member of Royal Society for Public Health.  
MSc. Sustainable Heritage & Built Environment  
(University College London)  
Executive MBA (Cranfield School of  
Management)*

Andy provides a professional background in cultural heritage management and conservation, and project delivery linking arts, nature, and health and wellbeing commissioning.

At international and regional level, he has delivered large scale social and economic impact evaluations for a range of museums, galleries, venues and street festivals, covering programme and audience development, local tourism spending, and volunteering transformation. This has included Manchester Museum, the British Museum-funded South Asia Gallery; dementia and wellbeing through opera, arts and culture; and training a network of museums in Tuscany, Italy, in assessing Alzheimers-inclusive programming at their venues.

For over 15 years, Andy has also been championing best practices in Social Return on Investment and impact assessment, health and wellbeing impact studies, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and social cost-benefit appraisal, as co-founder of [Envoy Partnership](#), and co-founder of the SROI platform, [Social Value Manager](#). His work has directly unlocked over £5 billion of new contract revenue, funding, and investment value for numerous clients.

During Covid and up until 2023, Andy was a trustee of a disability cycling charity in the New Forest National Park in the England, and more recently volunteers at his local hospice for seriously ill children. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts. Andy's personal and family life has involved music concerts and festival ecosystem for many years, having himself played as a drummer and saxophonist in a number of groups and mini-festivals, and avidly attending stadium concerts and festival tours through his brother's work as an international concert and festival booker – additionally gaining insights into extensive supply chain effects

# James McVeigh



Born and raised in Ireland, James travelled to his first festival at the age of four with his family of nine in an old Morris Minor, leaving him with a love of festivals and a dislike of car travel. He joined Festivals Edinburgh as their first Head of Innovation and Marketing following senior management roles with amongst others Salisbury International Arts Festival, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society and Arts Council England where he had lead responsibility for regional funding programmes of £25 million. His interest in culture as the key element of a good society has led him to develop various cultural policy contexts and international festival partnerships including the European Festival Research Programme.

In his current role with Festivals Edinburgh, a uniquely collaborative organisation, he works to sustain and develop the position of Edinburgh as the world's leading festival city - which now sees the Festivals host each year over 25,000 world class artists, more than 1000 accredited media and audiences of c4m while generating c£400 million for the Scottish economy. James is also a Trustee of the UNESCO City of Literature Trust and sits on the board of New Media Scotland.

# Monica Corcoran



Monica Corcoran is Strategic Development Manager at the Arts Council of Ireland and has over 35 years' experience in arts management and development. She has led on policy development in several areas including the Arts Council's Equality, Human Rights and Diversity Policy (2019) and their Place, Space & People (2021) spatial policy. She is involved in several developmental initiatives including All In, the groundbreaking new UK and Ireland cultural access scheme for disabled people. She is also currently leading on measurement and evaluation work, having initiated the pilot with local government partners that led to creating the Arts Council's Outcomes Measurement Guidebook. With her Festivals' team colleagues at the Arts Council, she has been leading out on the further development of that work through the Festivals Social Impact Measurement pilot. Monica has participated in a number of the EU's Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Working groups most recently working on the Gender Equality in the Cultural and Creative Sectors Group.

# Session host

Stefano  
Russo



Stefano Russo is a researcher and lecturer at Erasmus University Rotterdam, with a background in cultural economics, media and communication studies, and cultural management. His research focuses on the cultural and creative industries, with particular attention to digital transformation, cultural participation, data and technological practices, creative labour, cultural value, innovation, and the evolution of cultural ecosystems.

Alongside his academic work, Stefano has several years of experience as a consultant and applied researcher. He has worked with cultural organisations, innovation actors and territorial development projects on data collection and analysis, evaluation, strategic reflection, organisational development, and social impact assessment, with a particular focus on SROI – Social Return on Investment – approaches.

He is currently involved in EXCENTRIC – Excelling Human-Centric Collaborative Ecosystems for Smart Digital Transformations in Cultural and Creative Industries – a Horizon Europe project supporting collaborative, sustainable, and human-centric digital transformation in the cultural and creative sectors. In this context, he contributes to methodological design, evaluation, and transversal analysis, with particular attention to how cultural organisations can develop meaningful data practices that remain connected to cultural, economic, social and environmental value.

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