

Privacy Settings

We use cookies to optimize our website and our service.

- ☒ Functional
- ☒ Statistics
- ☒ Marketing

Save

Functional only

Accept all

COUNTRIES

[ASIA](#) [FRANCE](#)

DISCIPLINE

[PERFORMING ARTS](#)

Masterminds | France



"I hereby swear that I have done nothing bad. I swear that I have not done anything with the intention of causing harm. I swear that even if I have done mistakes, it was never a deliberate way. I have always led a quiet life. I pay my taxes. I do not drink more than is good for me." An excerpt from Julien Previoux's "Les Lettres de Non-Motivation"

Third day unto the feast of festival makers, lovingly named [FOCUS](#), as a performer for Vincent Thomasset's production of *Les Lettres de non-motivation*, utters the text of Marcel Duchamp Prix 2015 awardee Julien Previeux at Centre Pompidou, the words seem to resonate to me as if I know the text by heart. Voila! Part of it was delivered during a speech for the "FOCUS" opening on 1 October at Carreau du Temple, giving the **130 participants from 43 countries an idea of what to expect** from the smorgasbord two-week performing arts offering, carefully seasoned by the hosting star chefs' Institut Francais and ONDA (Office National de Diffusion Artistique) FOCUS is a unique opportunity for international programmers to take in 360° view of the Parisian cartography of venues and aesthetics productions, works in progress by artists in residence, meetings with artists and producers, the young generation of lesser-known artists and the discovery of the venues that make up Greater Paris.

It was only half past five and the performing arts connoisseurs are on their third serving for the day. Architecture and new music in on the menu for breakfast and lunch at Philharmonie de Paris; a work in progress in contemporary dance for snacks at La Villette; dinner offers a grand visual delight of Phia Menard's "Belle d' Hier" at Theatre de la Ville; and finally "Nuit Blanche", an all nighter of contemporary art in the city of love for a late night snack.

[caption id="attachment_56207" align="aligncenter" width="620"]



Relative

Collider, Liz Santoro & Pierre Godard, Theatre de Vanves, © Ian Douglas[/caption]

In between all these activities, it can't be helped that the active minds be stirred, and voluntary encyclopaedic review of almost every performance be discussed, dissecting scenes, imitating movements and delivery of lines even referencing the body of works of the artists concerned during the minimal gaps. The question if you like the performance or not arises after every show. Yet, the expected response usually goes beyond the standard yes or no. It was essential to express the programmer's culinary preference. Multiply this daily menu by ten and there it is, welcome to FOCUS! Welcome to the world of the festival masterminds!

Sure thing, [FOCUS](#) is a unique opportunity to take a 360° view of the Parisian cartography of venues and aesthetics productions, works in progress by artists in residence, meetings with artists and programmers, the young generation of lesser-know artists, new projects by artists already present on international stages, and the discovery of the venues that make up Greater Paris. But more importantly, this rich gathering that offered 23 shows and 10 professional meetings was another way of seeing Paris and the French performing arts scene through the critical eyes of the globetrotting festival directors. Whilst capturing a scenic route into the city's rich performing arts scene, the exchanges between the programmers were like a private and guided tour to festival making from one city to the next, from continent to continent.

Zooming into the Asia-Europe inter-change, I interviewed Jing WANG, Executive Director of French-China Hybrid Festival and Anikó RÁCZ, Head of International Relations for SÍN Culture Centre in Budapest Hungary for the ASEF culture360 to find out what they are looking for when programming for their festivals

Vanini:

Taking into account the unique cultural sensibilities and economic realities of your festival as well as the demands of your audience, what would you say is the value of an international meeting, like FOCUS, for your festival?

Jing (China/France): Institut Français FOCUS Performing Arts allowed me to meet my peers from different countries and build a network in Europe and Asia. It allowed us to share opinions on different shows and eventually develop synergies to tour some shows and share fees.

Aniko (Hungary): Attending such a dense programme is an essential and very important part of our work. Apart from having the opportunity to see a good number of shows within a few days it is also very useful to meet colleagues, discuss various programming agendas and artists.

[caption id="attachment_56208" align="aligncenter" width="604"]



Bien Sur, Les

Choses Tournent Mal, Frank Michelletti, Atelier de Paris, CDC, © Ada Bautista[/caption]

Vanini: Apart from the intent of shopping for performances and networking, what would you say are the three most valued take-away for you in attending international meetings with other festival directors, presenters or producers?

Jing (China/France): First, it is really important for me to meet people with different cultural backgrounds and share on a more personal level. Sharing experiences can cheer me up and encourage me to pursue my own direction. It also helps me to have an overview of different needs and expectations of the international festivals.

Aniko (Hungary): Visiting various venues in the given city gives a good overview of the cultural field in the area. I also find it very useful when places for production or any other background activity are also introduced at such events. The professional discussions are also very important. If the various guests can present themselves in a more structured way than the informal talks and drinks, it can give a much more comprehensive picture.

[caption id="attachment_56209" align="aligncenter" width="620"]



Noemie

Boutin presenting her work during Meet the Makers at Carreau du Temple, © Ada Bautista[/caption]

Vanini: *In terms of developing collaborations and co-productions, what are the essential considerations in your wish list? What are you looking for?*

Jing (China/France): I am not looking for something in particular; I am open to any opportunity. Human relation is often the deciding factor if I am going to work with someone.

Aniko (Hungary): As the co-progammer of the dance and theatre venue of Sziget Festival, I primarily look for productions that fit our programme for the next editions of the festivals. However, as a colleague of a contemporary arts production house based in Budapest, I am also very much interested in setting up longer term collaborations with artists and arts organisations. The first and most important collaboration is a mutual sense of the arts, some kind of a shared taste and attitude to the works.

[caption id="attachment_56210" align="aligncenter" width="620"]



Piece D'

Actualite No. 3, Olivier Coulon Jablonka at La Commune, ©Ada Bautista[/caption]

Vanini: *At this point in time, what is the relevance of cultural exchange between Europe and Asia, for your own festival?*

Jing (China/France): There's a lot of variety in the performing arts in Europe and Asia. Even if there are many cultural differences between Asia and Europe, there are also many similarities. I believe sharing this "effort" of creating art is a common ground for collaboration. It's not about the cultural differences but about the shared passion for the arts.

this different forms and visions can inspire each other and help us give the best of us.

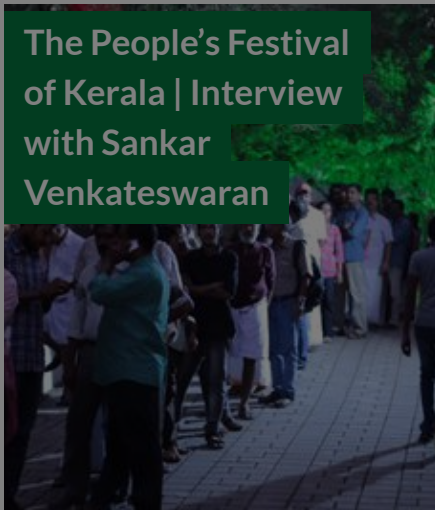
Aniko (Hungary): As we primarily present contemporary dance at our festival, Asia is becoming a significant and inspiring point of interest, more and more artists and works can be seen also around Europe, which brings new colour into the art life that we are happy to show to our public. For more information on FOCUS, its programme, partners and participants, visit <
<http://www.focus.institutfrancais.com>

Vanini Belarmino is curator, producer and writer, trained in theatre arts, art history, European cultural policy and management. She is Founder and Managing Director of Belarmino&Partners, an international cultural and arts consultancy, established in Berlin (2008) and Singapore (2011). Vanini is a 2015 Asian Cultural Council Curatorial Fellow.

Similar content

POSTED ON
24 MAR 2016

The People's Festival of Kerala | Interview with Sankar Venkateswaran




POSTED ON
18 MAY 2016

The Face of the Invisible | Art and Displacement



POSTED ON
07 NOV 2009

Interview: Thai choreographer




POSTED ON
01 DEC 2009

Asia-EU performing arts: cultural influences



POSTED ON
07 AUG 2011

Asia meets Europe in Edinburgh



POSTED ON
19 OCT 2017

Unfolding Kafka Festival 2017



ABOUT ASEF CULTURE360

culture360.asef.org brings Asia and Europe closer by providing information, facilitating dialogue and stimulating reflection on the arts and culture of the two regions.

[MORE ABOUT ASEF CULTURE360](#) | [FAQ](#)

