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Culture in Europe and Asia



 burningsnow_750

In 2014 the European Capital of Culture moves north to [Umeå](#) in Sweden and [Riga](#) in Latvia. While in Asia, three [East Asia Cities of Culture](#) have been designated: [Yokohama](#) in Japan, [Gwangju](#) in Korea and [Quanzhou](#) in China.

The [European Capital of Culture](#) initiative started in 1985 and has become one of the most prestigious and high-profile cultural events in Europe. More than 40 cities have been designated European Capitals of Culture so far, from Stockholm to Genoa, Athens to Glasgow, and Cracow to Porto. A city is not chosen as a European Capital of Culture solely for what it is, but mainly for what it plans to do for a year that has to be exceptional.

The **East Asia Cities of Culture** programme is a new initiative, launched in September 2013 by the respective Culture Ministers. It is planned to be an annual programme, with new cities of culture to be announced in future years.

In Northern Sweden, “Co-creation” is the key word in **Umeå2014**’s capital of culture initiative. Here, the concept means that everyone can participate and contribute to the programme. To promote a long-term perspective and encourage the continuance of capital of culture activities beyond 2014, it is intended that projects should be run by the “cultural operators” themselves. On 1 February 2014 the official opening ceremony for Umeå2014, called [Burning Snow](#), will take place on the river Umeälven. An important part of the ceremony is the participation of the people of Umeå, and it will involve many children from the city.

Read this informative Deutsche Welle article: [Culture Capital Umeå on a mission of growth](#)



Across the Baltic Sea, Rīga residents and

visitors will enjoy an abundant, diverse and high-quality cultural programme in 2014. [Rīga's year as European Capital of Culture](#) will be launched on January 17th with a number of specially developed exhibitions, unique activities and events in different Rīga locations.

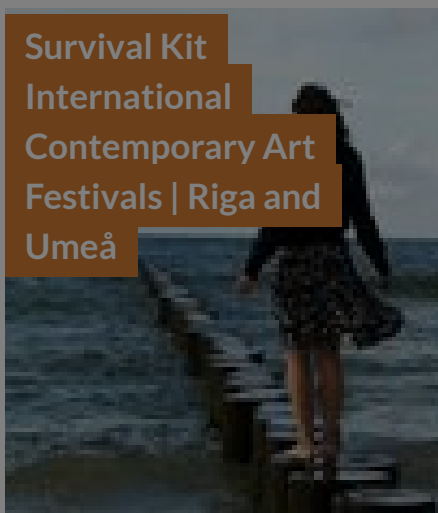
The “Riga 2014” team has announced a participatory campaign as the central opening event of the European Capital of Culture – its “[Chain of Booklovers](#)”. 2014 will kick off with the opening of the new Latvian National Library building “Gaismas Pils” (“The Castle of Light”) to the public. On 18 January, 2014, from 12:00 to 18:00 anyone can join the campaign during which books will travel from the old library building to the new one by being handed from one person to the next. This path of books will cross the river Daugava, symbolizing the fundamental values which have for many generations developed the core of our culture, and which are immortalized in books. By taking part in this historic campaign, you can help to transport books from the old library building to the new one, while also taking part in the creation of the European Capital of Culture, and enjoying such an incredible affirmation of the importance of culture.

Riga Photo / Kaspars Gardas, Rīga 2014

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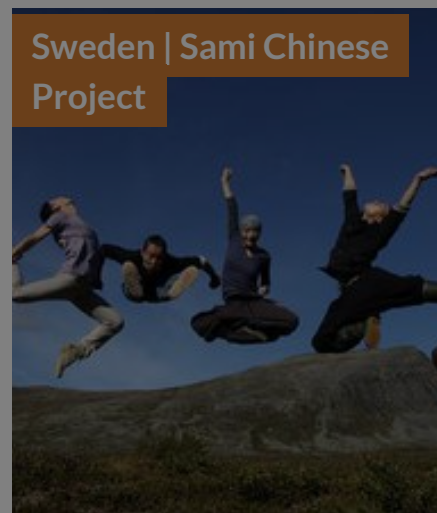
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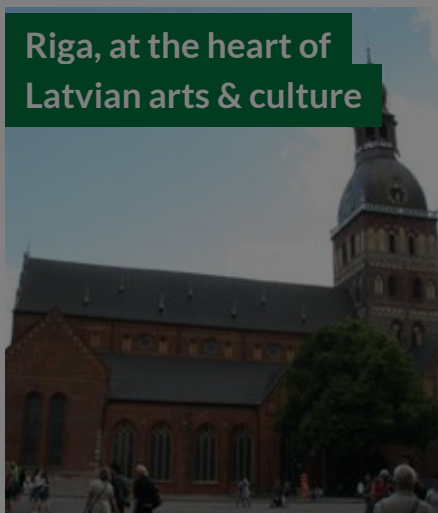
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