

# Open Call

**THEATER**  
**TREFFEN** Berliner  
Festspiele

## International Forum of the Theatertreffen 2026 of Berliner Festspiele

Theatertreffen in Berlin is considered to be the most important presentation platform of German-language theatre. Beside the ten most remarkable productions from the German-language region, selected by a seven-member jury of critics, Theatertreffen has invited aspiring artists from around the world for over 60 years to take part in the International Forum, a 17-day scholarship programme.

The International Forum is a platform for global exchange and the promotion of young theatre makers, an initial impetus for collaboration, the search for diverse local perspectives on global issues, and a free space for communal play. It focusses less on the completed work than on all the creative processes that precede artistic work to gather new impulses for individual artistic practice. Once again in 2026, around 30 artists who are setting out on their artistic practice will be invited, to watch theatre together, to talk, to (re-)consider, to experiment and to make connections. The fellows will have the opportunity to attend the festival, to take part in intensive workshops with international artists, to reflect together the productions invited to Theatertreffen and theatre in general and to exchange ideas: At night in the hotel lobby, during the playful morning warm-ups and while cooking lunch together. Nonstop theatre, for two weeks – as scenic research, entirely without pressure to produce.

### The 2026 International Forum: *Theatre and Cohabitation*

For its 2026 edition, the International Forum will relocate to the Floating University in Berlin's Kreuzberg district. The rainwater collection basin built to serve the former Tempelhof airport is a man-made environment reclaimed by nature – both contaminated and paradisiac – in which polluted water coexists with a variety of birds, insects, algae, reeds and some humans with a thirst for knowledge. The Floating University is a site of cohabitation, a place of learning in between nature and culture.

Here, in the middle of the city, the question of cohabitation is raised in an entirely new way – and not only between human beings. As a rule, we think of and practise theatre in laboratory settings from a human perspective, from which we attempt to make statements about the world. Is it possible to overcome this human gaze within theatre practice? Which language(s), images, movements and artistic strategies will we find as direct neighbours of the Floating University ecosystem?

We, the leaders of the International Forum, Aljoscha Begrich and Sima Djabar Zadegan, invite the fellows to join us in initiating a learning process in collaboration with the weather and environment of the Floating University: spending two weeks outdoors in the sunshine and rain. Establishing connections. Listening. Trying out shared languages. But also going inside, immersing ourselves in the Theatertreffen festival, watching and discussing productions. Cooking together, eating together (and washing up together). And allowing theatre's ecosystem to spread.

# Practical Information on the Scholarship Programme

## 1. Dates

**Deadline for applications for the 2026 International Forum: 30 November 2025 (23:59, CET)**

Announcement of selected fellows: late February 2026

Online preparatory meetings in March and April 2026

The International Forum will begin on the afternoon of Friday, 1 May 2026 and end on Sunday, 17 May 2026. The day of departure is Monday, 18 May 2026.

## 2. Programme

The International Forum's programme is based on the following pillars:

- Attending the performances invited to the 2026 Theatertreffen and participating in the accompanying programme
- Intensive workshops with artists on performing arts practise
- Artist talks related to Theatertreffen
- Discussions with the festival director and members of the Theatertreffen-jury
- Excursions and opportunities to see performances in Berlin outside the frame of Theatertreffen

The International Forum 2026 will mostly take place at the Floating University, an outdoor space. The weather in Berlin in May can still be cold and rainy.

## 3. Benefits

The scholarship includes all costs for participation in the programme:

- Tickets for the productions invited to Theatertreffen as well as for other festival events
- Travel expenses for fellows who are not residents in Berlin (most economic travel option applies, booking after prior arrangement)
- Expenses for travel within Berlin on public transport (excluding fellows who are residents in Berlin)
- Accommodation (excluding fellows who are residents in Berlin): Two fellows will share one apartment, each with a separate bedroom, while sharing a living and dining area (including a kitchen) and a bathroom.
- Catering / per diem (excluding fellows who are residents in Berlin)
- Travel and health insurance for fellows, funded by the Goethe-Institut
- Visa fees for fellows, funded by the Goethe-Institut

## 4. Conditions of Participation

This Open Call for the International Forum is addressed at theatre practitioners at the beginning of their artistic practice who have already gathered some professional experience. They may be from all sectors of the performing arts, especially from the fields of directing, acting, set and costume design, dramaturgy, text, music, video, performance, choreography and theatre education.

Applicants should

- have around five years of artistic professional experience in the above mentioned fields and be between around 25 to 35 years of age. The decisive factor is the point reached within the person's creative development.
- have good or very good English language skills. The common working language is English.

Applicants are expected to

- be available to participate over the entire period of the International Forum (1 – 17 May 2026) as well as in the online preparatory meetings.
- be committed to contribute in the International Forum's entire programme.
- be interested and contribute actively to the programme of Theatertreffen.

## 5. Application

We aim for the greatest possible diversity within the group. We don't base the selection entirely on fellows' artistic skills and approaches but also consider their main location of work (place/country) as well as the points of connection between their artistic work and the focus and programme of this year's International Forum. Due to the funding structure, we can only consider one person per collective; this person must be clearly named in the application.

We also strive to create the most barrier-free access to the programme. Individual needs and requirements will be enquired during the further development of the programme. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us before the application.

**Only complete applications that have been submitted before the end of the deadline will be considered. Deadline for all applicants for the 2026 International Forum: 30 November 2025 (23:59, CET)**

Applications must include the following documents:

- A filled-in application form, including contact information of two theatre-/culture-workers who can recommend your artistic work
- Take a photo that communicates your perspective on the following question: What does theatre look like for you today? This photo may be accompanied by three sentences max., but this is not a requirement.
- A letter of motivation (max. two A4-pages):
  - What do you hope to gain for your artistic practice from Theatertreffen and the International Forum?
  - Describe a remarkable production that you have seen in the past few years and why this work was remarkable for you.
  - With which species would you like to make theater, and how would you go about it together?
- An artistic curriculum vitae (one A4-page max.)
- Work samples (including short descriptions, links, visual and sound material, ten A4-pages max.; 5 MB max.)
- A confirmation of release from your employing theatre or institution for the entire period of the International Forum (this only applies to artists in permanent employment)

Theatre makers from all parts of the world can apply. They submit their applications via different institutions. Due to the federal funding structure of the International Forum, **the decisive factor is the main location of work, which must not be identical with the place of residence:**

## **I. Applicants with a main location of work in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland**

Artists whose current main location of work is in Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and Switzerland apply directly to Berliner Festspiele. Please send exclusively digital applications to:  
**[internationales-forum@berlinerfestspiele.de](mailto:internationales-forum@berlinerfestspiele.de)**

## **II. Applicants with a main location of work in non-German-speaking countries**

Artists with a current main location of work outside the German-language countries should apply via the Goethe-Institut's application portal via the following link:  
**[portal.gap.goethe.de/en-US](https://portal.gap.goethe.de/en-US)**

Further information on the application and the necessary documents:  
**[goethe.de/en/kul/foe/inr.html](https://goethe.de/en/kul/foe/inr.html)**

## **6. More Information**

about International Forum:  
**[berlinerfestspiele.de/forum-en](https://berlinerfestspiele.de/forum-en)**

about Floating University:  
**[floating-berlin.org](https://floating-berlin.org)**

about Theatertreffen:  
**[berlinerfestspiele.de/en/theatertreffen](https://berlinerfestspiele.de/en/theatertreffen)**

## **Contact**

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# Our Partners

The International Forum takes place in co-operation with the Goethe-Institut, the Swiss Cultural Foundation Pro Helvetia, the Kultur | lx – Arts Council Luxembourg and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

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 **Deutscher Bühnenverein**  
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The 2025 International Forum was realised thanks to the support of our partners:

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