

COMMUNITY AT THE FESTIVAL

12th Festival Politik im Freien Theater

→ Explanations and definitions on all **marked terms** can be found in the glossary.

The festival Politik im Freien Theater is a place for encounters, for the exchange of ideas and the artistic exploration of social issues. Every three years, it brings together people from the independent theatre scene, from education, culture, activism and civil society – each time in a new city and with a new topic. In 2025, the festival will take place in Leipzig and explore the topic of “Borders”. The varied programme contains guest performances, discussions, workshops, guided walks through the city, art actions, concerts, films and more.

We see ourselves as a

Theatre festival: with a broad spectrum of productions from the independent scene that examine socio-political issues through the devices of art.

Cooperation festival: jointly organised by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpj) and local theatres, cultural initiatives and partners from the field of education.

Discourse and participation festival: with space for encounters, controversies and further education – in discussions, workshops, guided walks through the city and many other formats.

Festival of society and democracy: open to all age groups from the age of 6, all approaches and perspectives – with the aim of strengthening cultural participation, diversity and a vibrant civil society.

Therefore, the festival is based on the interaction of diverse points of view and aims to create spaces where everyone feels welcome and able to move safely – regardless of their origins, gender, religion, disability, body, neurodivergence, sexuality, social status, and/or age.

We attach great importance to a way of treating each other that is sensitive to discrimination, respectful and inclusive.

This means that discrimination – whether it be in the form of racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, anti-Islamism, ableism, homophobia, classism and/or other forms of discrimination – has no place at our festival. This applies equally to open transgressions and to subtle forms such as derogatory remarks, micro-aggression and a failure to regard self-designations. Even apparently harmless jokes or stereotypical attributions can hurt a person – that is why it is important to treat each other in a conscious and reflected manner. Please take note: **It is not the intention that counts but rather the impact of what is said or done!**

Awareness and respect in dealing with each other are non-negotiable to us.

This includes addressing people by the names and **pronouns** that they use themselves. It means respecting personal boundaries – whether physical, mental or verbal. If you are uncertain, it is better to ask than to presume. It also means to reflect on your own role within social power structures, to recognise your privileges and to challenge discriminatory behaviour – both your own and that of others.

If you feel that you could use some support in these matters, please take the time to watch the video and do the exercise that you find at this link: :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wghClKN9up4>



What happens when incidents of discrimination occur, or we are charged with discriminating behaviour?

In the case of discriminatory situations, we expect solidarity with the persons affected. This means: listening, taking the situation seriously, not trying to put it into perspective. Trying to vindicate yourself is not helpful, and neither are being silent nor turning your head.

Our festival has an awareness-concept. Even if the awareness team cannot be present at every event, the person in charge of the event will also have been informed and aware. Furthermore, a trained contact person can be contacted by phone at all times: +49 155 103 516 94, or via e-mail after the event: zugaenge@politikimfreientheater.de.

As a festival, we are all responsible together for creating conditions that promote a way of treating each other with an awareness of violence and discrimination.

However, this task can and should not be laid exclusively on an individual team or organisation. It is rather up to all of us to reflect our own privileges, to strengthen an open, constructive way of dealing with errors and to act with solidarity.

This is why our concept **“Community at the Festival”** is aimed at all internal participants of the festival – the festival team, the artists, theatres, cooperation partners, service providers etc.

There will be a separate notice addressed directly towards external participants, as, for example, our visitors.

The Federal Agency of Civic Education’s event regulations can be viewed via the QR code.



We’re looking forward to a respectful, vibrant community – and to a festival that tries to be there for everyone.

Do you have any remarks, feedback or questions on the concept “Community at the Festival”? Please write to us at zugaenge@politikimfreientheater.de or anonymously via the QR-code.



DAS 12. FESTIVAL POLITIK IM FREIEN THEATER WIRD VERANSTALTET VON:



LOFFT
DAS THEATER



Schauspiel
Leipzig



GEFÖRDERT DURCH:



Stadt Leipzig
Dezernat Kultur



Das 12. Festival Politik im Freien Theater wird gefördert durch die Stadt Leipzig und durch das Sächsische Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Kultur und Tourismus. Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert durch Steuermittel auf der Grundlage des vom Sächsischen Landtag beschlossenen Haushaltes.

POLITIK
IM FREIEN
THEATER

12. FESTIVAL

GLOSSARY

This glossary is not conclusive and is intended to invite further exploration.

Ableism In our society, there is a normative idea about what people should be able to do or accomplish. People who do not conform to this norm are designated as disabled or inferior. Ableism describes the discrimination of people with disabilities by measuring them according to a standard of certain abilities – walking, seeing, being capable of social interaction – and reducing them to their impairment. Ableism manifests itself in unequal treatment, transgression of boundaries and stereotypical attributions which people with disabilities are subjected to. The most radical form of ableism was the so-called “euthanasia” in the times of National Socialism, the systematic murder of people with disabilities. In our everyday lives, ableism means that people with disabilities must always expect to be the exception. They often have to announce that they want to attend a cultural event and cannot simply assume that, for instance, access to the building is barrier-free or that a translation into sign language will be provided. In the media, people with disabilities are often discriminated through stereotypical portrayals and reduced to their disabilities.
(based on: <https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/ableismus>)

Anti-Semitism At its base, anti-Semitism is hostility towards Jews and means prejudice, hostility or hatred against Jews, i.e. people who are of Jewish faith or Jewish origins or belong to the Jewish community. In contrast to racist discrimination, where “the others” are portrayed as inferior, in anti-Semitism Jews are not only presented as inferior but also as overly influential and superior. Anti-Semitism has expressed and still expresses itself in the defamation, marginalisation, discrimination, persecution, forced displacement and, ultimately, the murder of Jewish people. It culminated in the Holocaust or Shoah during German National Socialism (the systematic murder of six million Jews). It is important to understand that anti-Semitism is an issue of the entire society and not limited exclusively to extreme right-wing people, groups or parties. Anti-Semitism in its various manifestation has grown throughout history and is deeply rooted in society.
(Based on: <https://www.vielfalt-mediathek.de/kurz-erklaert-antisemitismus> and <https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-junge-politik-lexikon/319828/antisemitismus/>)

Awareness describes and signifies an attentive, considerate way of behaving between people. It is an approach and a concept that aims to guarantee the well-being of all people involved. This entails:

- Sensitivity towards the needs and points of view of other people
- a reference point and greater assurance when dealing with transgressions and discriminatory incidents
- Reflecting on actions: When your actions cause others to feel threatened, intimidated, harassed or pressurised, a boundary has been crossed – regardless of whether this was your intention or not. You are responsible for how your behaviour is perceived by others. Respect your counterpart's personal boundaries – not what you imagine they should be.
- When we infringe boundaries, we are responsible for not repeating this behaviour, for reviewing what happened and analysing it.

(Based on: <https://www.awareness-bremen.de/de/glossar>)

Hostility towards Islam This means the depreciation and rejection of people of Muslim faith, their religious practices and culture(s). Other terms are Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

(Based on: <https://www.bpb.de/themen/rechtsextremismus/dossier-rechtsextremismus/500788/islamfeindlichkeit/>)

Classism describes a form of discrimination based on the assumption that the social worth of a person is determined by their social and/or economic origins or their economic status. Classism is not only about the question of how much money a person has at their disposal but also about their educational status, profession, family background and social conditioning. Classism is mainly aimed at persons from a “lower class”. It mainly excludes people without a home and/or employment as well as people from the working class and from poor backgrounds. They experience social depreciation, marginalisation and structural disadvantages.

(Based on: <https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/klassismus>)

Micro-aggressions concern every marginalised group that belongs to a minority due to their origins, their gender, their religion, their sexuality etc. Micro-aggressions may be words, phrases or behaviours; for example, when persons are deliberately ignored or treated different from others. They are often everyday discriminations that go unnoticed or are not challenged. Although they are not necessarily deliberate, they nevertheless hurt the other party. One example is the question: “Where do you really come from?” The question implies that the person cannot be German due to their external appearance. Some people may be subject to discriminating remarks and behaviours more frequently than others. That they react strongly to these supposed “trifles” is due to the fact that they are exposed to these micro-aggressions more often than others. We should be aware of this and respond with sensitivity.

(Based on: <https://www.awareness-bremen.de/de/glossar>)

Pronouns The pronouns concerned here are mainly personal pronouns – meaning those that refer to a person. German language usage mainly employs only masculine (he/him) or feminine (she/her) pronouns. Which pronoun is chosen for a person is usually determined by the gender that this person is ascribed to according to their appearance. There are, however, more than two genders. Especially non-binary people have no pronoun in the German language, which is why some of them use neo-pronouns, i.e. newly created pronouns. Others reject pronouns for themselves, preferring to use their names. Not respecting the pronouns of others is misgendering. It is always best to ask (e.g. “What are your pronouns?”) rather than to just assume.
(Based on: https://qnn.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Glossar_20240827.pdf S.42)

Queer The word queer covers a wide range of forms of sexual orientation and gender identities and is a term to describe all people who break with norms of heterosexuality and bisexuality. People who call themselves queer are those who might for example also call themselves lesbian, gay and/or trans* etc. The word queer used to be a term of abuse for gay people; today it serves as a self-designation that is critical of society.
(Based on: <https://www.queerer-beratungskoffer.de/glossar> and <https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/queer>)

Anti-queer hostility is the discrimination of queer people (lesbian, gay, non-binary, trans*, inter, agender people etc.) Its manifestations include rejection, anger, intolerance, prejudice, discomfiture and physical or psychological violence.
(Based on: <https://queer-lexikon.net/2020/04/29/queerfeindlichkeit/>)

Racism means considering people as inferior and/or excluding them because of their colour, origins, language, religion or their name. Racist thinking manifests itself in words, actions and the adherence to false ideas about certain groups. The idea that there are human “races” is scientifically false – and yet it was used for a long time to present white people as superior. Today, racism is often justified with reference to culture. The pretence is that cultures are unchangeable and incompatible. Racism is not innate – it is learned and passed on through our society.
(Based on: https://www.damigra.de/wp-content/uploads/final_Glossar_women-rai.ed_freigegeben_digitalversion-1.pdf, p. 21f)

Sexism means to appraise, degrade, discriminate against or favour people due to their gender. It is based on ideas on what people “are” due to their gender, what they “should be like”, be treated or portrayed and which rights and opportunities they should be granted. The practices and power structures related to this issue are historical and deeply rooted in society. Sexism manifests itself on both an individual and a structural level – in everyday or work life, in private or in public, verbally or non-verbally. It ranges from degradation and the transgression of boundaries to power abuse and violence. Sexism concerns all genders, but it mostly affects women, girls, queer persons and people with disabilities or a history of migration. It does not only damage the persons affected but also organisations and society as a whole.
(Based on: <https://gemeinsam-gegen-sexismus.de/glossar-posts/sexismus/>)

Self-designation There are often several different names for marginalised groups. The name that the marginalised group chooses for itself is its self-designation. The group may also select several self-designations. The name used by mainstream society to talk about the marginalised group is attribution. Again, there may be several attributions. Self-designation is empowering. It creates a positive feeling of community. Attribution, however, turns the marginalised group into others: The term “othering” is also used in this context. It often takes a while for self-designations to prevail. One example for self-designation is Person of Color. BUT: Self-designations may be individual, too. One person might reject a term that another person of the same group like to use to describe themselves.

(Based on: <https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/selbstbezeichnung> and <https://queer-lexikon.net/2023/03/04/selbstbezeichnung/>)

Othering We speak of othering when a group or a person distance themselves from someone else by describing them as different or strange. It does not matter whether the underlined characteristics are seen as positive or negative – they are interpreted as deviating from a supposed norm, which leads to excluding the group or person concerned. This distancing is often accompanied by depreciating the alleged other, fortifying one’s own self-image: One’s own group appears to be superior while the “other” group is seen as inferior. Othering can serve to justify social hierarchies and power structures and to create enemy stereotypes. It thereby creates a foundation for various forms of discrimination like sexism, racism, anti-Semitism or anti-queer hostility.

An example: The repeated enquiry about a person’s “real” origins – even though they were born here – may be a form of othering, marking the person as “not belonging”.

(Based on: <https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/othering> and <https://www.vielfalt-mediathek.de/othering>)