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Culture Action Europe's annual conference - Beyond the Obvious - takes place in Rome 15-17 November. This Beyond the Obvious conference reviews the dynamics sketched and offers a concrete arena for productive interaction between artists, cultural operators, policy makers and political visionaries, economic and social stakeholders. It also celebrates the launch of the European Year for Cultural Heritage 2018. The conference will highlight policy issues at stake, developing a present and future of culture in Europe. Take a look at the [programme](#). Over **15 high level speakers** will contribute, including Anupama Sekhar, Director of Culture Department, Asia-Europe Foundation. [Registrations](#) for the Beyond the Obvious Conference | Becoming and Belonging: Culture, Heritage and our Future are now open. We all long to belong. In a world that is rapidly changing, a sense of Belonging to communities, cultures, territories offers a much needed anchor and allows us to remain active players in our environments. Landscapes of belonging, however, are nuanced – we 'belong' and are perceived to belong in many different ways at many different scales. This enables us to engage in the active, perpetual process of Becoming citizens, societies and living up to our own potential. It allows us to envision new narratives and imagery that connect pasts, presents and futures.

While culture is a cohesive force, cultural divides are constructed to satisfy simplified political rhetoric. How can we, as artists and cultural operators,

engaged citizens and policy makers, rationalists and visionaries, develop an inclusive belonging? What is the impact of civic participation on social cohesion? How can we on all levels - local, national and European - create an understanding of belonging based on diversity and inclusion?

Our cultural heritage - both tangible and intangible - links us in Europe. The memories of our joint heritage, which we transmit from one generation to the next, shape many facets of our identities. Yet what impact do these narratives have on European cultural and political identity, on inclusion and openness?

Contemporary artistic creation can be a driving force to develop new narratives, new images for possible futures. A strong cultural Europe needs informed and involved citizens and calls for social innovation and inspiring political models. This informed engagement is rooted in education in the large sense of the term, allowing for the development of creativity and curiosity, and reaching out to people of all ages in an evolving society. Such an active 'becoming' must be co-created by all citizens, and take the global context into account.

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