



Territories of the Future

Bourges 2028
Candidate City

European Capital
of Culture

COVER PHOTO

Territories of the Future. Imagine societal and climatic innovation on the scale of human-sized cities. For the Gare Végétale of Bourges project, Eva Jospin will work with the Belgian architectural agency Bento, the curators Vinciane Despret (BE) and David Moinard (FR). They will create a double facade and an interior hall in molded and sculpted mycelium produced locally in a short circuit from household waste and coffee grounds from the Bourges area.

Cover: Mycelium, microscopic view © Bento agency and PermaFunghi (Brussels - BE), Belgian Pavilion Venice Biennale 2023, Curator Vinciane Despret.

Territories of the Future

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introduction

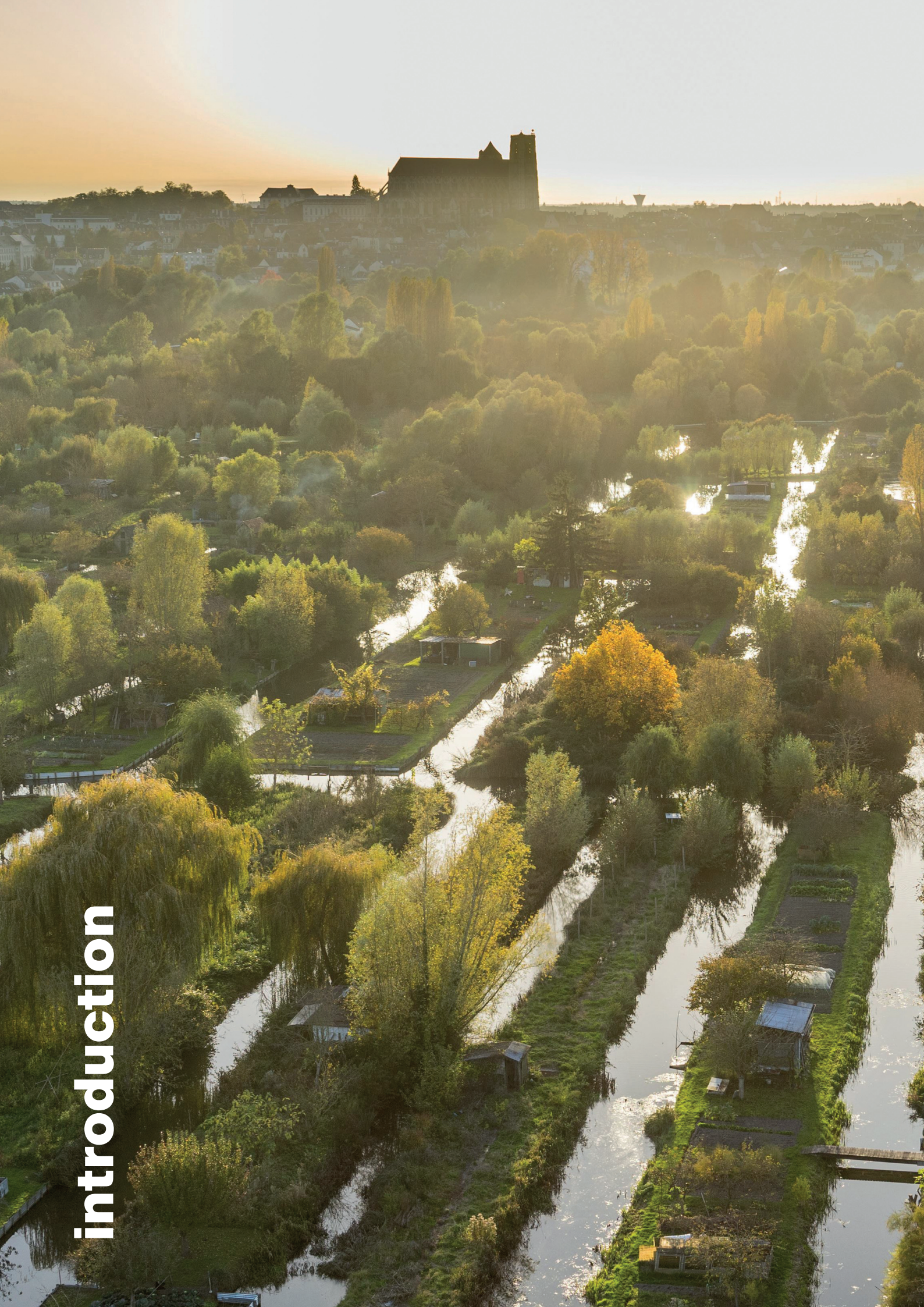
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introduction

Q01 Confirming our concept

Our concept has not changed but the mindset of Berruyers, of Berruyers artists and cultural actors and the image of Bourges nationally shifted on March 3rd. Bourges en finale! The local media reaction to our successful preselection.

Then came summer. The riots. France was in emergency mode. Not only in big metropolitan areas as previously but this time in small and medium size cities. Such cities were also and even most affected, including Bourges and the most impacted French city, Montargis, in our Centre-Val de Loire Region. The territorial and generational fragmentation of French society appeared clearly. Young people who feel they do not matter in places that do not matter – not to the police, not to the politicians – vented their anger and frustration. The resentment of the “left behind”.

If anything, the summer has shown us that Bourges has to become a place that matters. Where people feel they matter and feel in charge.

Our Territories of the Future still keeps up these two ideas: Territories of the Future is about smaller and medium-sized cities becoming places where everybody matters and feels they matter too. Where people can shape their own lives more easily in cities focussing on the human scale. Or should that read instead a humane scale? In short: putting people and nature first. Because Territories of the Future is also about observing the foreseeable effects of ecological disaster on our societies and cultural events, which makes it even more necessary to plan for an ecologically sustainable European Capital of Culture.

After the riots, and after Europe burning up in wildfires in summer, this all makes even more sense. Not just in our heads, or on the pages of our application, but in reality and for a large part of Europe. Especially in those places, where the European project and values are most contested. In remote places like ours, in smaller and medium-size cities and the rural areas around it.

The city has not changed overnight – we are still the smallest candidate city, with the smallest budget, and the smallest team. We still don't have a TGV, we struggle to attract doctors and the forecast of population loss until 2050 is still minus 30% in Cher Department as for most small medium size cities in France. But what emerged was a new story of Bourges and its future possibilities. A story of snapping out of emergency mode and going into conflict resolution through a strategy and programme which takes a forgotten part of France into a new heartland – and helps address some of the core challenges of today's Europe. Among those, e.g. the extreme, even violent reactions towards migrant centres in small and medium-sized towns as well as LGBTQ+ communities that are threatened in smaller communities and rural areas.

We believe that the local buy-in to our concept and our goals combined with their increasing relevance in Europe and globally show the genuine potential of our candidacy as a positive force for change. It's also not just one city swimming against the tide, but an innovative matrix of 18 cities across Europe.

Bourges 2028 aims to be systemic. Organising an ECoC in the next ten years gives a special responsibility, considering the challenge of mitigating climate change. The trajectory set to safeguard the planet's habitability by the Paris Agreement and the European Climate Law implies a profound paradigm shift. The European Capital of Culture in 2028 will have to contribute its part to address what we call the “climate change blockage”. Bourges 2028 can use a series of innovative and enticing projects which provide exciting and thought-provoking illustrations of how Territories of the Future and a low-carbon approach to ECoC could unfold.

It's time for the small city in the big country. In these difficult times for France and Europe, Bourges 2028 offers a new societal and territorial model for small and medium-sized cities. Placing the artist and the citizens at the centre of a transversal project of innovation and territorial rebalancing, adding the social and the inclusive to the ecological.

Let's create
Bourges 2028 together:
a platform for innovation
and transition for
human-scale cities
in France and Europe

**contribution to the
long-term strategy**

Chapter 1



Q03 Long-term impacts

The foreseen long-term impacts of a successful ECoC have not so much changed since the preliminary round, but have become more clearly articulated against the challenges that face Bourges as a city and also that face France and Europe.

In that context we have framed how Territories of the Future will be a long way on the road to being the “Territories of Now” by 2029, the year after our ECoC would end. We spoke a lot in round 1 about revisiting the vision of Malraux, modern French culture’s founding father, given his choice of Bourges to be the location of the first Maison de la Culture. Today, it’s clear to us that simply having one Maison de la Culture is not, on its own, enough. Rather, as Gabriel Monnet, first Director of the Maison in Bourges, put it: you need a “city of culture” where citizens can learn and express themselves in any place where they struggle with loneliness and can have control over their lives and destinies. And, this cannot be achieved by cultural institutions alone, but requires a broader societal effort, such as creating **cities of culture**.

By 2029, Bourges – and some of its key national and international partners – will have shown how the agility, creativity and humanity of the human(e) sized city can make this a reality. Giving people a stronger say in the way their lives and communities are lived. This is what success looks like.

A EUROPEAN CITY OF ARTISTS - MELINA MERCOURI

Bourges in 2029 will be a national and European centre of creative innovation following the establishment and development in the city’s Hôtel Dieu, of a totally new kind of artists’ centre. All of the support and services an artist would need are located there. 400 artists will benefit from the support offered and use its facilities.

Our “peer to peer” training module is also open to professionals in the sectors concerned by working with artists and networks in France such as AFDAS, the Ministry of Culture, in Europe such as On the Move, Culture Action Europe. Taking advantage of increasing ability to operate remotely away from large and expensive metropolises, the number of cultural and creative workers living in Bourges and surrounding areas has increased by 20%.

MAKING AN EXHIBITION OF OURSELVES

The creation of the Cultural Mile with existing infrastructure provides a series of exhibition spaces and becomes a unique attraction with cultural and urban impacts.

200 local people will continue to be part of a long-term volunteering and hospitality programme to promote a cultural scene which is open and welcoming to both visitors and local people. Museum visitor numbers grow by 30% with a sharper increase of 50% in visitors from formerly “museum light” groups. Audiences for our remote museum offer are five times the numbers of “live” museum visitors.

IT’S ONLY NATURAL

Addressing climate change has become a collective commitment rather than an imposition and cost.

The relationship between people and nature has been transformed with a renewed sense of respect for nature and an appreciation of

Bourges’ natural assets in city development plans. Bourges and Berry form a best practice example of a new cultural route, drawing people from the traditional Loire valley hotspots. Overnight stays increase by 30% from the 2023 baseline. Average stay duration increases by 50%. We hit all of our 2030 carbon targets, a decrease of 50% on current levels.

A REGION THAT MOVES US

Our Gares Végétales model has led to a huge shift in the use of public transport and underpinned a greater understanding of practical ways to adopt more sustainable and more fun ways to travel.

The partnership with Remi and SNCF has placed Bourges at the heart of a new rail connection network, improving connections with Paris and with Europe. Night train journeys have increased by 25%. The number of daily direct trains from Bourges to Paris has increased by 40%. Visitors to the Cher and Indre Departments – the least successful in Centre-Val de Loire region currently – increase by 25% compared to 2023, also reducing pressure on the overheated parts of the Loire valley.

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!

Bourges is a place where everybody matters. Where people are recognised and supported as being the experts in their own lives and communities. Departure class gives 200 “invisible” young people below 26 years of age the chance to follow a career through innovative adaptations to the existing programme from 2024 -2028.

Health centres and care homes are redesigned as “well-being centres” – bringing about a more inclusive approach to the designation of “cultural centres” and this also includes schools and other educational places. The use of cultural association (including volunteering) is a recognised part of a new prescribing model.

Diversity in the population is seen as a strength and not a problem. All communities can see their history and their stories told in the city’s new, co-curated museum model. Any 16 year old has, in the words of Malraux, real contact with his or her heritage and the spirit of humanity that runs through the metropolis.

Our social evaluation model shows that the value of cultural investment on wellbeing is five times the cost of an intervention. The life expectancy gap between richest and poorest parts of Bourges/Cher has decreased.

THE BYTE SIZED CITY

In addition to the Hôtel Dieu, the development of two more creative districts forms a central feature structure of the Bourges 2028 strategy for transforming the city’s potential as a strong creative hub at the heart of France.

Axereal Creative District

Axereal’s 4,000 sqm site in the city’s northern districts has been implemented which brings a creative industry centre for both commercial and non-commercial activities on a site inspired by the Oulu 2026 Urban Culture model. This is a project of comparable size and subject to a strategic collaboration between Bourges and Oulu 2026.

The site includes a prototyping space for training, transmission and the sharing of equipment, the only one of its kind in France, aimed in particular at students and recent graduates of ENSA, the National Higher School of Art in Bourges as well as Comité des Choses

Concrètes and Union Pragmatique (collective of young artists graduated from ENSA). It also includes innovative recycling units for materials and digital equipment.

EDF - Mazieres Creative District

This innovative project has brought carbon-free mobility into the ECoC programme. EDF - Mazieres site allows Bourges 2028 to enter into a unique partnership on a national scale with EDF which does not only consist in analysing carbon neutrality on the territory but in developing a unique creative district in France and in Europe on new European mobility (bicycle, car, train, on electric technologies, hydrogen, biomethane) centred on small and medium-sized towns as a space for prototyping and testing solutions of the future.

Following the pre-selection of Bourges 2028, the stability studies of the industrial archeology site and asbestos content were completed by EDF and allow the de-pollution of the site and the handing over of ownership to the city.

These new creative hubs increase overall city GDP by 5%.

ON A HUMAN SCALE

Our matrix of 18 like-minded, human scale cities grows from 18 to 25. Urban space design includes gender equality and disability access as amongst its most crucial design principles. Cultural and community governance is built on an evolving, bottom-up system of inclusion using the drawn by lots model. Citizen participation in civic activity grows by 15% and voting in local and European elections increases by 10%. As Malraux once spoke of Bourges: "What is happening here is a certain adventure, probably unique in the whole world!" Territories of the Future are the territories of the here and now. As places where the key challenges of modern life are explored, challenged and reframed.







**cultural and
artistic programme**

Chapter 2

Q05 Artistic vision and strategy

Since 27 June 2023 our whole country has been in emergency mode. Collective shock and individual suffering have shaken the foundations of our social self-conception. The protests of the summer may have calmed down. But the calm might be deceiving and the lid on the anger is not sealed tight.

What does all this mean for our artistic vision? Is “prototyping” still the way to go forward? We feel it is not. So whilst our Concept has stayed the same, our Artistic Vision has changed. The need for a more hopeful, more positive and shared view of the future has been accelerated by the summer’s events.

We still want to prototype processes and projects. We still want the feedback of citizens and users to be part of a looped co-creation process. But the force of anger and frustration that the riots showed – and that not only broke out in the banlieues of Paris but right here in our town and even worse in some close by – has made us rethink. Perhaps what we need most is to snap out of the emergency mode – which is never a good state for calm reflection and seeing all sides – and instead, putting all our thinking and acting on a human scale. Even, in fact, on a humane scale.

We had established On a Human Scale as one of our programme lines in our previous bid book. Now we feel the notion is exactly what we need as an artistic vision and strategy. Bringing people along with everything we do, not flying off on intellectual or exclusive artistic trips which leave behind too many. Our vision is to start, travel, and arrive on a human(e) scale with all our artistic and cultural endeavours. And we do not mean human in an anthropocentric sense. We mean human and humane as an approach at eye-level between humans and of humans with all beings and nature at large. Because the emergency mode is also present looking at the effects of climate change and the ongoing ecological catastrophe. At the same time, a recent poll of Le Monde shows that 70% of the French are sceptical about climate change issues and unwilling to change their behaviour. To bring these issues onto a human scale and propose a coherent and viable approach for everyone is part of our artistic vision and in the DNA of our programme.

The opposite of emergency mode is conflict resolution mode. Listening to each other’s viewpoints, stepping into the shoes of your “opponent”, keeping an open mind for what triggers you most. And getting a feeling for what drives your fellow human beings that are behaving in initially incomprehensible ways. On a Human Scale means to move away from a rhetoric that dismisses those who think differently as “savage hordes” and “vermin” and makes it possible to see the human at eye-level again. This all sounds extreme? It is extreme. And it is also a way to come out of it if we openly acknowledge what has been going on. It is a first step towards a human scale.

On a Human Scale is a much-needed vision to achieve that ours and similar territories in Europe become Territories of the Future. The rifts through societies, the incomprehension and distrust towards other viewpoints and democracy are getting deeper everywhere around the world. We go back to culture as a tool for changing mindsets. To artistic and cultural creation that takes us away from emergency mode through conflict resolution into what is on the other side: celebration and rituals that allow us to meet, beat, and breathe together on a human scale.

We mean human and humane as an approach at eye-level between humans and of humans with all beings and Nature at large

Q06 Culture and Artistic Programme: The Structure

OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES

programme line LOTS OF NEIGHBOURS

projects

Gares Végétales #flagship project
European Inside Out #flagship project
RER Europa / The Loire Sun #flagship project
Trans Europe Culture / The New European Grand Tour #flagship project

- The Rhythm of the Rails - residencies Artists on Trains
- Artistic projects on the rails
 - ⊕ World History of Europe
 - ⊕ European Puppet Stories
 - ⊕ European Resilience Choirs
 - ⊕ The Train of Beautiful Differences
 - ⊕ We can be European Heroes

European Parliament of Rivers #flagship project
Shelters for Mobile Democracy
Noirlac Cabanes
Métro Europa
European Citizen Council
The Matrix

programme line THE LANGUAGE OF EUROPE

projects

European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri #flagship project
Défilé #flagship project
Money (and Art)
The Silence
Euro Renaissances - Centre Pompidou collections in Centre-Val de Loire #flagship project
Jacques Tati, The Birth of a Filmmaker #flagship project
The Language of Food
Intergenerational Canteens
Sarkis, Cultural Incubator
Gaia - 24. Opera del Mondo
Printemps de l'Europe #flagship project
Odyssey
Baroque Renewal 2028
André Malraux, An Imaginary Museum
Connected Micro-Folies
Liszt! From Bourges to Europe
European Pocket Theatre
Duke Jean de Berry, a European Heritage #flagship project

- Learning to see: Les Heures
- A Quantum of Mourning
- Sainte Chapelle - Euroverse and Miniverse exhibition

European Light Nights

programme line
RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW!

projects

Departure Class #flagship project
Zanele Muholi #flagship project

- Visual activist
- MAI (Muholi Art Institute) in Bourges

Symbiocene, Journey to the Future #flagship project
Sounding the Ceramics
Awaking the Silenced
On the Spectrum
Music! For Sanity
Young Programmers on the Move
European Queer Cabaret
Our (European) Stories
Missing Women
George Sand

- A Fertile Land for Tomorrow
- From the River
- The George Sand Prize

The Maestra 2028
Decolonising 30 years of video art, new media and cinema
Centre Pompidou @Palais Jacques Coeur
From the Countryside
Ageing Artfully
Our Gallery
Revival Shops



OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONY

OPENING CEREMONY: THE NEW EUROPEAN NARRATIVES

Artistic Direction : Boris Vedel (FR)
Associated artist Bintou Dembele (FR) for urban choreography

Bourges 2028 wishes to give current musics, the power of their stories, their ability to cross social and generational barriers, to capture young audiences, a fair place in relation to what they represent in artistic production in Europe, but also and above all in our common European collective imaginations.

We also hope that this opening celebration can reflect the European exchanges, the low-carbon travel that Bourges 2028 will put in place from Europe to Bourges and from Bourges to Europe. That Bourges 2028 begins with an event where 100,000 people travel with sustainable behaviour, a limited carbon impact allowing them to meet their individual 2030 objectives. From the major European current music festivals partners of Printemps de Bourges, France and from the Region, recognised and emerging groups and artists, citizens who will have learned to sing European standards together with We Can Be European Heroes project will travel by train, playing on trains, European hub stations, Gares Végétales.

In Bourges, Boris Vedel knows every square, every stone, in the Cultural Mile (see Q43), in the squares of the medieval town, the churches, the Cathedral. These new European narratives will be in the spotlight. The music will be accompanied by video and installation, mapping creators, choreographers, and fireworks, of which Bourges is an important production centre.

Bintou Dembele is a French dancer and choreographer recognized as one of the pioneers of hip-hop dance in France.

European guests: Nuits Botaniques (BE), Eurosonic (NL), Artmania (RO), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES), Yourope and ETEP European networks, Be Ur Self (hip hop association), Urb'annale association Bourges, Campus Pyrotechnie du Futur Bourges, SNCF Gares & Connexions and many others.

CLOSING CEREMONY: RIGHTS OF THE EARTH AND NATURE

Artistic direction: Sandrine Salzard (FR), with international guests

Symbolic and eventful translation of the steps taken since 2019 within the framework of the Parliament of the Loire, this ceremony led by local artist Sandrine Salzard will be the leading theme of the closing ceremony of Bourges 2028. It will bring together the ambassadors of indigenous peoples from the five continents, celebrities from the world of current musics and specialists in environmental causes. Concerts, artistic performances and inspiring speeches will promote collective awareness of the rights of nature and living things.

We would like this closing ceremony to invite the winning 2029 ECoCs for Poland and Sweden with specific projects linked to their programme.

Partners: Natural History Museum of Bourges, Quai Branly Museum Paris, CRHIM Lausanne (CH), Lausanne University (CH), la fabrique narrative, musée de l'Homme Paris, Wild legal, 2029 ECoCs.

LOTS OF NEIGHBOURS

Lots of Neighbours focuses on human-sized cities facing population loss. It works towards participatory policymaking, innovative cultural practices with citizen governance, conflict resolution, meeting, understanding. Also, taking care of our local and European neighbours with low-carbon travel solutions and positive alternate sustainable behaviours. Lots of neighbours finds new ways to interact fairly with our non-human neighbours: environment and nature. With artists on the front lines of this systemic movement for change. It's human Nature.

GARES VÉGÉTALES

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

STATIONS OF CULTIVATION

Bourges 2028 project aims to transform train stations into spaces for artistic and environmental demonstrations, a nest of positive and sustainable behaviours with high impact for large audiences - schools, travellers/tourists, citizens - thanks to disruptive proposals of major artists of our time. The project will connect national and regional train networks with low-carbon RER networks.

Following our shortlisting, we began intense working sessions with the regional and national services of the SNCF, who were enthusiastic about the Bourges 2028 Stations of Cultivation project and the societal transformation positioning of train stations. SNCF proposed to us to start a pre-design study on three pilot stations providing us with their detailed plans in order to determine the parameters of intervention, the possibilities offered and the limitations, confirm budget, and to initiate work with the selected artistic teams.

Moreover, SNCF is proposing a massive communication plan on Bourges 2028 train routes in 3000 train stations in France welcoming 10 million visitors and travellers every day.

Here are the three first projects. In addition four more train stations will be part of the project: Vierzon, Tours, Chateauroux, Orléans. Sarah Sze (US) will work on Orleans train station and Vierzon, Tours and Châteauroux will be designed by teams winning an international open call for artists, designers, landscape architects, architects from European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri.

Partners: SNCF Gares & connexions, Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence Tours, Centre-Val de Loire Region, City of Blois, City of Orléans, City of Châteauroux, City of Vierzon, City of Tours, CESER - Regional Economic, Social and Environmental Council, Bad Ischl 2024 (AT), Nova Gorica 2025 (SI), Uppsala 2029 (SE).

BOURGES TRAIN STATION

Eva Jospin (FR)/Bento agency (BE)/Vinciane Despret(BE)

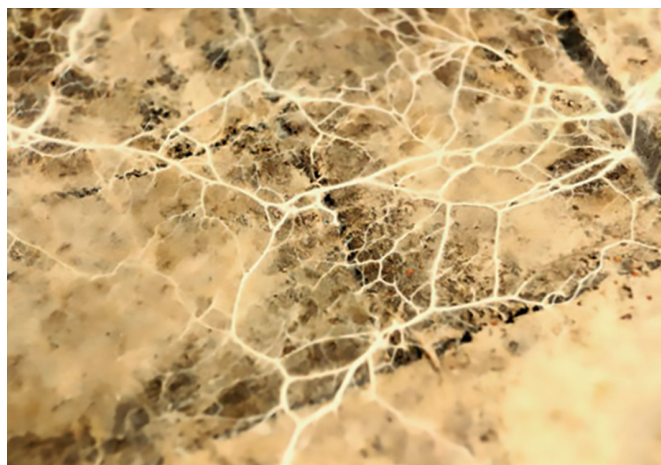
Bourges station (1 million visitors per year) will of course be a major gateway to the European Capital of Culture. That's why we're entrusting it to internationally renowned French artist Eva Jospin, who will be collaborating for the occasion with the Bento Belgian architecture agency, which designed the Belgian pavilion at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale, with philosopher Vinciane Despret as curator.

Bento took the opportunity to present their research into a natural material with the potential to revolutionise architecture, thanks to its thermal and acoustic insulation properties and carbon-neutral production: mycelium panels. This substrate, which is unique to mushrooms, has the ability to grow rapidly and adopt any shape of mould.

Eva Jospin will design these shapes to decorate the interior, the front wall and some devices of the platforms of Bourges station with her plant-based unique fantasy world.

The particularity of this material invented by the Brussels company Permafunghi, which has had worldwide media exposure following its work, is that it is produced from the recycling of waste and garbage from the city, and coffee machine residues from restaurants and bars. We will set up a small mycelium production unit with Permafunghi within the creative district of Axereal. Eva Jospin's work will be produced from the recycling of local waste, inviting the community of inhabitants of Bourges and the agglomeration, the students of Bourges and the Region to develop a positive story about recycling in short circuit and its possibilities, while developing a new technology-driven sector for long term strategy of Bourges 2028.

"I adhere to the idea of Bourges 2028 to give legal personality to rivers but I think that we should give it, especially in France, to buildings located at the entrance and outskirts of towns that French-style urbanisation has often made very ugly." Eva Jospin



Mycelium, Belgian pavilion, Venice Biennale 2023 © Bento agency

BLOIS TRAIN STATION

Gilles Clément (FR)/Bivouac atelier (FR) and guest European landscape schools

Home to one of France's three leading landscape schools, Blois embodies the idea of transmission. A pioneer of ecology in France who has been translated around the world, landscape architect Gilles Clément has revolutionised the way we think about gardens, notably through his three major concepts of *Tiers-Paysage*, *Jardin Planétaire* and *Jardin en Mouvement*.

As a direct neighbour of the Centre-Val de Loire region (his garden is located just south of the river Creuse, which forms the south border), and finally a local artist in view of the gardens he was able to create in Bourges and around Bourges, in particular the superb gardens of the Abbey of Noirlac, we asked him to reflect on this theme of knowledge transfer in thinking up a design for Blois station.

In return, he offered to give the station project in Blois (1 million visitors per year) a general focus and to "pass the torch" to the **Atelier Bivouac** agency (made up of 6 young landscape architects), whose highly collaborative work and commitment to working specifically for rural areas he particularly appreciates. Atelier Bivouac themselves would also be working on the idea of knowledge transfer by inviting students from the Blois Landscape School and other European landscape schools, twinned with Blois for the project, to take part in the design and implementation. The project will be based on the recycling of local construction materials.

Partners: Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, National School of Nature and Landscape of Blois, Horticultural high school of Blois.



Preview of Gilles/Clément/Atelier Bivouac project for Blois Train Station

PARIS AUSTERLITZ TRAIN STATION

Inside Outside collective / Petra Blaisse (NL)

Paris Austerlitz station (24 million visitors per year) will be the gateway for low carbon travellers to Bourges and the Centre-Val de Loire Region. In this monumental station, the renovation of the glass roof, which is currently the largest station renovation project in Europe, is coming to an end. Bourges 2028 and the SNCF invite the international collective Inside Outside directed by Petra Blaisse (NL) to create a vegetal proposal suspended in the huge glass roof overlooking all the platforms transversely. The glass roof was inaugurated in 1867. With its 52 m wide and 287 m long, it is exceptional for the time. With its metal frame, the construction technique used is also revolutionary.

The project will be carried out with the Jardin des Plantes located nearby. Botanical garden rich in four centuries of scientific adventures, the Jardin des Plantes is the historic heart of the National Museum of Natural History located near the station. The renovated Austerlitz station offers many exhibition spaces that the SNCF has proposed to Bourges 2028 to use for the following exhibition:

Cultural and Artistic Programme



Paris Austerlitz train Station

EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE: OUR FUTURE

OMA agency / Rem Koolhaas (NL)

In order to give an introduction to the central theme of Bourges 2028, Territories of the Future, which is innovative cities on a human scale, we asked Rem Koolhaas and the young architects of OMA agency to prepare for the exhibition spaces of Paris Austerlitz a continuity with the exhibition they commissioned at the Guggenheim in New York in 2020 'Countryside, our future'. Through a series of surveys and testimonies from citizens, researchers, scientists, journalists, this approach aims to raise awareness of the displacement of innovation in our contemporary societies at the beginning of the 21st century from metropolises to the countryside and to the spaces of intermediate cities like Bourges and the ones of Centre-Val de Loire Region. A series of specific studies carried over with local universities of Tours and Orléans, national and European school of arts networks, complementary to those already developed by OMA will be proposed within the framework of the towns of the Centre Val de Loire Region. This corpus will be an educational gateway to the territory and the European issues defended by Bourges 2028.

Partners: National Museum of Natural History of Paris, Universities of Tours and Orléans

EUROPEAN INSIDE OUT

➔ FLAGSHIPPROJECT

BY JR (FR)

The artist JR revolutionised the paths of art at the beginning of the 21st century through the innovative means of production that he has created throughout the world. For Bourges 2028, JR is offering a pan-European creation based on his Inside Out Project. The concept of the project is to give everyone the opportunity to share their portrait and a statement of what they stand for, with the world. The project provides individuals and groups from all corners of Europe with a vehicle to make a statement. Anyone can participate, and is challenged to use photographic portraits to share the untold stories and images of people in their communities. The Inside Out photo-booth will be installed in 7 European node stations of the Bourges 2028 night train network and the 6 Centre-Val de Loire Gare Végétales plus Paris Austerlitz. The public will be invited to interact on the theme "Territories of the Future, our relationship to the living world". With the JR teams we plan to dress several European night trains and selected regional trains in Centre-Val de Loire with this citizen-generated visual content.

Partners: SNCF Gares & connexions, Centre-Val de Loire Region.

European stations : Paris Austerlitz, Brussels Midi (BE), Hamburg Hauptbahnhof (DE), Milano Centrale (IT), Berlin Hauptbahnhof (DE), Vienna Hauptbahnhof (AT), Budapest Keleti (HU), Centre - Val de Loire stations : Orléans, Tours, Blois, Châteauroux, Vierzon, Bourges.

RER EUROPA / THE LOIRE SUN

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

CURATORS : DAVID MOINARD (FR) AND VINCIANE DESPRET (BE)

David Moinard is a geographer by training and has since undertaken a career as a curator of exhibitions always linked to the territory, specifically around the Loire.

He was thus commissioner of Estuaire on mouth of the Loire as part of the Voyage à Nantes or Le Partage des Eaux project on a 100 km line sharing the waters between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, where the Loire has its source. He is committed to New Patrons initiative allowing citizens to decide the need of a work of art.

Vinciane Despret is a Belgian philosopher of science, associate professor, at the University of Liège, Belgium. She is considered to be a foundational thinker in what has now become the field of animal studies. More generally, at the heart of her work lies the question of the relationship between observers and the observed during the conduct of scientific research

In France, the Centre-Val de Loire Region is the cradle of the Renaissance.

What would a 21st century Renaissance look like? If the human being became central to Renaissance thinking in the same way that God was in the Middle Ages, then since Darwin the human being has come down from his pedestal, blending into the living world without hierarchy. Over the last few decades, humanity has also been faced with a question that it had never had to face before: that of guaranteeing the conditions for its survival and that of other species. Thus, just as the advent of the Renaissance was the result of a combination of energies and thoughts, awareness of the effects of human activity on the climate and the biosphere necessarily implies a revolution in our organisational systems.

“For the Bourges 2028 artistic approach to be fair, it must be in phase with the territorial, geographical, historical, social, economic and human context.”
David Moinard



THE LOIRE SUN - A SOLAR SYSTEM FOR LOW CARBON TRAVEL IN THE LOIRE WATERSHED

The route can be thought of as an interstellar voyage through this solar system. The low-carbon shuttles leave from the Gares Végétales to explore one planet and then another. Each planet has its own low-carbon navigation circuit, but they are also interconnected.

Echoing the solar system made up of 8 planets, the Loire sun shines on 8 entities with very distinct geographical and cultural characteristics: The Forest Planet (Sologne) / The Planet of the Witches (Berry) / The Planet of the Ponds (Brenne) / The Fragile and Strong Planet (around la Borne and Pays Fort) / The Countryside Planet (around Noirlac) connected to Bourges / The Castles Planet (Chaumont, Chenonceau, Chambord) / The Chapel and Cathedral Planet (connecting Chartres and Dreux).

Each of the 8 planet will have its own artistic path, respecting its own identity, but the planets will be linked by a number of common features:

- A long-term citizen commission based on the New Patrons protocol (see below),
- A commission for an artist in a prestigious part of the built heritage to reveal The forces of the living,
- A permanent commission for an artist to reveal a natural site.

The project proposes monographic exhibitions, including site-specific creations by artists whose talent is already widely recognised, but who need the visibility that we will be offering them to achieve a more international stature.

The following artists will be the basis of selection of RER Europa of Bourges 2028 and Loire Sun:

Stéphane Thidet (FR), Jan Kopp (DE), Randa Maroufi (MA), Edoardo Tresoldi (IT), Michel Blazy (FR), Otobong Nkanga (NG), Hicham Berrada (MA/FR), Anouk Durand-Gasselini (FR), Claire Morgan (UK), Chapuisat Brothers (CH), Krijn de Koning (NL), Felice Varini (CH), Tiphaine Calmettes (FR), Zilvinas Kempinas (LT), Elsa Guillaume (FR), Per Barclay (NO), Observatorium (NL), Suzanne Husky (US), Mireille Fulpius (CH), Mehmet Ali Uysal (TR), Dana Awartani (SAL), Daniel Otero Torres (CO), Mimosa Echard (FR), Henrique Oliveira (BR), Barthélémy Toguo (CM), Magdalena Jetelova (CZ), Marcus Coates (UK), Monika Sosnowska (PL), Fujiko Nakaya (JP), Sarah Sze (US), Janet Cardiff (CA), Adrian Villar Rojas (AR), Elmgreen & Dragset (NO/DK), Ned Kahn (US), Ann Veronica Janssens (BE).

The New Patrons initiative, initiated by the Fondation de France, aims to democratise access to culture by reversing the traditional logic of cultural policy. The project places citizens as commissioners of a work, allowing them to call on an artistic mediator to help them commission a work of art. In the framework of Bourges 2028, a series of public commissions will be launched in 2024 as part of the New Patrons programme. This initiative aims to highlight citizen initiatives, which often lack visibility, with artistic creation that is specific to their issues and contexts.

ROUTES EXAMPLES

Bourges 2028 aims to create permanent, long-lasting low-carbon tourist routes linking emblematic sites on each planet. The aim is to develop traffic and the region's southern part tourist appeal in a sustainable way for 2028 and beyond. Visitors will board a bio-methane shuttle (could be mixed with electric and hydrogen shuttles in 2028), RER Europa, to explore heritage sites, gardens, and natural sites. Routes will normally operate 3 days a week (Fridays to Sundays) for each of the 8 routes of the Loire Sun. Here are two examples.

RER Europa Vierzon Gare Végétale to The Planet of the Ponds (curated trip with guide, four hours, low carbon bus)

- Remarkable garden of the Domaine de Poulaines / Site-specific art installation by Mehmet Ali Uysal (The forces of the Living),
- Village of Palluau-sur-Indre / New Patrons project for the banks of the Indre river,
- Ponds of Brenne around the Château du Bouchet - working closely with the Brenne Regional Nature Park to create an extraordinary birdwatching site with Dutch architects RO-AD,
- Tasting fish from the Brenne / Chef Edouard Bergeon teams up with a chef from another European country,
- Gardens and Orangerie of the Château de Bouges (CMN) / site-specific art installations by Sarah Sze (The Forces of the Living).

RER Europa Bourges Gare Végétale to The Fragile and Strong Planet (curated trip with guide, four hours, bus low carbon)

- Château de la Chapelle D'Angillon – site-specific art installation by Magdalena Jetelova on the reservoir in front of the Château (The forces of the living),
- Aubigny-sur-Nère - work sponsored by the village shopkeepers (New Patrons),
- Vailly-sur-Sauldre and surrounding area - art trail linking the pyramid-shaped barns, with artists such as Mimosa Echard and Daniel Otero-Torres, programmed in collaboration with the existing "Allons Voir" art trail,
- Sancerre vineyards - Reuilly-based chefs Hitashi and Takashi Sato team up with a chef from another European country to create an exceptional food and wine pairing,
- La Borne - ceramics exhibition / creations by artists Elsa Guillaume and Tiphaines Calmettes following a long residency in the potters' village.

For RER routes starting from Bourges, a first stop will be proposed in Bourges Plus Conurbation in the following communes : La Chapelle-Saint-Ursin, Mehun-sur-Yèvre, Saint-Doulchard, Saint-Germain-du-Puy, Trouy.

Partners: Budweis 2028 Kulturista, Uppsala 2029.

ASSOCIATED PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMME TO THE LOIRE SUN

REDISCOVER OUR DANCES ALESSANDRO SCIARRONI (IT)

Alessandro Sciarroni will explore forgotten traditional dances of the Centre Val-de Loire Region, Cher Department, Bourges Plus Conurbation, Bourges for Bourges 2028, using a contemporary vocabulary. He will immerse himself in the territories and meet with locals to understand the origins and transmissions of these dances, with the aim of reviving them and preserving them as a living heritage. Sciarroni's work is characterised by rigour, coherence, and intensity, and he draws on practices external to contemporary dance, such as circus and traditional dances. His work has been presented widely in Europe and he is an associated artist at Centquatre-Paris and the Triennale Milano.

LES VEILLEUSES - THE GATHERING JOANNE LEIGHTON (AU)

Joanne Leighton will be developing a project based on Les Veilleurs concept in which one person each morning and evening watches over the city, the department, the conurbation or the region for an hour, at sunrise and sunset, in a shelter object designed by scenographer Benjamin Tovo, installed on a high point, for 365 days. It is a participatory and inclusive project in which each person, each body, is part of a dialogue with its city: the performance shines to the rhythm of the seasons, through the daily activities and movements of the city. From there, The Gathering will be developed, in close proximity to nature and based on current ecological issues. This project will draw its inspiration from the thinking of eco-feminist Vandana Shiva. It is an ode to life on Earth and the fragile world in which we live.

From the centre, which is Les Veilleurs, there will be walks around the regional area, inviting thinkers, researchers, artist-walkers, botanists and philosophers, and bringing together a European community of visions close to the thinking that Joanne Leighton wishes to promote.

Cultural and Artistic Programme

THE CENTIPEDE WITH 1000 ROLLING FEET

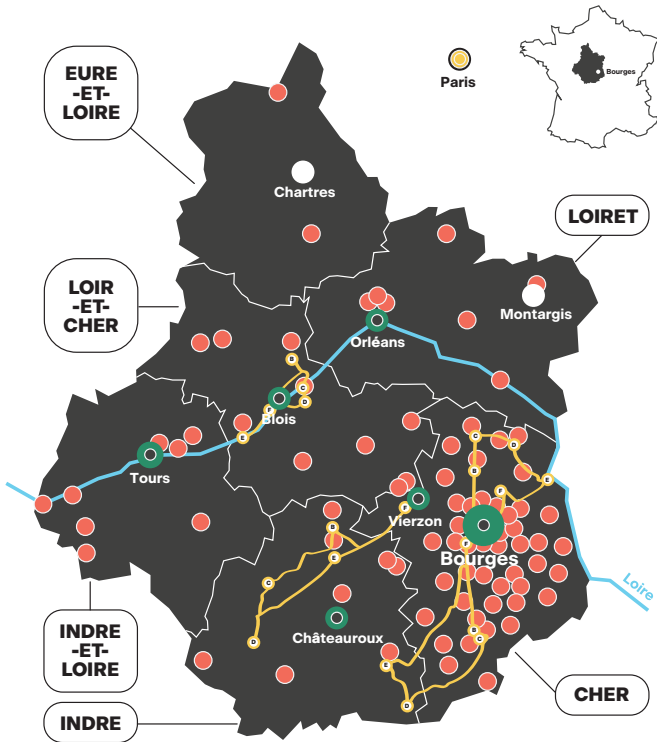
MOBILE RAILWAY MUSEUM TRAVELLING ON RAIL NETWORK OF CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE • ANNA COLIN (FR/UK)

The Centipede is a travelling exhibition in a decommissioned train that visits various railway sites in rural and urban Berry. The exhibition invites audiences to discover unusual places, stories, and works, using the low-carbon RER Europa network. Trains have been the subject of fascination and horror for artists, novelists, filmmakers, and naturalists since their birth in the 19th century. The exhibition invites artists to rethink the train as a tool for rewilding, as an environmental corridor, linking economic progress to ecological progress, the urban to the rural, and yesterday to tomorrow.

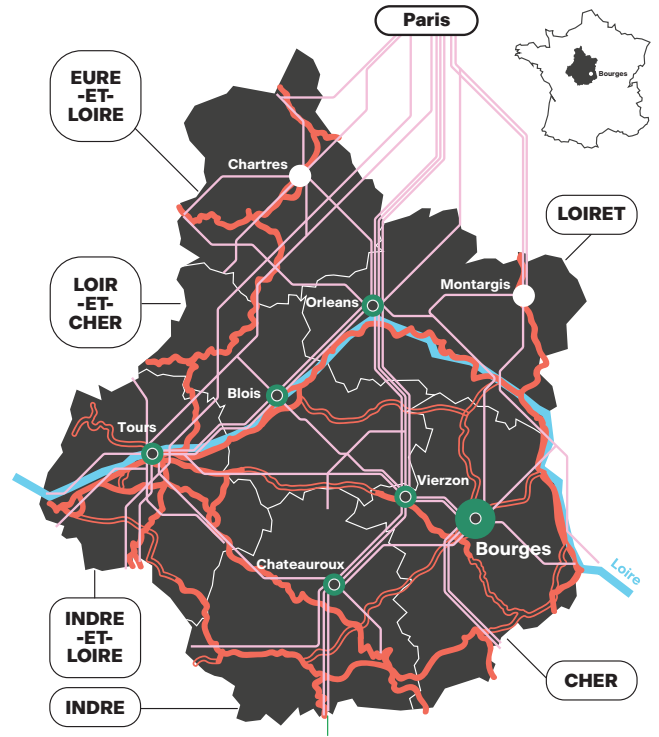
The Loire, the last wild river in Europe, whose bed and banks have remained natural over its 1000 km, making it the longest in France, and the only one to be classified as a Unesco World Heritage Site on part of its course.

In the spirit of the Parliament of Loire, Bourges 2028 will respect this naturalness in its projects: no construction, no temporary islands and no fossil-fuel-powered navigation, from the Bourges marshes to the Cher, and to arc of the Loire Sun.

EXAMPLES OF RER LOW CARBON ROUTES



COMBINED BOURGES 2028 REGIONAL TER TRAINS AND CYCLING NETWORKS



RER Europa - Examples of routes

RER Europa Vierzon

- A Vierzon Train Station
- B Domaine de Poulaines
- C Pallau-sur-Loire
- D Regional natural parc of Brenne
- E Château de Bourges
- F Vierzon Train Station

RER Europa Gare Végétale of Bourges to The Fragile and Strong Planet

- A Gare Végétale of Bourges
- B Château de la Chapelle d'Angillon
- C Aubigny-sur-Nère
- D Vailly-sur-Sauldre
- E Pottery village of La Borne
- F Gare Végétale of Bourges

PARTNERS

Centre-Val de Loire Region

- National Choreographic Centre of Orléans
- POLAU - Arts and Urban Planning Centre of Tours
- Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire
- Ciclic
- The Issoudun Formations
- Saint Roch Hospice Museum
- Scène O Centre
- FRAC Centre-Val de Loire
- Cepravoi
- Equinoxe National Stage
- become.art
- The Shining
- ESAD Orléans
- Hectare Vendôme
- Chambord Castle
- L'ARTSENAL Contemporary art Centre
- Orléans Museum of Fine Arts
- Charles Péguy Centre
- Talcy Castle
- Municipal School of Fine Arts
- Henry de Monfreid Museum
- Maison Dutilleul-Joy
- Museum of Fine Arts of Tours
- CCC OD
- Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning House
- Domaine Francis Poulenc at the Art Centre
- Rivau Castle
- The Dyeing Room
- Zone-i
- Les Tanneries - Contemporary art centre
- Domaine de Poulaines
- Bouges Castle
- House of George Sand (CMN)
- National Drama Centre of Orléans

GARES VÉGÉTALES

RER Europa Gare Végétale of Blois to The Castles Planet

- A Gare végétale of Blois
- B Château de Talcy
- C Château de Chambord
- D Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire
- E Gare végétale of Blois

RER Europa Gare Végétale of Bourges to The Countryside Planet and The Planet of the Witches

- A Gare Végétale of Bourges
- B Bruère-Aillichamps
- C Noirlac Abbey
- D Sainte-Sévère-sur-Indre - Jacques Tati
- E House of George Sand
- F Gare Végétale of Bourges

Cher Department

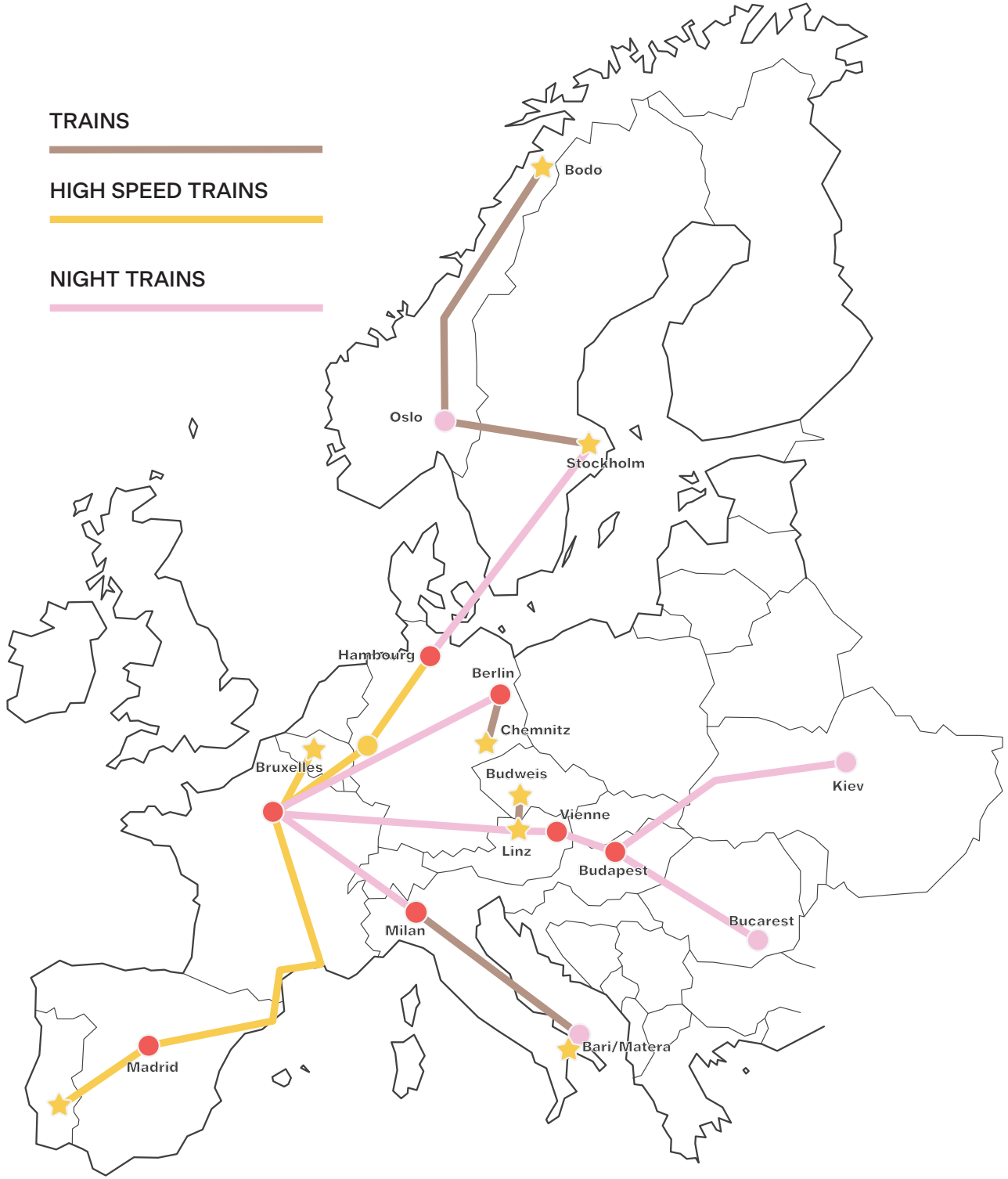
- Antre Peaux
- Mille Univers Association
- National Higher School of Arts (ENSA)
- Printemps de Bourges
- Noirlac Abbey
- Train and Military Crew Museum
- Cher departmental and heritage archives
- Leila Slimani media library and Bourges library networks
- Bourges Conservatory
- Museums of Bourges
- The Bains-Douches Association
- Carrosserie Mesnier
- Mac-Nab Theatre
- Saint-Amand music school
- Music Conservatory
- Bourges circus school
- La Borne Contemporary Ceramic Centre, La Borne Museum, Association of Ceramists of La Borne
- Capazza Gallery
- Cher Education League
- Jacques Coeur Theatre with the Léla Company
- La Transversale Gallery and Alain-Fournier High School
- Jacques Coeur Palace (CMN)
- Cathedral Saint-Etienne de Bourges (CMN)
- National Federation of Writers' Houses and Literary Heritage
- Bourges-Osmoy EPIDE Centre
- La Châtaigneraie - centre for autism
- George Sand hospital centre with Paris Mozart Orchestra
- Comité des Choses Concrètes and Union Pragmatique
- Library of the Four Pillars and Work of Graham Stevens
- Allons Voir! Association
- Le Centre / OCEL Vierzon

CYCLING NETWORKS

CYCLING NETWORKS IN PROGRESS

TER NETWORKS IN CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE

Bourges 2028 : low carbon bus, bicycle and train routes to rurality of Bourges
Plus conurbation, Cher Department and Centre-Val de Loire



Bourges 2028:
 developing sustainable behaviours for long-distance travel across Europe

EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

- Stockholm 1998
- Brussels 2000 / 2030
- Chemnitz 2025
- Matera 2019
- Bodø 2024
- Evora 2027
- Linz 2009
- Budweis 2028

HUB CITIES

- Paris
- Hamburg
- Berlin
- Vienna
- Budapest
- Milan
- Madrid

TRANS EUROPE CULTURE

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

THE NEW EUROPEAN GRAND TOUR

Bourges 2028 will develop a programme of themed and cultural low-speed trains and exciting cultural train journeys. Coming to Bourges and leaving from Bourges to Europe will be an experience where the focus is on meeting people and finding the cultural treasures, unexpected stories along the way – rather than racing to destination with our heads in our tablets! Get on board with us!

Our objectives are to bring about low-carbon behaviour for long-distance travel from Europe to Bourges and from Bourges to Europe, to revive the spirit of Interrail and Trans Europ Express, (which for many is the foundation of their European identity before Erasmus), to link countries and European cultural institutions including ECoCs in themed routes, to give these routes social links and a relationship with the landscape. Building European communities through cultural journeys. As stated in Bid Book 1, we have 2 goals with Trans Europe Culture programme with 2 different families of projects:

- **The Rhythm of the Rails:** Invite long distance French and European travellers to come to Bourges, and Berruyers to travel to Europe, by existing trains and night trains with a specific experience (online and downloaded contents and narratives) and incentives for guided tours and free entrances in Bourges, Paris and in 7 European hub cities.
- **Art on the Rails:** Create specific artistic projects using trains and night trains between different European locations where citizens of Centre-Val de Loire Region, Cher Department, Bourges Plus Connurbation and Bourges meet peers in other European regions building up European identity.

We have already had several working sessions with the SNCF, several private operators and agencies specialising in night trains, in search of a reliable solution at the logistical and financial level for our proposed network. From these work sessions it emerged that charter trains are unrealistic because they entail significant risks and constraints. The solution of chartering existing night train carriages for artistic projects, on the other hand, is extremely easy and simple. It allows certain specific support at the level of the wagons (decoration, reception, even dressing) to be defined by project.

THE RHYTHM OF THE RAILS

TRAINS OFFERING ALL TRAVELLERS TO AND FROM BOURGES
MEDIA CONTENT ON THEIR TRIP
RESIDENCIES ARTISTS ON TRAINS
ALEXANDRA BADEA (RO) AND GUEST ARTISTS/CURATORS FROM EUROPE

Alexandra Badea is a Romanian author and director who has won numerous writing awards in France and Europe. The train journeys between Romania, her country of origin, and France where her family immigrated marked her childhood. Alexandra offers to coordinate a residency programme powered by the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri for European artists, including herself, between various European regions in night trains. The artistic subject of these residencies is to write within the specific framework of trains or night trains, associated human encounters and stopover towns, with an emphasis on the singular, the off-screen, the imaginary, the unexpected of European routes as seen by artists.

“Night trains are low speed. They give the time to connect with the landscape, people. I have always dreamed to be able to write actual stories or fictions about these landscapes, people, cities on European routes. This is what *The Rhythm of the Rails* is about and will offer.” **Alexandra Badea**



The artistic content created by the artists will come in formats like podcasts, music, comics, short movies, videos, visit and restaurant recommendations available for free in different languages for travellers who wish to come to Bourges via Paris by train, with a low-carbon trip. The heavy contents and files will be available for download rather than streaming to reduce carbon footprint.

A Bourges 2028 Trans Europe Culture app will allow access to the contents in partnership with various stakeholders of European night train lines (interrail, <https://back-on-track.eu/night-train-map>, national and private operators, the customers of which will have also access for free to these contents). The works created by the artists during their train residencies thus allow everyone to start a travel experience from their home by following low-carbon train journeys on the main European lines of the night train network, and the associated stopover towns.

We will use 7 hub cities and stations with a partner cultural institution in each hub city proposing to Bourges 2028 travellers free access to exhibitions and guided tours upon presentation of the Bourges 2028 Trans Europe Culture pass on our app, and a train ticket. For each hub, a curator will launch through the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri a call for residences of artists on night trains and various content creation. We will select 3 winning projects for each of the following lines :

- Paris/Brussels curator Matthieu Goeury (BE/FR)
- Paris/Hamburg (existing night train connection to Stockholm, to get to Oslo and Bodø) curator Yngvild Aspeli (NO)
- Paris/Berlin (connection to Chemnitz 2025) curator Camille de Toledo (FR/DE)
- Paris/Vienna (train connection to Budweis 2028 via Linz stop, night train connection to Budapest, Bucarest, Krakow, Warsaw). Curator Alexandra Badea (RO)
- Budapest/Lviv and Kiev Curator Roman Grygoriv and Illia Razumeiko (UA)
- Paris/Milano (train connection to Matera 2019) Curator Hanru Hou (CN/IT/FR)
- Paris/Barcelona/Madrid/Evora (high speed line) thanks to the new Madrid/Evora high speed line, Curator Roger Bernat (SP)
- Local TER Paris - Centre-Val de Loire lines : Alexandra Badea (RO)

Partners: local institutions in each of the 7 hub cities chosen by each curator in the cultural fields eg Kanal Centre Pompidou in Brussels, HAU in Berlin, PAC in Milano, Ukrainian Institute Kyiv (UA) or by New European Bauhaus Mission on global urban challenges.

“Finding a new word and new images for Bourges 2028, being “in between” different countries, transportation systems and realities. Between war and peace, between death and live, between time and space.” Illia Razumeiko



ART ON THE RAILS, WITH CITIZENS AS CO-CREATORS

A first set of trains will propose Berruyers and local residents of various European cities to co-create projects with artists. In these projects, candidates and volunteers to join the experience will have travel costs borne by the production. We will have some participants drawn by lots.

Follow us across Europe to join creations between Berruyers and their European neighbours!

WORLD HISTORY OF EUROPE

MOHAMED EL KHATIB (FR), PATRICK BOUCHERON (FR)
AND EUROPEAN GUESTS

Mohamed El Khatib proposes in this project to write a history of Europe with and for its citizens. The project will be built initially from 2026 through writing workshops in 6 European cities from west to east (Evora, Brussels, Matera, Budweis, Budapest, Kyiv) in which 20 citizens of the Centre-Val de Loire region and 20 citizens of this country will share the experience of co-writing their vision of European history with local artists, local historians but also personalities from civil society and the general public from these countries. Travel will be by trains and night trains.

In a second stage, each module will be repeated and played in each city and partner. The final and long form will be performed at the Maison de la Culture in Bourges in 2028.

Mohamed El Khatib is a local artist from the Centre-Val de Loire region who has developed theatrical projects for ten years, mixing professional and amateur artists, witnesses and citizens in an approach that has shaken up the traditional theatrical field by creating highly participatory and new forms. His projects have been performed and questioned our world and the theatre in Rio, New York, Brussels, Avignon, Madrid and moreover.

Patrick Boucheron, is a one of the most renowned French and European historians, specialist in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, particularly in Italy. Since 2015 he has been a professor at the Collège de France on the chair “History of powers in Western Europe”.

Partner cities: Evora 2027 (PT), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Brussels National Theatre (BE), Ukrainian Institute Kyiv (UA), Matera 2019 (IT), Trafo (HU), Maison de la Culture de Bourges.



Budapest Keleti Train station

EUROPEAN PUPPET STORIES

YNGVILD ASPELI (NO) AND EUROPEAN GUESTS

The great Norwegian puppeteer **Yngvild Aspeli** offers a train journey from Paris / Bourges to Bodø (Norway) and return with three stopover cities (Hamburg, Oslo, Trondheim). Travellers will take the train in Paris to Köln/Hamburg, the night train to Oslo. Various visits in Oslo curated by Yngvild Aspeli, and then the Oslo/Trondheim and breathtaking Trondheim/Bodø train lines with performances, and a final stop in Bodo with various visits organised with Bodo 2024 legacy, return trip to Paris with visits in Hamburg.

This project will take the 700 km line between Trondheim and Bodø where four stations have been reopened in small and medium towns on the occasion of a Bodø 2024 artistic project dealing with the history of the construction of this line by prisoners during the second world war. A puppet performance will be organised in these towns as a legacy for Bodø 2024 and sustainability of the touristic development allowed by this project. The final project will be resumed in its entirety at the Maison de la Culture in Bourges in 2028.

Yngvild Aspeli is Norwegian. Artistic director of Plexus Polaire and director of Nordland Visual Theatre, she develops a unique visual universe that brings to life the most buried feelings. Human-sized puppets are at the heart of her work, which has renovated contemporary puppetry. The double presence of the actor-puppeteer, the music, the light and the video contribute to the creation of an extended language to serve and communicate the story.

Prospective partners in progress: Nordland Visual Theatre (NO), L'Hectare – Centre National de la marionnette Vendôme, Maison de la Culture de Bourges, Théâtre National Bruxelles (BE), Trondheim – Bodø railway line (NO), Touristic office of Nordland region (NO), Bodo 2024 (NO), Evora 2027 Power Puppets (PT).

EUROPEAN RESILIENCE CHOIRS

MARTA GÓRNICKA (PL)

Marta Górnicka is a Polish director, author and singer, a graduate of the Warsaw Theatre Academy and the Frédéric Chopin Conservatory of Music. She founded the Political Voice Institute (PVI) in 2019 at the Maxime Gorki Theatre in Berlin, where she developed her practice of the choir in its formal and political dimension.

In the choirs she offers, voices and bodies, individually and combined, are intrinsically political instruments. She exploits a variety of choral formats to provoke confrontations with unbearable realities. Marta Górnicka uses the stage as a platform to embrace discourses of conflict and resolution, creating opportunities for community members to make their voices heard but also to recognize each other's common humanity.

In her project *Mothers. A Song for Wartime* which will be presented at the 2024 Avignon Festival, she brings together Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian women around the conflict that keeps them apart.

For Bourges 2028, with the project *European Resilience Choirs* Marta proposes an open project since it will feed on an upcoming European crisis in the period 2024-2026, from which she will choose a theme and invite European citizens to a series of choral workshops in four European cities to be determined. The choral groups will be made up of citizens of the Centre-Val de Loire region and the respective country concerned. The final show will be organised at the Maison de la Culture in Bourges in 2028. Travel will be chartered by Bourges 2028 night trains, depending on the cities and countries chosen.

Prospective partners in progress: Avignon Festival, Maxim Gorki Theatre Berlin (DE), Euroszene Leipzig (DE), Spring Festival (AT), Powszechny Theatre Warsaw (PL), Le Maillon Strasbourg, Les Choeurs de Bourges, Nova Gorica 2025 (SI).

THE TRAIN OF BEAUTIFUL DIFFERENCES

ERIC MINH CUONG CASTAING (FR)

Eric Minh Cuong Castaing has developed with his projects in particular forms(s) of life and *_P/ARC_ _ _* a unique work with differentiated audiences, audiences with reduced or disabled mobility with whom he develops a work of sensory redevelopment based on human relationships redefined outside our standards. As part of Bourges 2028, Eric offers a programme inviting differentiated audiences and their medical staff from Bourges and the Centre-Val de Loire region, and from three European cities (Geneva, Düsseldorf, Brussels), to co-create a show at the outcome of residency work in the four cities, and to share feedback from the approach for the various stakeholders (artists, participants, medical staff) on a pan-European scale. The final show will be presented in Bourges. Travel between cities will be by train, which poses an interesting collective challenge in terms of mobility for different audiences. This project will take place in 2026 and 2027, allowing Bourges 2028 and partner organisations (train companies, SNCF Gares & Connexions, cultural institutions, ...) to integrate the good practices necessary for differentiated travel into their programme. It will also give us the chance of integrating resource people from this project on these issues in the governance and staff of Bourges 2028.

Prospective partners in progress: Tanzhaus Düsseldorf (DE), Comédie de Genève (CH) Festival Out of the Box (CH), Théâtre National Wallonie Bruxelles (BE), various Healthcare Institutions and their staff in CH, BE, DE, Bad Ischl 2024 (AT), AUDIENS (FR).



“Making yourself accessible to others, regardless of differences in conditions, human or technological: the train of beautiful differences is an incubating ground for new relationships.” Eric Minh Cuong Castaing



WE CAN BE EUROPEAN HEROES

GRUPE EN FONCTION, ARNAUD PIRAULT (FR)

Arnaud Pirault is a local artist from Centre-Val de Loire. About thirty feet with their microphones in a square of a few square metres delimited on the ground by black adhesive tape, a discrete sound system which broadcasts a compilation of modern pop, bringing together titles by Shirley Bassey, MGMT, Jamie T or Björk. About thirty inhabitants enter the square and perform the songs in playback. WCBEH is a gesture, an act performed by a group of European people who have the desire to come together and celebrate this coming together.

A common action, in the eyes of all.
A generous, ironic and joyful gesture, a unifying act.

In this proposal *We can be European Heroes* created for Bourges 2028 with the Printemps de Bourges, the project will propose in 2027 to work in 6 European countries in which citizens will be offered a pre-established list (depending on the technical and linguistic specificities of the project) of song successes representative of the European narratives conveyed by pop music, and more broadly by current music (especially rap).

A final combination will be played during the opening ceremony of Bourges 2028 with the various groups coming from the 6 European countries by trains.

Partners: Printemps de Bourges, Groningen (NL) and Brighton (UK) festivals, Nuits Botaniques (BE), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES).



ART ON THE RAILS, OPEN CALLS FOR TRAVELLERS

Based on the playground of the network of 7 European hub stations, Paris-Austerlitz and the 6 Gares Végétales of the Centre-Val de Loire network, European City of Artists - Mélina Mercouri will launch a series of calls for projects around artistic projects taking place on European night trains on round-trip journeys on the one hand, and on regional trains in Centre - Val de Loire on the other hand.

We are waiting for projects offering new experiences for travellers wanting a different pace of travel through Europe, its identities, its cultures, and Centre-Val de Loire Region. Music, performances, dance, singing, design, literature and other possibilities will be convened as well as visits linked to the Bourges 2028 axes with partner locations in the stopover towns. Project linking Bourges through the seven European hubs to past and future ECoC cities will be favoured, Budweis 2028 through Linz, and Evora 2027 through Barcelona/Madrid.

We target one long distance project issued from these calls every month in 2027 and 2028, some could be repetitive from one month to the other.

Travellers will have to pay for the experience, estimated cost is between 200-600 € for a 3 to 6 days trip. Sponsors will be solicited to allow a pro-rata of people with lower income (selected from their tax return) to participate.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF RIVERS

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

A PROJECT BY CAMILLE DE TOLEDO (FR/DE)

This project was a leading and breakthrough vision of our first bid book.

The European movement to recognise the rights of nature and watersheds as a new structuring model for our territories has experienced several accelerations since the first round. In Spain, the Mar Menor lagoon was the first natural feature in Europe to receive the status of legal existence at the start of the year. In Poland and Germany, a 1000 km march in May saw several thousand Polish and German citizens take turns for a march for the rights of the river Oder, and the signing of a declaration of the rights of the Oder. In Ukraine, the destruction of the Kakhovka dam restored the natural bed of the Dnieper River while generating problems impacting hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. The Ukrainian government has requested recognition of ecocide, a first in human history.

In the Centre-Val de Loire region, the Loire Parliament, which has been at the base of this European citizen dynamic since 2019, initiated a major journey up the Loire bringing together 330 km of navigation against the current from Nantes to Orléans, 20 common stages and thousands of participants from September 1 to 20, 2023 and finally a declaration of rights of the Loire river in Orleans on September 20.

Loire, Danube, Dniepr, and Oder – the rivers and watersheds of Europe are our precious and nourishing neighbours: they deserve a voice and representation in the new framework of the rights of nature's development on other continents.

The European Parliament of Rivers is a pan-European extension of the artistic project Towards a Parliament of the Loire by Berlin-based artist, political scientist, professor, and writer Camille de Toledo which was produced by the POLAU urbanistic association in Tours. This pioneering real life narrative triggered huge public debate in France and Europe. For our Bourges 2028 project, The European Parliament of Rivers (including the four rivers mentioned above), a dozen public hearings will be proposed to citizens and will take place in each of the four partnering areas linked to the participating European rivers.

These hearings put into action a collective research to assess the potential of a river ecosystem and involve in a fictional parliamentary commission that has to decide whether the agency of all the elements of the rivers should be recognised as a legal person like it was done in other regions of the globe (New Zealand, Ecuador, Columbia). These hearings (also moments of conviviality and sharing) involve researchers and thinkers (philosophers, anthropologists, ecologists, biologists, legal experts) and the users of the four European rivers locally.

In Bourges, a development of this project will focus on the recognition of the rights of the marshes of Bourges and those of its twin town Diourbel, in Senegal.

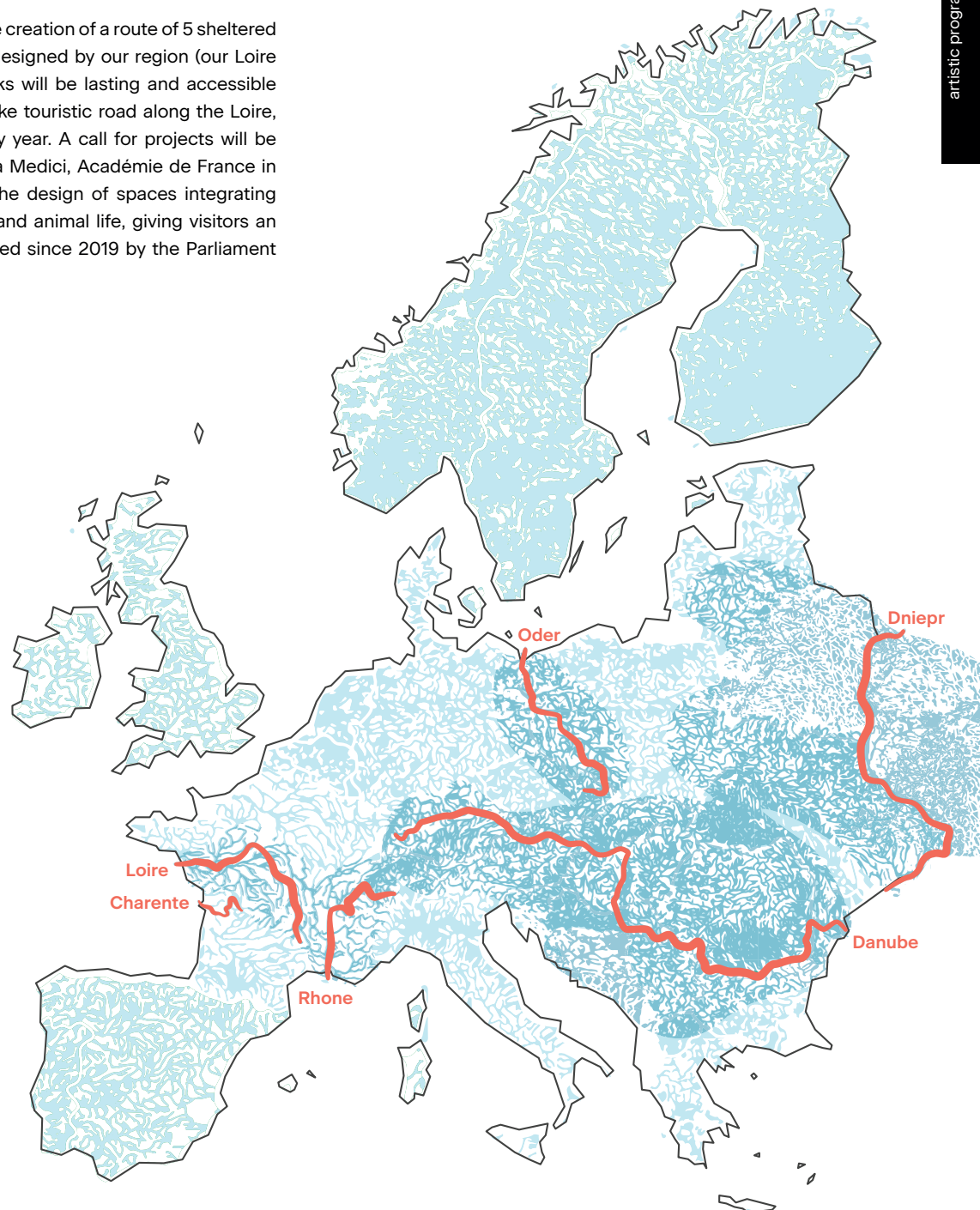
The final results will be:

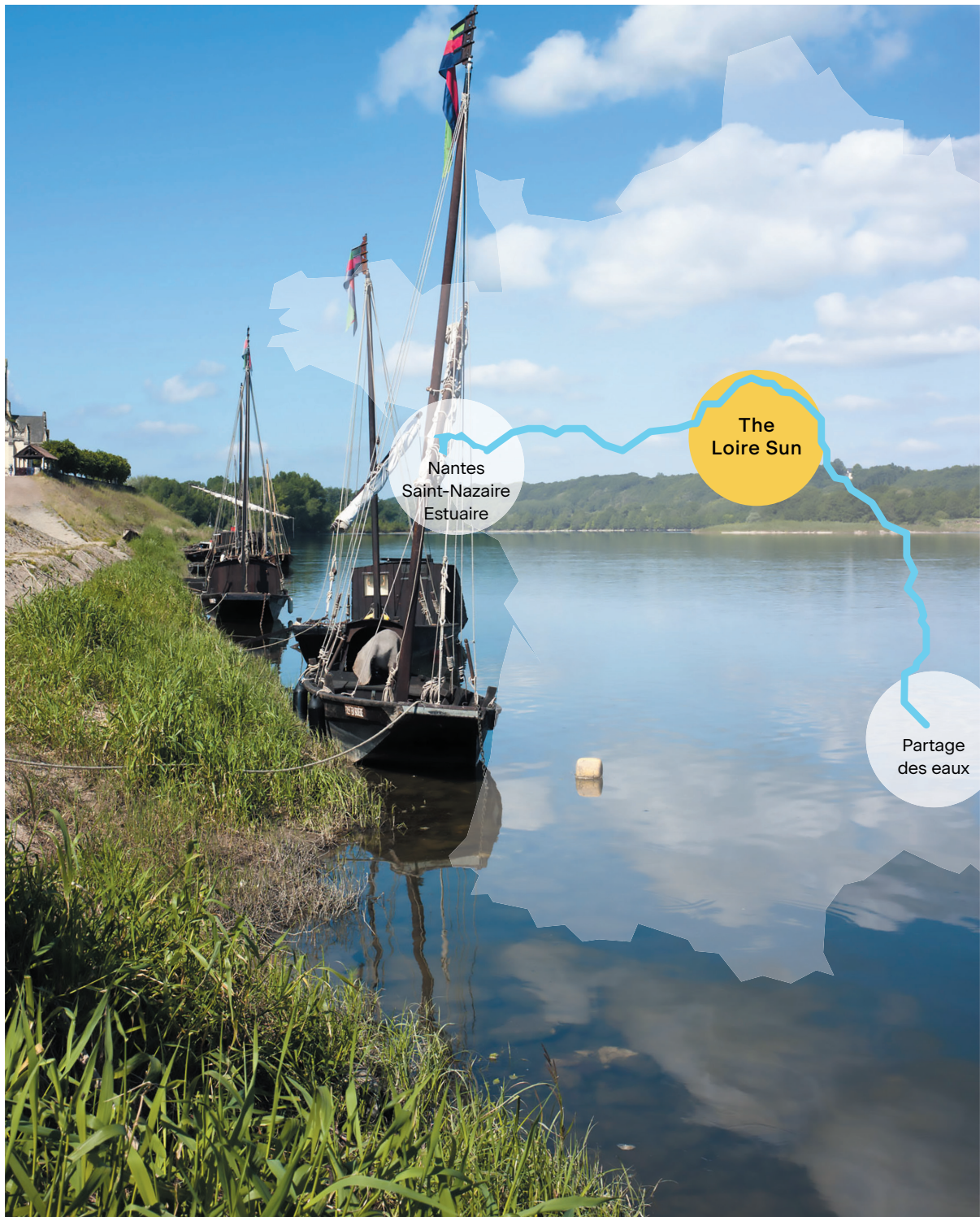
- An artistic festival of projects linked to the rights of nature.
- A dialogue with similar projects developed in Colombia, New Zealand and India with which Parliament of the Loire has developed strong partnerships since 2019.
- The publication of a manifesto/investigation book on the new wave of the rights of rivers.
- Creating a house of European rivers in Tours offering exhibitions, a documentation centre and a legal resource centre.
- Giving a European resonance to the Parliament of the Loire in Tours and its phase 2 promoted by POLAU locally.
- Developing interspecies-negotiation methods with regards to the Cher, a tributary of the Loire close to Bourges, in connection with the Assises des Marais (Marshlands) in Bourges.

Partners: Bourges Plus Conurbation, City of Tours, Centre-Val de Loire Regional Council, Bourges Museum of Natural History, Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT), Ukrainian Institute Kiev (UA), Notre Affaire à Tous, legal association, Institute for advanced studies and Le Lieu unique in Nantes (FR), Oder Osaba Odra association (PL), Laboratoire CEDETE Orleans University, Bambey University (Senegal), City of Diourbel (Senegal), City of Angoulême, City of Avignon, Novi Sad 2022 (RS), Bad Ischl 2024 (AT). Budweis 2028 (CZ) Ars Biologica and Confluence projects (CZ).

Bourges 2028 will propose with the creation of a route of 5 sheltered works along the arc of the Loire designed by our region (our Loire Sun). This journey and these works will be lasting and accessible by “Loire a velo”, the important bike touristic road along the Loire, frequented by 1.8 m cyclists every year. A call for projects will be launched with the help of the Villa Medici, Académie de France in Rome, whose guidelines will be the design of spaces integrating the materials of the Earth, water and animal life, giving visitors an experience on key issues developed since 2019 by the Parliament of Loire.

Bourges 2028: give Nature rights in Europe from Parlement de Loire structural frame





The **Loire**, France's longest river, known the world over for its famous châteaux and wines, will become, with **The Loire Sun**, the first river in the world to be highlighted by permanent artistic creations. David Moinard, artistic curator associated with our application, was curator of **Estuaire**, a pioneering territorial public art event in the mouth of the Loire which, between Nantes and Saint-Nazaire, presented some thirty works by major artists on the international scene. He is also curator of **Partage des Eaux**, a permanent art trail featuring a dozen works by leading artists from the Monts d'Ardèche Regional Nature Park, a UNESCO Geopark where the Loire River originates.

In this way, and in a clear echo of the Parliament of the Loire, it would be possible to create the world's first **art river**: to bring the best of humanity to a river in its entirety, revealing its natural, historical and sociological riches while encouraging respect for the many ecosystems it encompasses.

SHELTERS FOR MOBILE DEMOCRACY

The question of listening, mediation and conflict management processes is central in France in a situation of societal fragmentation. The expression “France is a paradise experienced as hell by the French” is often used by external visitors.

Bourges 2028 will create new compact neutral places which will be, like the Gares Végétales, the totem places of Bourges 2028 – to enable this listening, these encounters, this mobile democracy that Bourges 2028 experienced during its conferences, in the participatory design meetings for the project, and at the design agoras for the Metro Europa lines with a pan-European perspective. But the shelters will also welcome citizen councils, project monitoring, different youth programmes or certain artistic residencies wishing to interact closely with the public.

Resulting from calls for projects drawn up and managed with the team of the Académie de France in Rome - Villa Medici in the spirit of its “Cabanes” festival, 3 places will be developed which will question modular design and construction sustainability as well as our relationship with nature. One of the shelters will be in the Bourges Plus Conurbation to ensure exchange with local population on the project.

Project leader: Bourges 2028

Partners: Académie de France in Rome - Villa Medici (FR/IT), Foundation Matera Basilicata 2019 (IT), Budweis 2028 Hotspots and Inspire projects, Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence Tours, Parvis des métiers Bourges.

NOIRLAC CABANES

CURATOR: ELISABETH SANSON - NOIRLAC ABBEY, ACADÉMIE DE FRANCE IN ROME - VILLA MEDICI (FR/IT)

Noirlac Abbey is a jewel of mediaeval architecture. Preserved intact, it hosts today a European cultural meeting centre for artists centred on the arts of speech and sound. Located one hour from Bourges, Noirlac offers to welcome several winning artists from calls for projects from the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri in the particular setting of “cabanes” (cabins) of the Villa Medici, following certain joint calls for projects between Noirlac and Villa Medici.

From 2025, a cabane of the festival in Rome will be installed in Noirlac, and in 2026 a call for joint projects will be proposed for the creation of three cabins which will be deployed in the gardens and park of the abbey.

Partners: Académie de France in Rome - Villa Medici (FR/IT), Noirlac Abbey, European Center of Encounter, Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence Tours.

MÉTRO EUROPA

Métro Europa is a project aimed at improving low-carbon connectivity in medium-sized French towns like Bourges, which have been neglected in terms of funding and development. The project consists of four fake metro lines which can be explored on foot or by bicycle/scooter, each featuring cultural and artistic programmes tied to the European dimension. The initiative encourages citizen involvement in shaping the city's cultural future and connects different districts from the centre to the outskirts. After a successful launch in 2022 and another edition in 2023, the project uses a 'learning by doing' process, where citizens and students collaborate to co-create the lines, station names, and programming on a semestrial basis. Métro Europa also serves as a platform to showcase local economic, social, and solidarity initiatives and promotes Bourges as a tourist destination. The project aims to create a lasting tool for citizen consultation, enrich the tourist offer, and foster collaboration between public and private entities.

We decided to include the project **Stages Across Borders** in Métro Europa. A might version of Metro Europa will be proposed in Bourges Plus Conurbation in the following communes: La Chapelle-Saint-Ursin, Mehun-sur-Yèvre, Saint-Doulchard, Saint-Germain-du-Puy, Trouy. Specific metro lines will be developed on a themed EU member country visited by citizens of Bourges with Trans Europe Culture artistic train projects. Food, beverage, play lists, exchange of craft, we will even twin streets of Bourges with European peer streets!

Project leaders: Bourges 2028, the citizenship centre of the City of Bourges and the citizens' assembly.

Confirmed partners: Bourges plus Conurbation, PONY (electric scooters), the 750 associations of the City of Bourges, City of Avignon, City of Guingamp, City of Nevers, Budweis 2028 Kulturista (CZ), Nova Gorica 2025 (SL).



Metro Europa line in Bourges northern outskirts

EUROPEAN CITIZEN COUNCIL

Bourges stands out as the pioneer in adopting participatory democracy with a drawn-by-lot selected citizen municipal council since 2021. Notably, the Conference on the Future of Europe marked a significant move towards direct representation in shaping European policies.

In the context of Bourges 2028, a European Citizens' Council will be established comprising 32 members managing 20% of the calls for artistic projects in the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri. This council will consist of 16 local citizens from Bourges, Bourges Plus Conurbation, Cher Department and Centre-Val de Loire Region and 16 from European Capitals of Culture partner cities (between 2024 and 2028), chosen by lot for one-year terms. We will organise a semestrial meeting in Bourges with people travelling by train, and monthly meetings with our remote and translation partner Panthea Paris/Berlin, one of the leading service companies for translation and remote conferences in the cultural field who we collaborated with very efficiently for our three international colloquies during preselection. The project aims to explore the meaning of being a citizen of a European Capital of Culture beyond the excitement of cultural activities. Questions about the project's long-term impact, inclusivity, cost, and climate concerns will be addressed. The council main's goal will be to write the 20% of open calls of European City of artists - Melina Mercouri it will be in charge of. Two council members (one French and one European) will sit on Bourges 2028's Board of Directors, presenting their findings and recommendations for project enhancement.

Project leaders: Platoniq Foundation Barcelona (ES), Citizen Assembly of Bourges.

Confirmed partners: CESER Centre-Val de Loire Region, The Matrix (cities involved), Korosten (UA), Liepāja 2027 (LV), Budweis 2028 Hostspots and Inspire projects (CZ), Skopje 2028 (MK), Trenčín 2026 (SK), Nova Gorica 2025 (SL), Chemnitz 2025 (DE).



Bourges 2028, European Conference, Avignon Popes Palace, July 11-12, 2022

THE MATRIX

The Matrix project presents a novel and systemic network of human-scale cities, aligning with the theme of the Bourges 2028 candidacy. This network facilitates the consolidation of projects, ideas, and legacies from Bourges 2028, as well as interactions with national stakeholders in mobility and sustainable development.

The 15 partner cities have held six monthly working sessions since April 2023, involving directors of institutions, elected officials, municipal administrators, and artists. They have integrated themselves as partners or co-sponsors for around 25 projects in the artistic programme such as Métro Europa which has been acclaimed by many partner cities or even Sounding the Ceramics which will associate the cities of Nevers and Châteauroux with Bourges 2028. Some projects, like Métro Europa or Gares Végétales, can be adapted directly in the partner cities. Starting in 2023, many Matrix cities have contributed financially to the candidacy, regardless of its outcome, with plans to annualise their memberships to sustain collaboration.

Furthermore, a pair of representatives, one French and one European, will represent the Matrix cities on the Board of Directors of Bourges 2028, selected by the partner cities, with a one-year mandate.

In addition to the regular meetings, two exceptional sessions were held alongside Matrix cities. During the Avignon 2023 festival, a meeting at the Palais des Papes included representatives and artists from Bodø 2024, along with Avignon and Angoulême, both strongly committed to the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri supported by Bourges 2028. Another special session focused on the New European Bauhaus, allowing Matrix cities representatives, in partnership with the Centre-Val de Loire Region Office in Brussels, to discuss opportunities and challenges for medium-sized towns. Recommendations from this meeting will be presented to the European Commission by the Mayor of Bourges and the General Commissioner of Bourges 2028 on November 10, 2023.

The 15 first cities in the Matrix project are committed to collaborative work and include:

- 5 cities in the Centre-Val de Loire Region: Bourges, Châteauroux, Vierzon, Issoudun, Blois
- 5 French cities: Avignon, Angoulême, Guingamp, Béthune, Nevers
- 5 European Capitals of Culture: Matera 2019, Bodø 2024, Oulu 2026, Tartu 2024, Bad Ischl 2024

Additionally, three more members joined after the preselection round: La Rochelle, Évora 2027, and Budweis 2028.

	PARTNER CITIES IN THE MATRIX	PROJECTS ENDORSED
CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE	Blois	Gares Végétales
	Châteauroux	Sounding the Ceramics, Gares Végétale
	Issoudun	Gares Végétales
	Vierzon	Connected Micro-Folies, Our Gallery, European Light Nights, Gares Végétales, Centre Pompidou @Palais Jacques Coeur
FRANCE	Angoulême Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region	European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, European Light Nights, European Parliament of Rivers for the Charente river
	La Rochelle Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region	European City of artists - Melina Mercouri
	Avignon Provence-Alpes Côte- d'Azur Region	European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, Duke Jean de Berry a European Heritage, Young Programmers on the Move, Ageing Artfully, Metro Europa European Parliament of Rivers for the Rhone river
	Béthune Hauts-de-France Region	Departure Class Right Here Right Now! exhibitions
	Guingamp Brittany Region	Metro Europa, Gares végétales + the city of Guingamp will bring experiences, as a city already labellised 100% EAC (National Artistic and Cultural Education programme for Youth), with the support provided by the presence on site of INSEAC (Higher National Institute of Artistic and Cultural Education)
	Nevers Burgundy Franche-Comté Region	Métro Europa, Sounding the Ceramics Gare Végétales
EUROPE	Bad Ischl (AT)	Trans Europe Culture, European Parliament of Rivers, Gares Végétales, Revival Shops
	Bodø (NO)	Our (European) Stories (youth projects), European Puppet Stories (Trans Europe Culture)
	Budweis (CZ)	New Patrons, RER Europa and a set of 9 projects (See Q13)
	Evora (PT)	European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, Young Programmers on the Move and a set of projects (see Q13)
	Matera (IT)	Shelters for Mobile Democracy
	Oulu (FI)	Ageing Artfully, European Queer Cabaret, The Language of Food, Young Programmers on the Move
	Tartu (EE)	On the Spectrum, Music! for Sanity, Low carbon ECoC

Bourges 2028:
Inspire a network of
human-sized cities

THE LANGUAGE OF EUROPE

The language of Europe is looking at the role of the European artist in the light of new European narratives with climate change, climate scepticism, multiple social crises, and war. How do we use the dynamics and exposure of Bourges 2028 to create a truly pan-European dynamic and dissemination of artistic productions to deliver positive messages and solutions? And how do we transmit it as a continuous legacy to our territory and others?

EUROPEAN CITY OF ARTISTS – MELINA MERCOURI

👉 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

A true service, knowledge and resource centre for artists and their access to the European stage

This programme ECA is the Bourges 2028 legacy project which we described in detail in Bid Book 1. Its first objective is to lead and empower local and national artists and organisations to internationalise their projects with a support structure. The European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri offers a first step of capacity building, financing of pan-European projects directly from Bourges 2028 so that they can initiate European deployment and later on answer to calls for Creative Europe projects, for example, which require technical expertise and skills that the majority of actors in our landlocked territory do not possess.

The ECA is the place where our relationship with art as a tool for transformation and social cohesion will be created and will continue after 2028 as a legacy. We imagine the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri in the physical location of the Hôtel Dieu but also and above all as a capacity building programme whose operational satellites will spread throughout the city where art and culture can be levers of transformation and of cohesion: difficult neighbourhoods in the north and south of Bourges, hospitals, elderly homes, outskirts of the agglomeration disconnected from the city centre, schools, centres for people with disabilities, spaces for LGBTQIA+ associations, rurality, companies, administration.

This network of residences for artists called Villa Europa is built on the solid foundations of local institutions. Since Bourges made the shortlist, the ECA has received numerous endorsements which make it a systemic project at regional, national and European level.

Beyond the confirmation of the commitments of the UNESCO listed cities of Avignon and Angoulême with their internationally renowned festivals allowing us creative triangulation, Evora 2027 and Budweis 2028 join ECA and we will amplify.

The French academy in Rome, the Villa Médici, opens its short residencies to shared residencies for ECA partners/calls for French artists. Finally, Audiens, the national agency in France for artists with disabilities, will take over the care aspects of the ECA.

“The Board is very happy to give its consent to name the ECA after Melina Mercouri and thanks Bourges 2028 for the vision and the impressive activities developed.” September 19, 2023, the Board of Melina Mercouri Foundation, Athens



Development of a joint legacy project with Evora 2027

The European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri (ECA) in Bourges 2028 is funded with 5 M €, with an average 50% coproduction, making the total budget 10 M €. Evora 2027 has a Lab and Meeting_ line cultural resource centre project with a budget of 6+3 M €, following the same philosophy and objectives as Bourges 2028. The goal is to have a joint resource and legacy centre in Evora and Bourges, and possibly collaborate with other small to medium-sized cities in central and northern Europe. There will be joint project calls for Evora 2027 and Bourges 2028 in 2025, and continued network collaborations after 2027 and 2028. The open calls will be split among disciplines allowing transversal projects.

ECA: Hôtel Dieu and satellites, incubator/transmitter

At the Hôtel Dieu but also in the satellite locations described above, Bourges 2028 will develop three resource centres in conjunction with the experience of Evora 2027:

- a resource centre for artists with 5 support people allowing them to be accompanied for responses to Bourges 2028 calls for projects for search for European partners and cultural mobility in Europe (Culture Moves Europe, On the Move), translation (Panthea Paris/Berlin), European social rights (Your Europe advice, CLEISS, Devenir Art Centre-Val de Loire), low-carbon mobility of projects (Carbon Commissioner), legal and intellectual property rights (structural agreement with international law firm)
- a popular university Bourges 2028 presenting on a weekly basis for the citizens of Bourges the projects in progress, meetings with artists, curators, members of the team
- an incubator/transmitter inspired by EuroFabrique for students in French and European art schools

A yearly international symposium on Artists in European society with 20 European Schools of arts and New European Bauhaus Mission

EuroFabrique is an initiative of RMN Grand Palais during the French Presidency of the European Union in 2022. The programme invited students from 40 European art schools to propose projects, brainstorm on the future of Europe with various stakeholders during a week of meetings in Paris. Bourges 2028 proposes to take over the programme and will offer a version of the project to 20 schools (40 delegates, 2 per school) from 2025 and a yearly international symposium of collective brainstorming on the future of Europe, feedback/sharing of experience between the curators, artists of Bourges 2028, international stakeholders and these students, The New European Bauhaus Mission. The programme aims to facilitate the professional integration of students through this experience within the framework of a European Capital of Culture.

ECA - Melina Mercouri in short:

Budget: 10 M € (5 M € Bourges 2028, 5 M € co-producers)

Number of funded projects: 200, average 50k € funding per project

Who writes the calls/decides? 60% Bourges 2028 artistic direction, 10% Bourges 2028 committee within the Youth Regional Council, 10% differentiated audiences, 20% European Citizen Council.

What are the themes of the calls? The 3 leading themes of Bourges 2028 : Lots of Neighbours, The Language of Europe, Right Here Right Now. 25% will be music oriented.

When will calls start? 2025 on a semestrial basis giving 6 months for the 5 experts to support the bidding teams.

Who can answer? Artists, associations.

From where? We target 50% of local/regional stakeholders, 50% national/European.

How European? We want 50% of the funded projects to happen/interact in at least 3 European countries and some to include artists in exile from other parts of the world.

Who runs the popular university, mediation tool for local residents?: Bourges 2028 artistic team.

Are residences possible? Yes, thanks to a Villa Europa network of residencies associated to the European City of Artists, with a network of institutions specialised in residencies in France and abroad through the coproductions, but residencies will also be possible in health institutions, administrations, private companies part of the Bourges 2028 ecosystem.

Partners: Evora 2027 Lab and Meeting_Line cultural resource center (PT), Budweis 2028 Found in Translation (CZ), Académie de France in Roma (FR/IT).

Partners in France: Villa Europa residence network, Antre Peaux, ENSA, Maison de la Culture, Printemps de Bourges, Paris Mozart Orchestra, Noirlac Abbey, Mille Univers, Maison Artagon, Capazza Gallery, Festival d'Avignon, City of Avignon, International City of comic strip (Angoulême), City of Angoulême, Atelier des Artistes en Exil, devenir+art, regional network of artists (FR).

European networks : EMAP network, New European Bauhaus Mission, EIT Culture and Creativity, Académie de France in Roma - Villa Medici (FR/IT), ECSA European Composer & Songwriter Alliance, European Media Art Platform - EMA, Nuits Botaniques (BE), Eurosonic (NL), Artmania (RO), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES), Yourope and ETEP European networks, ACCR association of European Cultural Centers, Broumov 2028. Professional networks : Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers (SACEM), Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (SACD), National Music Centre (CNM) with One Voice for European Music, National Centre for Cinema and Moving Image (CNC), CICLIC Regional audiovisual agency, AUDIENS.

Bourges 2028: (re)thinking the role and status of the artist in 21st century Europe with a European city of artists -Melina Mercouri

DÉFILÉ

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

A PROJECT BY HOU HANRU (CN/IT/FR)
WITH GRADUATED STUDENTS FROM EUROPEAN ART SCHOOLS

Hou Hanru (born 1963 in Guangzhou, China) is an international art curator and critic based in San Francisco, Paris and Rome. He worked at San Francisco Art Institute as Director of Exhibitions and Public Programme, was artistic director of the MAXXI in Rome (2013-2022) and curated numerous international art exhibitions including Cities On the Move, Shanghai Biennale, Gwangju Biennale, Venice Biennale (French Pavilion, Chinese Pavilion), Nuit Blanche in Paris. Bourges 2028 asked Hou Hanru to work on two themes that seem central to him in contemporary European society.

The project Défilé aims to explore how to enjoy life again after the COVID-19 crisis, geopolitical conflicts, climate change, and technological anxiety. The project uses the carnival, as well as other festive traditions, as a metaphor for joyfulness and a way to create a temporary utopia that defies the establishment and releases oppressed political energy. Défilé, referring, critically, to both carnivals and various forms of manifestation from popular feasts, fashion shows, military parade to street demonstrations, is an innovative form of artistic expression that involves visual arts, design, performance, and public participation. The project will turn the city of Bourges and its outskirts, Bourges Plus Conurbation into an open stage for a kind of cosmopolitan theatre, involving all kinds of technologies from crafts to digital images. The project aims to provoke temporary autonomous zones across the city with various communities claiming their "rights to the city". It involves a range of international artists, designers and performers including AES+F (RU), Francis Alÿs (BE/MX), Nick Cave (USA), Hew Lock (UK), Navin Rawanchaikul (TH), Marinella Senatore (IT) and Hito Steyerl (DE). The project, aiming to create new connections between various forms of public spaces, will take place in both cultural venues of the Cultural Mile, in museums, galleries... and everyday life spaces such as streets, places, shops, and historic buildings, with défilés taking place every once or twice per month during weekends, and projections of videos in the evening in different public spaces. At the same time, serious site-specific exhibits will be commissioned and exhibited in interior spaces permanently, with educational workshops for the participation of the inhabitants to prepare their own performances.

The artists and other participants, as much as possible, will be invited to Bourges using low carbon means of transportation and resort to local materials and human resources to conceive and produce their projects.

A selection of artists from this list: AES+F, Francis Alÿs, Array Collective, Tarek Atoui, Black Quantum Futurism, Blank Noise, Nick Cave, Chim ↑ Pom, Chto Delat, Choi Jeonghwa, Clement Cogitore, Contact Gonzo, Heri Rà di Martino, Heri Dono, Jimmie Durham, Ed Fornieles, Michac Gaba, Gelitin, Piero Gilardi, Félix Gonzalez-Torres, Shilpa Gupta, Jean-Paul Goude, Francesca Grilli, Ramin Haerizadeh/Rokni Haerizadeh/Hesam Rahmaniyan, Mona Hatoum, Huang Yong Ping, Mieskuoro Huutjat, Ryoji Ikeda, Anne Imhof, Mella Jaasmar, Ange Kayifa, Bernie Krause and United Visual Artists, Jompet Kuswidananto, Lee Mingwei, Lawrence Lek, Les gens d'Uterpans, Liang Shaoj, Hew Lock, Lu Yang, Martin Margiela, Enzo Mari, Alexander McQueen, Marie-Claire Messouma Maanlanbien, Simphiwe Ndzhbe, Carsten Nicolai aka Alva Noto, Olaf Nicolai, Adrian Paci, Paola Pivi, Alfredo Pirri, Public Movement, Navin Rawanchaikul, Kawakubo Rei, Michele Rizzo, Jimmy Robert, Peter Robinson, Larissa Sansour, Yorgos Sapountzis, Marinella Senatore, Shen Yuan, Federico Solmi, Hito Steyerl, Koki Tanaka, Wang Du, John Wood and Paul Harrison, Liam Young, Samson Young, Yao Qingmei, Zhang Ding, Zhang Xu Zhan.

Partners: Rockbund Art Museum Shanghai (CN), Shangqi Art Shenzhen (CN), Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (JP), The Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi (UAE), Budweis 2028 Kroj Pride and Kulturista (CZ).

MONEY (AND ART)

A PROJECT BY HOU HANRU (CN/IT/FR)
WITH GRADUATED STUDENTS FROM EUROPEAN ART SCHOOLS

The European Union was founded on a common economic and industrial project of modernization and development symbolised by the common currency euro. Bourges, with the historical figure Jacques Coeur, can be seen as a pioneer in the development of global trade and colonial expansion of Europe, and Jean de Berry a pioneer in artistic patronage before the Medici in Florence. The question of money, and economic values in life and their impacts on social and individual lives have been a central concern for numerous artists in history. This becomes an even more urgent and omnipresent issue in today's art world, essentially dominated by the power of the neoliberal capitalist system. A great number of works have been conceived and produced by contemporary artists across the world to incite us to reflect critically on the issue, or the very fundamental conditions of our life and even our definition as human beings. Are we anything else than simply homo-oeconomicus? The project "Money" seeks to shed light on the relationships between money and contemporary art, and provoke debates of the role and power of financial practice in our life, with a major exhibition and research event taking place in Bourges as part of the European Capital of Culture. The exhibition will feature historical parts in the Palais Jacques Coeur and site-specific works installed in shop spaces along the main commercial street, encouraging interactions between artists and inhabitants to improve cultural and everyday life in the city. Research conferences and debates will also be organised in collaboration with cultural institutions and universities in the region.

A selection of artists from this list: Genpei Akasegawa, Sophia Al Maria, John Baldessari, Elisabetta Benassi, Joseph Beuys, Marcel Broodthaers, Cao Fei, Maurizio Cattelan, Chen Zhen, Paolo Cirio, Clairefontaine, Minerva Cuevas, Burak Delier, Simon Denny, Marcel Duchamp, Jimmie Durham, Elmgreen & Dragset, Sylvie Fanchon, Hans Peter Feldmann, Forensic Architecture, Meschac Gaba, Jean-Baptiste Ganne, Andreas Gursky, Hans Haacke, Jens Haaning, David Hammons, Louis Henderson, Christine Hill, Thomas Hirschhorn, Huang Yong Ping, Christian Jankowski, Isaac Julien, Sora Kim, Yves Klein, François Knoetze, Alexander Kosolapov, Barbara Kruger, Surasi Kusolwong, Lin Yilin, Liu Chang, Cristina Lucas, Piero Manzoni, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Gordon Matta-Clark, Steve McQueen, Cildo Meireles, Museum of Capitalism, Dan Perjovschi, Cesare Pietroiusti, Julien Prévieux, Readymade belongs everyone, Pedro Reyes, Oliver Ressler, Julian Rosefeldt, Franck Scurti, Allan Sekula, Mladen Stilinovic, Koki Tanaka, Total Refusal, Nasan Tur, Wang Guangyi, Andy Warhol, Sislej Xhafa, Xu Zhen, Yan Lei, Yan Pei-Ming, Yu Youhan, Zhang Ding.

Partners: Taikwun Contemporary Art Centre (CN), Power Station of Art, Shanghai (CN), MUAC, Mexico City (MX).



Cultural and Artistic Programme

THE SILENCE

BY TIAGO RODRIGUES (PT)

A convent in the south of Portugal where the vow of silence is practiced has fewer and fewer monks that are getting older and older. This diminishing community is aware they will soon be extinct. Their profound connection to the land they cultivate, the walls of the building they inhabit, the surrounding nature, their library, their kitchen, and, most of all, one another, will soon end. They say their silent goodbyes until the convent is ultimately closed and the last monks are spread in different convents. Years later, one of these old Carthusian monks that has not spoken for decades accepts to talk to Tiago Rodrigues. A long conversation follows. Monk and artist discuss about silence, faith, words, nature, food, architecture, politics, history, communication. But mainly about silence. And this conversation leads Tiago Rodrigues to other meetings with masters of silence, be it in solitude or surrounded by many, as the keeper of a light house at a deserted island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, or an astronaut at the International Space Station or the last inhabitant of a very small village lost in the mountains. Because of a monk that breaks his vow of silence, we will embark in a trip into the world of the silent.

Portuguese actor, director, playwright and producer, Tiago Rodrigues is the current Director of Festival d'Avignon, in France. Since he started as an actor, 20 years ago, he has always looked at the theatre as a human assembly: a place where people meet, like in a cafe, to confront their thoughts and share their time.

Partners: Evora 2027 (PT), National Theatre of Wallonia-Brussels (BE), Maison de la Culture de Bourges (FR).

EURO RENAISSANCES - CENTRE POMPIDOU COLLECTIONS IN CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

CURATOR: ANNE-LAURE CHAMBOISSIER (FR) WITH THE
CURATORS OF CENTRE POMPIDOU AND THE CURATORS OF
LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Bourges 2028 will offer national and international visitors in the exceptional heritage sites of the region a series of major exhibitions with the Centre Pompidou based on an unprecedented partnership for the decentralisation of one of the world's largest art collections. This unique proposal is part of the legacy of an annual operation of the Centre-Val de Loire Region linking for several years important and smaller heritage sites, Les Nouvelles Renaissances, which attracts around 800,000 visitors each summer. It meets several of the objectives of Bourges 2028: the question of cultural rights and access to national heritage in peripheral regions and in rural areas, the mapping, networking of cultural actors of different sizes in a common programme and vision, the reduced carbon footprint linked to the air travel of art works and the travel of audiences. In a large scale prefiguration event, Ar(t)chipel, works of the Centre Pompidou left in October 2023 the Paris-based museum to join various places of exhibition and creation in the Centre-Val de Loire Region, a programme which will continue on a more important scale during the closure of Centre Pompidou for works as of 2025. Ar(t)chipel in the dynamics of Bourges 2028 has made it possible to calibrate this extraordinary collaboration and to create a structuring operational framework between the partners. Visitors were able to admire dozens of works from the first collection of modern and

contemporary art in Europe, from all over the region in 54 places of contemporary art, but also and especially in intermediate places, or sometimes private artists' studios. The installation of contemporary works in certain heritage places, sometimes small, allows a public not accustomed to contemporary art to confront these works.

Bourges 2028 will offer low-carbon shuttles, organised by bus linking three or four of these places with guided tours of the exhibitions and the routes and landscapes, on routes lasting a maximum of four hours including a stop for an organic snack.

Here is a selection of the 54 participating venues and sites to Euro Renaissance and ateliers d'artistes Centre Pompidou:

Parc du Perche, Refuge la Tanière, Domaine du Ciran, Domaine de Chaumont-sur-Loire, Domaine National de Chambord, Château de Cheverny, Château Royal d'Amboise, Château de Beaugency, Château de Bouges, Château Royal de Montargis, Musée Beaux-Arts Orléans, Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré Tours, George Sand House in Nohant, Palais Jacques Coeur in Bourges, Tower and crypt of Bourges Cathedral, Noirlac Abbey, Comité des choses concrètes and Union Pragmatique etc. ...

Atelier Calder, Maison Max Ernst, Canal de Berry: the 320 km of the 19th century canal transformed into a soft mobility route will be used for contemporary art exhibitions in situ or in various industrial brownfields, notably in Bourges and Vierzon. A special participation is foreseen for Bourges Plus conurbation communes and Cher Department.

JACQUES TATI IN BERRY, THE BIRTH OF A FILMMAKER

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

CURATORS: RÄ DI MARTINO (IT), WANG BING (CN), WITH RMN - GRAND PALAIS IMMERSIF (FR)

Jacques Tati is one of the greatest filmmakers of our time. In 1947, he filmed *Jour de fête* in the countryside one hour from Bourges in the small village of Sainte Sève, with its inhabitants. The theme of the film, the story of a postman trying to Americanize and optimise the profitability of the organisation of his tours, like the entire work of Jacques Tati, follows the axes of the Bourges 2028 candidacy. It is a critique of dominant metropolisation, of rapid mobility without social interaction or with the landscape, of the operating methods of American liberalism spreading in Europe. Bourges 2028 asked the Italian artist Rà di Martino, and the Chinese filmmaker Wang Bing to prepare an exhibition Jacques Tati in Berry, The Birth of a Filmmaker translating from the archives available in the Region the modernity of the issues of his work on a European and global scale. A series of exclusive short films rehearsing the character of the postman from *Jour de fête* will have their world premiere. We will ask INSEAC (French National Centre for school artistic education) in Guingamp (partner city of the Matrix) an artistic and cultural education programme dedicated to schools and young audiences. The regional cinema agency Ciclic will deploy its micro-cinema bus to present various films by Jacques Tati, documentaries, short films in the villages and hamlets of Berry and the Centre-Val de Loire Region.

Partners: RMN Grand Palais Immersif, Centre Jacques Tati in Sainte Sève, Ciclic - regional agency for cinema, INSEAC.

THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD

CURATED BY FLORIANE FACCHINI (IT/CH), EMMANUEL PERRODIN (FR) AND ALIMENTATION GÉNÉRALE (FR)

At Bourges 2028 we do believe food is the first identity and audience development tool in an ECoC !

The history of territories is told through that of food. Its commercial exchanges, the sharing of culinary traditions, ways of doing things, in crafts or in agriculture have always contributed to the cross-enrichment of civilizations. At a time when our contemporary societies are questioning the carbon footprint of our food practices (excessive meat consumption, single-use packaging, commercial circulation of materials, food waste, intensive agriculture, deforestation, etc.), it appears essential to include this subject in Bourges 2028.

The Bourges 2028 programme dedicated to food will be structured around four axes:

1. A section dedicated to contemporary artistic creation:

Curated by Floriane Facchini (FR/IT), Emmanuel Perrodin (FR) and Alimentation Générale (FR). Floriane Facchini (FR/IT) is an artist linked to Matera ECoC 2019, who created *Ce que nous dit l'eau* (What water tells us) linked to the collective, citizen-based initiative of the Parliament of the Loire river. She will propose a performative, in situ and participatory project in several proposals, where the act of eating will allow one to become attached to a territory, to tell stories, to ingest them, to become one with them:

- Cooking and water landscape workshops with Céline Pelcé (culinary designer) to "make a table" differently by heading towards the rivers;
- Open-air rituals where participants imagine together a meal with local products and in connection with the water entity;
- Creation of a garum specific to the territory with residents, in collaboration with the fisherman Thierry Bouvet, creator of the Loire garum;
- Workshops for inventing topical dishes with locals, promoting links to water and riverine forests with botanist artist Thomas Ferrand, in conjunction with local restaurants who will be able to introduce this recipe to their menu;
- Workshops with local potters to design and produce a scenography and cooking or presentation elements for the dishes created...

"Bourges 2028 can become a marvellous artistic, philosophical, ecological and culinary laboratory, a training place for the times to come where new gestures of attachment, collective care and essential resilience can be experienced." Floriane Facchini



Emmanuel Perrodin (FR) (historian/cook/artist) will propose a project around the culinary heritage of the Centre-Val de Loire and in particular at the time of the Renaissance, at the crossroads between history, food and banquets.

At George Sand's table exhibition (provisional title)

Curated by Alimentation Générale (FR), an agency specialised in food, agriculture and gastronomy, led by Elisabeth Martin and Pierre Hivernat.

At George Sand's table will highlight the cooking notebooks of George Sand, the culinary heritage of Berry and women around:

- The promotion of staged/staged recipes;
- Reinterpretation of recipes with residents and local chefs;
- Invitation to women chefs and artisans for event meals;
- Inviting culinary female authors to debate ideas.

Partners: Carreau du Temple, BNF, Bondir.e, Campus des métiers et qualifications d'excellence Tours, Tivoli Initiatives, Villa Rabelais Tours.

2. A Section dedicated to debates and discussions

Alimentation Générale will develop for Bourges 2028 a cycle of meetings, conferences, debates of ideas around food by associating researchers, academics, historians, philosophers, doctors, artists, farmers, and taste workshops offered to all audiences.

Partners: agricultural sectors and chambers of agriculture, Tivoli Initiatives, Villa Rabelais Tours, regional producers, etc.

3. Food / Art / science section

Curated by Margaux Schwab (CH)

With the foodculture days (Vevey, Switzerland) Bourges 2028 will carry a programme of prospective reflection on innovative approaches in agriculture, design, taste education, technological advances around the world, which will define our food of tomorrow. We will also develop an educational and research programme around new food practices.

Partners: foodculture days Vevey (CH), Pro-Helvetia (CH), Cab Patagonia (CL), LABVERDE (BR), AIL (Artist In Lab) (CH), CRBA - Centre de Ressources de Botanique Appliquée, Villa Rabelais Tours, Reims School of Art and Design- higher education in culinary design training programme.

4. A label for local stakeholders

On the model of Oulu 2026 Arctic Food Lab, our food curation team jointly with our carbon commissioner will label proposals in the menu list of local restaurants based on low carbon and local production.

Partners: Campus des métiers et qualifications d'excellence Tours, Professional Baccalaureate in Hotel Trade and restaurants at Lycée Jacques Coeur, Tivoli Initiatives, Villa Rabelais Tours, Collectif des Mamans, l'Artisane, Agriculture Chamber, Oulu 2026 Arctic Food (FI).

INTERGENERATIONAL CANTEENS

A new kind of canteens will be offered to the schools of Bourges' conurbation, inspired by the model of the canteen of Saint-Laurent-sur-Cher - and with 100% vegetarian food to meet our goals on creating on a human(e) scale - whether humans or non-humans are concerned.

Lunchtime will become a time of sharing between children and elderly people in nursing homes or isolated people with artistic

interventions or activities to raise awareness of healthy eating. Once tested, this new concept will be offered to the cities of the Matrix.

Partners: City of Bourges, Bourges plus Conurbation, Academy of Orléans-Tours, Elderly residences of Bellevue in Bourges (600 beds).

SARKIS, CULTURAL INCUBATOR

A PROJECT BY HOU HANRU (CN/FR/IT)
WITH GRADUATED STUDENTS FROM EUROPEAN ART SCHOOLS

The proposal is turning what will be the newly renovated historical site of Hôtel Dieu into a cultural incubator for the younger generation. Sarkis, a Turkish-Armenian artist, is proposed to deploy his "Kriegsschatz" gathered from his experiences and memories of cultural and social transformation prompted by migration and confrontation-convergence between various spiritual, religious, and political traditions. Sarkis' work, incorporating various forms of art, represents the common concerns and aspirations for a more open and just Europe shared by generations living through various traumas. Sarkis has always been a committed teacher for younger generations of artists and has developed education platforms in most of his exhibitions to encourage and perpetuate the continuation of our common cause to defend a certain ideal of being European and being a world citizen. The proposal suggests that Hôtel Dieu should also be an incubator for the next generation of creators, and various workshops will be organised accordingly in the frame of the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri. Sarkis' intervention is proposed to prompt the birth of such a "lieu sacré" of our time.

Partners: Arter, Istanbul (TR), Kadist, San Francisco/Paris (FR/US), Floating University Berlin (D), Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (CN), Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome (IT), Dekoloniale Berlin (D).

GAIA-24. OPERA DEL MONDO

ROMAN GRYGORIV AND ILLIA RAZUMEIKO (UA)

Gaia-24. Opera del Mondo is a contemporary geohistorical opera.

The project is based on exploration of the results of destructive human activities, and particularly Russian invasion in Ukraine as part of the global ecological crises. The main goal of the project will be to develop new ways of reflecting and performing our knowledge about the wars in a wide historical and international context.

The title of the project has references to Gaia as a Greek Goddess representing earth. Number 24, connecting the year 2024 with the date of large-scale Russian invasion (24.02) as well as classical musical numerology (24 Preludes and Fugues by Bach, etc.). Opera del Mondo as a genre has its roots in Theater del Mondo - floating theatre by Aldo Rosso, presented 1980 during Venice Biennale. Thinking and reflecting on ongoing Ukrainian tragedy, speaking about missing villages and cities, wounded Ukrainian landscapes and polluted Ukrainian soil will be also a way to speak about Europe and European soil, inspired by Bruno Latour thinking: "I am interested in Europe not only as an institution, but also as Europe as a territory,

as a soil, as a turf, as a land, or, to borrow the German expression, as Heimat, with all the difficulties of that term.”

Place for filming process and research: Dniepr river and the bank of the former Kakhovka sea, Carpathian Mountains, ruined urban landscapes in Kharkiv, Zaporizhia urban landscapes.

Roman Grygoriv and Illia Razumeiko are an award-winning composers' duo from Ukraine. They have been working together as composers, stage directors and librettists in the field of contemporary opera and new music theatre since 2015, exploring the boundaries and borders of contemporary opera and music theatre in Ukraine and worldwide.

The Ukrainian refugee community from Bourges and Centre-Val de Loire will be integrated into this project.

Partners: Kyiv October Palace (UA), Lviv Zankovetska Theater (UA), Rotterdam O. Festival (NL), Opéra d'Avignon (FR).



Zaporizhia, Dniepr river after destroyed dam © Opera del Mondo

PRINTEMPS DE L'EUROPE

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

CURATOR: BORIS VEDEL (FR)

MUSIC MAKES EUROPE

Music is the most popular form of cultural consumption in Europe, with genres such as pop, jazz, metal, rock, and rap being powerful tools for communication and sharing.

The Music Make Europe (MME) system, supported by Bourges 2028, Printemps de Bourges, and the new European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, aims to unite and develop systems for identifying and disseminating young talents in Europe. Printemps de Bourges pilots the iNOUÏS, the most important French system for identifying young talents in current music, and proposes to bring together the main European actors of emergence through the MME initiative. Most events that identify creators of tomorrow have a national or regional influence and do not exist on a European scale, making it difficult for festivals such as Eurosonic, Reeperbahn, BIM, and The Great Escape to find European relays to develop. The same goes for Printemps de Bourges, whose influence is essentially national and not European.

The solution to promote reasoned and joint development is to increase the exposure of artists identified during music events. The MME system proposes simple actions to encourage artist mobility and highlight territories to boost economic activities in current music. Starting in 2024, three professional music festivals will be highlighted at the Printemps de Bourges, and young talents spotted by these festivals will be invited to perform. Young professionals from various European countries will also be invited to develop their activities in France and Europe, similar to the existing system in Bourges La Relève.

In total, at least 15 countries will be explored until 2028 and more than a hundred professionals will be invited to the festival, and we will make it sustainable. Music Makes Europe will also be a tool of European cultural soft power internationally by opening the system to a non-European country each year (South Korea, Nigeria, Mexico, United States, Lebanon, Australia, Egypt, etc).

The identification and support of young talents is a French know-how recognized worldwide since our country has been able to develop its musical scenes beyond its borders, the success of French electronic music is a perfect example with a successful combination of private and public interests. The objective of this new system aims to broaden this experience at the European level to allow more mobility for artists and professionals who make the music of tomorrow.

TRANSE*EUROPA CREATION

Printemps de Bourges is a festival for emerging artists in France that offers original creations outside of usual distribution patterns. It has partnered with the Avignon Festival and plans to give a European dimension to its artistic itinerancy by inviting European artists to create collaborative works in Bourges and broadening its association with other festivals. This collaborative and migratory combination will give unprecedented influence to current music creations in Europe. Transe Europa, a musical creation programme, aims to promote the best of European know-how by integrating artistic, technology, and humanity.

Furthermore, through musical creation, Transe Europa must enable the development of the technological creation capacities of which Europe is capable. Artificial intelligence, robotics, acoustics, accessibility for audiences in difficulty, our creative programme will aim to promote the best of European know-how by integrating artistic, technology and humanity. Over time, Transe Europe creations will take on more scope and can be considered over the long term. In 2028, a creation that will provide a better understanding of our European polar ecosystems will be offered to the public. The sound of Svalbard's glaciers will be set to music by electronic music artist Molécule through recordings and sounds broadcast live from the Norwegian archipelago.

HOTEL DIEU: RAP IS THE NEW POETRY

Rap, poetry and street art.

Rap music is most listened to by the younger generation but is often discredited in major cultural events. Rap conveys the tensions in our society as felt by young people, and is therefore an ideal tool for conveying the messages and values of Bourges 2028 to young people, but also in terms of conflict management to explain their issues and thoughts to other generations. Bringing together the new generation of European urban poets in the heart of Bourges 2028. Marseille 2013 was widely criticised for not giving its place to urban

arts and current music. In Bourges, we could not miss the current music most listened to by young people, rap. And we are putting them in the spotlight at the Hôtel Dieu! Hôtel Dieu and European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri will be dedicated a week per month to urban music and art, connected to outskirts of Bourges and partner cities in France and Europe.

Through words, music and photography, urban painting, bringing to life the emotions, feelings, joys, sorrows of a new generation within the centuries-year-old walls. Bring together through calls of European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri leading rappers and visual artists for collective writing and work sessions. The words of the poets come to life on the walls thanks to street artists. The exhibition can then tour the walls of regional, European heritage sites, decorated with additional works by local artists, schoolchildren, migrants and residents. Once a month we will use the 7 Light Nights venues to project street art and associated rap creations, live.

First Rap artists: Josman (FR, Vierzon), Kae Tempest (UK)

First Street artists: Jon One (FR), Aheneah (PT)

Partners: Nuits Botaniques (BE), Eurosonic (NL), Artmania (RO), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES), Yourope and ETEP European networks; Partner institutions of Le Printemps de Bourges in France: Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers (SACEM), Society for the collection and distribution of performers rights (SPEDIDAM), CNM Centre National de la Musique, Be Ur Self (hip hop association), Urb'annale Collective, Chemnitz 2025 (DE), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Katowice 2029 Candidate City.



ODYSSEY

A PROJECT BY JACQUES VINCEY (FR)

The Odyssey by Homer is a cornerstone of European culture and identity, with its legendary characters and stories deeply ingrained in our collective imagination. In this project, local artist Jacques Vincey, who was for 10 years director of the drama centre in Tours, and who is now an associated artist at Maison de la Culture de Bourges aims to bring this ancient epic to life using modern tools and sensibilities, creating a "sonic epic" accessible to all in five

languages and six countries of the Union (France, Italy, Czech Republic, Greece, Finland, Cyprus). The project will take the form of a podcast, a theatrical voice installation with renowned casting in each country, and live performance for main theatre festivals (Avignon, Montpellier and other major European festivals), featuring a diverse cast of actors and musicians. The French casting for the theatrical installation includes Isabelle Adjani, Jacques Bonnafé, Nicolas Bouchaud, Sharif Andoura.

The goal is to revisit our cultural heritage and activate the seeds of our civilization, while also adapting the epic for modern audiences and incorporating contemporary issues. The project is adaptable and can be presented in various locations, making it a fitting addition to Bourges 2028.

Partners: Ircam/Centre Pompidou for voice - binaural sound, Maison de la Culture de Bourges,, Maison Antoine Vitez, French Institutes in France, Italy, Germany, Greece, Finland, and Cyprus.

BAROQUE RENEWAL 2028

LEONARDO GARCIA ALARCON (AR) AND OMAR PORRAS (CO)
SUSTAINABLE-EEEMERGING CREATIVE EUROPE

As an emblematic figure in baroque and classical music, Leonardo Garcia Alarcon is regularly invited by major musical and operatic institutions, from the Paris Opera to the Zarzuela in Madrid, passing through the Aix-en-Provence Festival of Lyric Art and the Geneva Opera. In 2024, after an important renovation, he will take over the direction of the Cité Bleue Theatre in Geneva (CH), which aims to be a place for international artistic encounters with a particular focus on interdisciplinary exchanges between the Arts and Humanities.

The Maison de la Culture (MCB) will host a scenic and lyrical creation of Leonardo with Swiss-Colombian director Omar Porras, who founded Teatro Malandro in 1990 and has been directing the Kléber-Méleau Theatre in Lausanne since 2015. The MCB has a special loyalty to Porras and has co-produced most of his shows, which are enjoyed by the Bourges public. The project promises to be baroque in terms of musical repertoire and scenographic universe, as Porras and Leonardo lead the audience on the mystical and magical traces of South American myths.

Actions in support of young European musicians and ensembles in early music will also be designed on this occasion, around the issues of sustainability of artistic careers as part of the Sustainable-EEEmerging project. This large-scale cooperation has been selected for support from the Creative Europe programme. It is managed by the Ambronay Cultural Meeting Center of which Leonardo García Alarcón with Cappella Mediterranea is associated.

Partners: Maison de la Culture de Bourges, Conservatory of Bourges, Choeurs de Bourges, Cité Bleue Theatre (CH), Kléber-Méleau Theatre in Lausanne (CH), Choeur de Namur (BE), Sustainable-EEEmerging project: Ambronay Cultural Meeting Centre (FR), Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen (DE), Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (FI), the Athens Conservatoire (GH), Udruga Festival Kvarner (HR), Ghislierimusic (Pavia, IT), Riga Early Music Centre (LV), Joventuts Musicals Torroella de Montgrí (SP), Academia de Música de Espinho (PT), Progressione (Budapest, HU), The Green Room (FR), Towarzystwo Kulturalne FUGA (PL), Mezinárodní centrum slovanské hudby (Brno, CZ).

ANDRÉ MALRAUX, AN IMAGINARY MUSEUM

CURATORS: HOU HANRU (CN/FR/IT), PASCAL KEISER (BE), RMN GRAND PALAIS IMMERSIF TEAM (FR)

A major and accessible exhibition dedicated to young audiences will revive André Malraux's idea of the imaginary museum in a contemporary way. Malraux and his cultural policy are intimately linked to the city of Bourges through the creation of the first Maison de la Culture, with its immense political importance in the strategy of cultural decentralisation of France. Yet few tributes have been paid to André Malraux, to his revolutionary ideas, his writings on art, rediscovered by new publications in the early 2000s. Bourges 2028 will complement this with a major exhibition on Malraux's concepts of the imaginary museum, but taking a contemporary turn with the transition from print and photography to digital media, and to immersive Metaverse and NFT processes in the second instance.

Partners: André Malraux Foundation, Antre Peaux Art Centre, RMN Grand Palais Immersif, Heritage inventory department of the Centre-Val de Loire Region, City of Art and History department of the City of Bourges, Bourges libraries.

CONNECTED MICRO-FOLIES

CURATOR: EL QANTARA ASSOCIATION (FR), EPPGHV PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PARK AND GRANDE HALLE OF LA VILLETTE PARIS (FR)

The Micro-Folies network, as mentioned in our previous bid book is a programme of the French Ministry of Culture. Each Micro-Folie is a cultural centre including a digital museum presenting French and European museum collections. In addition to creating content for most of the Bourges 2028 exhibitions, allowing a dissemination of Bourges 2028 programme in 500 Micro-Folies and potentially 5 million remote visitors. To comply with the low-carbon ECoC, projects with live streaming will be reduced and stand alone projects without streaming will be favoured.

After the shortlisting, Micro-Folie of Bourges came to operation managed in the northern district by El Qantara association, originally an association promoting Arabic and Andalusian music. Micro-Folie of Bourges is a portable equipment allowing it to go to any school of the various districts and rural areas.

- The 3 Micro-Folies of Vierzon, Bourges and Nevers will be prototypes from 2025 to develop communities with a number of European Micro-Folies on the model of the Cafés Europa of Mons 2015. From daily exchanges, shared playlists, live cooking classes, citizen capacity building and artistic exchange programmes will be developed from community to community. Train tours by Trans Europ Culture are envisaged between participants of the Micro-Folies communities.
- We propose a new immersive space linked to our Euroverse in other European Micro-Folies for an immersive presentation of the Bourges 2028 exhibitions but we will favour the local experience of immersive museums with Le Centre/OCEL minivers.
- Bourges 2028 will offer live events that will be broadcasted in other French and European Micro-Folies with specific care to carbon footprint.

Partners: EPPGHV Public Establishment of the Park and Grande Halle of La Villette - Paris, Micro-Folies Bourges, City of Vierzon, City of Nevers, Micro-Folies all around France and Europe, Budweis 2028.



LISZT! FROM BOURGES TO EUROPE

CURATOR: JEAN-YVES CLÉMENT (FR)

“The artist's mission is to express, demonstrate, elevate and render divine all aspects of humanitarian feeling”, Liszt wrote in 1834, at the age of 23.

Throughout his career and after (at 35), he performed charity concerts in many places: prisons, asylums, even in nurseries. For him, beauty must be for everyone and in no case only address a bourgeois elite, to whom he was opposed, like most romantics, including George Sand. The writer was a privileged friend of Liszt, in Paris as in Nohant where the composer came twice, in 1837, in the company of Marie d'Agoult. He transcribed lieder from Schubert and certain Beethoven symphonies. In 1832, he resided in Bourges for a long-term stay; he admired the splendours of the city and performed there twice. Leaving Nohant in 1837, he briefly returned to the town of Jacques Cœur, where he looked at his house. This was the first stage of his European journey, his “period of glory», which lasted 10 years, during which he gave more than 1000 concerts...

This incomparable spirit and “movement” will be highlighted through a project intended for high school students as well as students of the Bourges and Châteauroux conservatories, the two capitals of Berry; Châteauroux where for 22 years has taken place every year, at the Toussaint, the international festival of Lisztomanias, entirely dedicated to multiple facets by Liszt. A demonstration whose idea Liszt himself had conceived with the complicity of George Sand in 1844, and which Jean-Yves Clément will produce in 2002. The aim is to create a “Liszt itinerary” from Paris, his home port, to Budapest, capital of his native country, passing through Bourges, Châteauroux, Nohant as well as Weimar, which constituted the centre of Liszt's influence from 1848. Readings, events and concerts will punctuate this “pilgrimage” in the spirit of the incomparable traveller and “broadcaster” that was Liszt.

Partners: Liszt Cultural centre in Paris, Conservatory of Bourges, Châteauroux (FR), Weimar (DE), Lisztomania Festival, Hungary Ministry of Culture (HR).

EUROPEAN POCKET THEATRE

A PROJECT LED BY LELA COMPANY (BOURGES)

Within the framework of the European City of Artists - Melina Mercuri, one of our flagship projects, the company from Vierzon close to Bourges, Lela is taking over the Jacques Cœur Theatre in Bourges and transforming it into a European authors' house.

Each year 3 contemporary theatre authors (1 French, 1 European with his translator, 1 French-speaking) are welcomed for one-week residencies contributing to the creation of sound work around their text which has not yet been presented on stage.

For a week, the author, accompanied by a creative team, works on putting her/his text into voice.

At the end of the residency, the public is invited to a theatrical sound performance born from this work, which allows the discovery of a new text, a language but also a form of voice performance enhanced by sound creation. The evening continues with musical time and readings of contemporary texts by their authors.

At the same time, mediation sessions around the discovery of sound creation and sound professions will be offered to school groups, as well as internships with amateur theatre groups around contemporary texts.

Project leader: Cie Lela (Lola Molina and Lelio Plotton).

Partners: CMN-Cité Internationale de la langue française de Villers-Cotteret, La Chartreuse National Centre for Performance Writing in Villeneuve-lez-Avignon, Noiriac Abbey, Antre Peaux Bourges, ENSA Bourges, Gare au Théâtre Vitry-sur-Seine, Les Francophonies en Limousin, Scène O Centre, Open Theatre, Longwave Festival in Brest, Ligue de l'enseignement 18, Maison Maria Casarès, John Smith Cultural Meeting Center (BJ).

DUKE JEAN DE BERRY, A EUROPEAN HERITAGE

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

This programme brings together a series of projects allowing the inhabitants of Bourges and Bourges Plus conurbation to reappropriate the major works resulting from the enlightened patronage of the Duke of Berry presented in the largest international museums, and to reassociate them with several major works present in the collections of Bourges' museums.

LEARNING TO SEE: LES HEURES

CURATORS: ESTELLE ZHONG MENGUAL (FR) AND DAVID MOINARD (FR)

A first international exhibition based jointly on the Très Riches Heures of the Duke of Berry (or The Very Rich Hours, Château de Chantilly), the Très Belles Heures (or The Very Beautiful Hours, Royal Library of Brussels) and the Belles Heures (or the Beautiful Hours, Metropolitan New York) is entrusted to Estelle Zhong Mengual and David Moinard.

What if living better on earth also meant living better in time? Through an environmental art-historical reinterpretation of the calendar in the Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry, this exhibition invites us to imagine a Book of Hours for today: what images can we use to re-inscribe ourselves in earthly time, despite the proliferation and hostility of modern times? How can we re-establish a sense of belonging to the seasons, in other words, to the temporality of life

that we share with the non-human living world? The Very Rich Hours calendar will act as a guide, with its distinctive way of representing each month as a distinct and specific form of relationship with the environment, animals and plants. The exhibition will thus run throughout the year, changing form and content with each season. This jewel in the crown of art history will be linked to a selection of works that could make up our Very Rich Hours, the ones we need today to reinvent our relationship with the living world.

Estelle Zhong Mengual (FR) is an art historian. Normalian and holder of a doctorate from Sciences Po Paris, she teaches in the Master of Experimentation in Art and Politics (SPEAP), created by Bruno Latour at Sciences Po Paris.

Her research focuses on the relationships that art, past and present, maintains with the living world. She works in particular on the development of an environmental history of art, which proposes a new regime of attention to the representation of life in art, based on the tools of the most contemporary environmental humanities and natural sciences. She is the author of numerous books, including Learning to See. The Point of View of the Living (Actes Sud, 2021).

Partners: Musée de Chantilly, Royal Library Brussels (BE), Metropolitan New York (US), Le Louvre, Musées de Bourges, Bourges libraries, Cultures et bibliothèques pour tous Bourges, Musée des Beaux Arts in Orléans and Tours, City of Avignon.



Bourges 2028:
What if living better on
Earth also meant living
better in time ?

A QUANTUM OF MOURNING

CURATOR: FLORENCE MARGO-SCHWOEBEL (FR)
SEE THE TOMB OF JEAN DE BERRY THROUGH NEW TEARS

This exhibition will explore the multiple nature of tears as an expression of emotion or as an open door to transcendental and collective consciousness. The statues of Mourners from the tomb of the Duke of Berry, brought together in an exceptional way, will evolve in their meaning. Seeing the tomb of Jean de Berry through new tears in the perspective of ancient, mediaeval and contemporary works from major European collections, whose iconography of crying or distress questions the relationship to the eternity or the ephemeral, the human condition and inscription in the world. In addition to the relationship with death, one of the axes will be particularly devoted to the notion of 'solastalgia' as a source of artistic expression and collective action, facing the ephemerality of life and the ecological emergency. A multidisciplinary scientific and artistic programme will be offered to echo this exhibition in European places connected to the biography of the Duke of Berry (London, Bohemia, Arragon, etc.) and on the route of his last journey, in the places of dispersion of his remains, from Paris to Bourges. **Florence Margo-Schwoebel** is director of the Bourges Museums.

Project leader: Museums of Bourges.

Partners: Le Louvre, Centre Pompidou Paris, Orsay Museum, Courtauld Institute London (UK), National Museum of Scotland Edinburgh (UK), Munch Museet (NO), Fine Arts Museums of Dijon, Lille, Tours, Centre-Val de Loire Museums Association.

Partners (tbc): Metropolitan Museum of Art (US), Guggenheim Bilbao (SP), Cluny Museum, Cité de l'architecture, MNAM, Rodin Museum, Custodia Foundation.

SAINTE CHAPELLE - EUROVERSE AND MINIVERSE EXHIBITION

A PROJECT BY OCEL COMPANY AND LE CENTRE ART CENTER - VIERZON (FR)

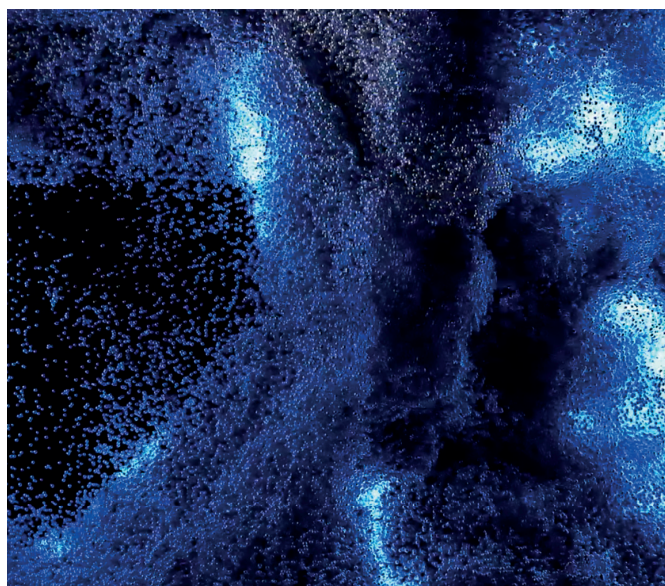
This project reconstructs Bourges' Sainte Chapelle that was destroyed in 1775 as an immersive digital space – an exceptional monument completed in 1397, modelled on the Sainte Chapelle of Paris. It housed, among other treasures, the tomb of Jean de Berry with the 40 exceptional sculptures of mourners. Using period documents, Bourges 2028 digitally reconstructs the building in all its magnificence and splendour, with the local unicorn IT company Le Centre / OCEL spillover of local IT unicorn company Ledger. The exhibition will present, in an original immersive scenography, The Beautiful Hours of the Duke of Berry, The Very Beautiful Hours and The Very Rich Hours digitised with a perspective of their historical value in the history of European art. Through Euroverse, a European Metaverse channel by Le Centre/OCEL, remote audiences will have access to the exhibition. Whereas the Miniverse gives access to the entire immersive exhibition on the physical site of the Sainte-Chapelle, non-digital audiences will find support experiencing the Miniverse. All of the digital corpus will be stored and backed up on the Centre-Val de Loire regional data centre, and a proposal to save this content over time will be put forward in partnership with the services of the Universities of Tours and Orléans and INSA engineering school in Bourges.

Partners: Le Centre/OCEL, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Regional Centre-Val de Loire data centre, University of Orléans, University of Tours, INSA engineering school Bourges, Musée Condé Chantilly, Royal Library, Brussels (BE), Getty Center, Los Angeles (US), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (US), Museo Civico de Arte, Turin (IT).

EUROPEAN LIGHT NIGHTS

In 2027, 2028 and 2029, Bourges 2028 will turn the Nuits Lumière into an expanded European Light Nights event. We plan to use the projection infrastructure available all year round, and will propose, via calls for projects from the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri and the programme Rap is the New Poetry (Printemps de l'Europe), original visual and sound creations by European artists on the theme of Territories of the Future. The Nuits Lumières were initiated in Bourges in 2000 and take place annually from July to September. They consist of 7 stations at the city's heritage sites, where projections on the heritage facades tell the story of the city. Before Covid the festival attracted 200,000 spectators, mainly families and transgenerational audiences. In 2022, Bourges 2028 proposed creations by contemporary Serbian artist Dejean Stojkov and Lithuanian artist Maksimilianas Prishka, in homage to Novi Sad 2022 and Kaunas 2022, presenting respectively the resilience of the Serbian people, and the requests integrating the word "liberty" in the year of Lithuania's entry into the Union in 2004. These 2 projects made an impression on the Bourges audience because of their content and the different vision these artists gave of Europe. We will also develop a series of interactive online video games projected in real time onto the facades of heritage buildings that can be played collaboratively from players all over the world.

Partners: City of Bourges, CNC, Antre Peaux Art Centre, Printemps de Bourges, CICLIC Regional Audiovisual Agency, Magellis Cluster Angoulême, Comic strip festival Angoulême, City of Angoulême, City of Vierzon, Trecin 2026.



Light Nights 2022 in Bourges : original creations by lithuanian artist Maximilianas Oprishka.

RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW!

Right here right now! Is about cultural rights that we have not seen developed enough to say it is inclusive for all. Neither in the context of French nor of European society in fragmentation. Yes, we talk about accessibility but we are going a huge step further. Whether it is youth, the homeless, drop-outs, minorities, eco-feminism, the digital challenge and digital inclusion, the elderly, people in hospitals, people with mental issues or isolated.

DEPARTURE CLASS

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

A PROJECT BY PERRINE FOVEZ AND BRUNO LAJARA (FR)

Social transformation through culture at the heart of the ECoC

The number of young people dropping out following the covid crisis affects all European and French territories. The younger generation has paid a heavy price for this crisis and today finds itself the generation in the greatest situation of fragility and danger. Departure Class is a national network of four centres offering individualised programmes of social transformation for young people aged 17 to 26 who have dropped out of school and/or society, their family, who sometimes reject institutions and the State, face problems of accommodation. Through artistic workshops (writing, theatre, music, singing, dance), they are empowered to write their own narratives, re-develop personal and collective work objectives. They also develop cultural mediation activities with local residents. At the end of this 7-month cycle, they present a collective show in front of an audience, and 80% have found a positive outcome in terms of personal life project, employment (in any field of activity) and/or housing since 2015.

Bourges 2028 will develop 2 Departure Classes per year from 2026 to 2028 affecting around a hundred local young people in the dynamic framework of an ECoC: exchanges between the 5 French departure classes including those of Avignon and Béthune cities of the matrix, mixed workshops with other European initiatives and the MAI (Muholi Art Institute) will strengthen the inclusion and dynamics of trainees called "travellers", but also of the teams supervising them.

Each "traveller" will be offered a 2-month working experience in the Bourges 2028 team, and will be offered volunteering actions. In total 200 young people off the road will be embarked in the dynamics.

Homeless audience

As an extension of this programme, we will develop with the young people involved a specific programme for the homeless with the Abbé Pierre Foundation and their local partners. Young people in training in Departure Class will be mediators for homeless people.

This inclusive programme will be based on the model of the "C'est pas du luxe" Festival, biennial in Avignon in 2026 and 2028 which offers projects open to the homeless and the normal public, an extension of which will be planned in Bourges as part of Bourges 2028 with the Abbé Pierre Foundation.

Project leaders: Departure Classes Network, L'Envol Béthune, La Manufacture Festival des Compétences Avignon, City of Béthune, Bourges 2028, Muholi Art Institute (ZAF).

Partners: El Qantara association, Broumov 2028 (CZ), Burgos 2031 (ES), ANCT, Ministère du Travail, Fondation Abbé Pierre, Imanis and Relais 18 associations for homeless in Cher Department.



ZANELE MUHOLI

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

VISUAL ACTIVIST

ZANELE MUHOLI (ZAF)

Zanele Muholi, internationally renowned South African photographer and activist, whose work documents the lives of the black LGBTQIA+ community and individuals who constitute it. Zanele Muholi, who defines herself as a "visual activist", uses the camera as a tool against injustice.

Zanele Muholi's photographs encourage us to question preconceived ideas. They create a new lexicon of positive images for under- and misrepresented communities to promote mutual respect. Very involved in the lives of black LGBTQIA+ people, Muholi carries out activist photographic work. In her individual and collective portraits, the artist seeks to make queer and racialised people visible, while questioning the stereotypes and dominant representations associated with them. Muholi's photographs show the diversity and singularity of the members of the community, highlighting their courage and their dignity in the face of multiple discriminations.

For Bourges 2028, Zanele will present a 3200 sqm exhibition on a themed selection of her works of the next years 2024-2027.

Partners: Muholi Art Institute, Cape Town, Johannesburg (ZAF), Galerie Carole Kvasnevski - Paris (FR).

MAI (MUHOLI ART INSTITUTE) IN BOURGES

ZANELE MUHOLI (ZAF), STUDENTS OF MAI (ZAF) AND BOURGES CITIZENS/MINORITIES

With a team of creative minds from different parts of South Africa, Zanele Muholi gave birth in 2021 to the Muholi Art Institute, also known as MAI. This is a unique space for critical and creative intellectual and cultural intervention — a community, supporting young black artists issued from minorities.

Establishing MAI came with many challenges and it is in these challenges they've seen the importance of collaborating across disciplines. At the launch of MAI, the artist invited fellow creatives, such as Nomonde Mbusi (actor), Napo Masheane (poet and director), Charmaine Carrol (photographer) and Indlovukazi Mapule (author), to speak to young artists and encourage them to tell their stories, irrespective of the circumstances in which they find themselves.

This project will create a moment of exchange between the singularities of minorities in South Africa and Europe, in the context of peripheral towns and rural areas and with our Departure Class programme.

After Philadelphia and San Francisco, the MAI students will develop for four weeks mixed workshops with Bourges residents and minorities in various fields: crafts, ceramics, visual arts, music, performance, poetry. For example the MAI Students will be able to work with the Rhyzome collective based in Centre-Val de Loire region and present a selection of design objects conceived with them, the result of a meeting between artistic creation and excellent craftsmanship. The output will be a joint exhibition and performance programme across disciplines in Maison de la Culture de Bourges, Antre Peaux art centre, pioneer in France for such societal challenges and the Parvis des métiers, a gallery of craftsman's knowledge. Bourges 2028 wishes to develop a structural partnership with the MAI in order to integrate the approach and values of MAI into the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri to create a global ecosystem allowing acceptance and visibility for minorities in art.

Partners: Muholi Art Institute, Cape Town, Johannesburg (ZAF), Collectif Rhyzome Centre-Val de Loire region, Parvis des métiers Bourges, Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence Tours.

SYMBIOCENE, JOURNEY TO THE FUTURE

📍 FLAGSHIPPROJECT

A PROJECT BY SANDRINE SALZARD AND SEBASTIEN MINCHIN (FR)

Sandrine Salzard graduated from the ENSA, art school of Bourges. She considers herself an activist, works in the audiovisual field in France and in the US, and in music performance.

Sébastien Minchin, director of the Natural History Museum of Bourges, develops a programme focused on nature, the implementation of concrete actions in the evolution of construction standards for the protection of bats or the demineralisation of soils. He was at the basis of developments in French law for the restitution of collection items from human remains to their countries of origin. By creating new imaginations, this project proposes a paradigm

shift from the Anthropocene to the Symbiocene era, neologism from Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht, where humans live in harmony with non-humans and nature, with a reduced footprint. Symbiocene offers us to meet indigenous people, listen to them and hear the connection with nature they kept and that we have lost. It is part of the desire to make the city of Bourges and its surrounding territory a centre of inspiration, creativity and reflection for a sustainable city, inspiring for other cities of similar human size. The Symbiocene project combines arts, sciences, history and ancestral knowledge from indigenous peoples.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS AND GUESTS

Daiara Hori (from the Tucano People based in Amazonia, BR), Ander Sunna (from the Sami people, SE), Pauliina Feodoroff (from the Sami people, FI), Maret Anne Sara, (from the Sami people, NO), Sofia Jannok (from the Sami people, SE), Amanda Kernell (from the Sami people, SE), George Nuku (from the Maori people, NZ), Hugo Araujo (BE/MX/CO), Jimmy Nelson (UK), Manish Arora (IN), Saya Woolfalk (LP/US), Sarah Valente (FR), Jeremy Shaw (CA/DE), Flore-Aël Surun (FR), Julein Comte Gaz (AU/FR), Rebecca Bournigault (FR), Oliver Beer (UK), Mélanie Bonajo (NL), Julien Salaud (FR), Prune Nourry (FR/US), Mathilde Rance (FR), Zadie Xa (CA/KR), Iwalja Klinke (DE), Jesse Jones (IR).

Ambassadors of indigenous peoples: Mundiya Kepanga (PNG), Vera Sazina (RU), Sung Mi park (KR), Snellgrove (Fishing lake First Nation, US), Mickaela (MX), Ayangat (MN), Raphael (CL), Puyanawa (Amazonia, BR), Assossa (GA), Cheryl Angel (Lakota Sioux, US), Matza Tlaloc (MX), Jipi Japa (EC), Pedro de Las Rosas (VE), Bhola, Nath Bantsola (NP), Elima Ngando (CG), Roy Barnes (first nation, CA), Pegas (CON).

This project is broken down into several parts:

Symbiocene Kids first: The Superheroes of the Symbiocene, kids project

- **Mother Earth exhibition**
This exhibition will offer an educational and fun experience with interactive installations, games, scientific experiments and practical workshops, meetings with experts and representatives of root peoples, to raise children's awareness of ecological issues and prepare them for their role as ambassadors of the defence of the rights of nature.
- **School time in nature**
An educational component will be planned in immersion in nature, with workshops, observation time and study of living things led by the Natural History Museum.

Symbiocene – the exhibition: the Collection of the Invisibles

This exhibition will explore the unseen aspects of nature through the perspectives of indigenous peoples, scientists, quantum physics, insects and microorganisms. It reveals the complex and often misunderstood interactions between the different species and ecosystems, because they are invisible to the naked eye, knowledge of which is essential if we want to reflect on the means of preserving the diversity of species.

Métro Europa Routes

Remarkable Trees Route: a poetic stroll through the heart of the territory's tree heritage, transforming into an immersive circuit in a night version thanks to mapping.

Dark Nights Route to meet bats and their places of life in the region.

Symbiotic Huts Circuit in the Berruyers marshes in search of these shelters welcoming biodiversity and allowing the natural fight against harmful insects.

Project leader: Natural History Museum of Bourges.

Partners: Quai Branly Museum Paris, la fabrique narrative, Musée de l'Homme Paris, Wild legal, CRHIM Lausanne (CH), Lausanne University (CH), Natural History Museums of Orléans and Tours.



SOUNDING THE CERAMICS

TAREK ATOUI (LB) CURATED BY HOU HANRU (CN/IT/FR)

Tarek Atoui is one of the most outstanding artists in the global art scene today, creating installations and performances resorting to sounds, music, instruments made of various materials. Originally from Beirut and now living in Paris and working internationally, Atoui has developed a rich body of works inventively blending music and sound cultures across the world, especially of Arabic heritage, and contemporary experimental languages of visual arts, systematically incorporating performances in collaboration with local communities. Pottery and ceramics, in his long trajectories traversing the globe, have been used by him as an increasingly important material to create new instruments and installations. The Musée de la céramique in La Borne, the earthenware Museum in Nevers and the Ceramics festival in Châteaurooux as the central meeting points of the region's crafts legacy will be transformed by Tarek Atoui into an experimental base of creation, exhibition and exchange, an ideal site for the artist to develop further his ambitious work. A commission for the artist to create site-specific projects, with the participation of the local communities, especially youths, will be an opportunity to expand the influence of the long tradition of ceramic and earthenware creation of the region, helping to put the village on the European and global cultural maps.

At the same time an exhibition will show the evolution of techniques illustrated by a selection of ceramics covering a period ranging from the Neolithic to the present day, with a special section dedicated to the industrial production of the internationally renowned Pillivuyt company (one of the oldest porcelain brand established in Berry). A ceramics route in the central Loire Valley will be proposed as a heritage project linked to this exhibition.

Cultural and Artistic Programme

Partners: Vitamin Creative Centre, Guangzhou (CH), Centre de la céramique La Borne, Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la faïence Nevers, Capazza Gallery, Archeology department of the City of Bourges, Pôle de la porcelaine in Mehun-sur-Yèvre, Pillivuyt company, Chambre des métiers d'excellence Tours, Parvis des métiers Bourges, City of Châteaurooux, City of Nevers.

AWAKING THE SILENCED...

SUSAN PHILIPSZ (UK/DE)

Susan Philipsz intervenes in spiritual sites across the region of Bourges • Proposed by Hou Hanru

Originally from Scotland and based in Berlin, Susan Philipsz has developed a remarkable career as a master of sound installations for the last two decades across Europe and beyond. Awarded the Turner Prize in 2010, she explores in depth hidden and silenced traces of memorable events related to human traumas and violence at the sites. Through collaborations with musicians, using site-specifically conceived sound devices, Philipsz creates highly poetic and emotional installations that reveal the dramatic memories of the events that transcend the conventional significances of the sites, in order to bring the audiences into new spiritual travels. Bourges and its surrounding region, with historical sites such as the Cathedrals in Bourges and Chartres, the Monastery in Noirlac and Saint-Étienne de Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre, among others, will provide ideal sites for the artist to develop further her research and creation, while sharing with the public her engagement and imagination of the history of this particular region at the geographic and cultural heart of Europe.

ON THE SPECTRUM

Bourges 2028 is partnering with La Châtaigneraie, a reception structure for young adults with disabilities, to provide care for people with autism. The establishment focuses on art and nature and works with the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art (ENSA) of Bourges to train young graduates in cultural mediation. European artists and mediators will be invited through European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri to reside at La Châtaigneraie for 2-3 months from 2024, creating eco-sustainable works integrated into the ecosystem and working with young adults on the spectrum.

Bourges 2028 also plans to set up a TV programme and monthly magazine with Papotin (newspaper with journalists on the spectrum) and Châtaigneraie, featuring interviews with artists and personalities from the title year, with a special editorial committee formed with young people from La Châtaigneraie, journalists from Papotin, and young Europeans.

Project leaders: Bourges 2028, La Châtaigneraie, Le Papotin.

Confirmed partners: ENSA (National School of Arts) in Bourges, Antre Peaux, Tartu 2024 (EE).

MUSIC! FOR SANITY

The Paris Mozart Orchestra and the George Sand Psychiatric Hospital Centre have chosen to join forces to imagine a unique project of general interest, an innovative place, open and accessible to all, a laboratory of ideas at the crossroads of the challenges of mental health and artistic creation. Within an 800 sqm 19th-century building located at the very heart of the Hospital Centre, this third place will pay particular attention to the mental health of artists, particularly weakened following the COVID crisis.

Co-built with a collective of partners, this “mental health and culture” third place aims to be a place of residence, creation, research and training; a laboratory of ideas and innovation; a living space to promote social ties, encounters - intergenerational, between patients of the Hospital Centre and residents, between artists, residents and patients, etc.) and the sharing of knowledge; a place of national, European and international influence.

The renovation of the building, planned for 2026, will be carried out in partnership with Les Sismo (to be confirmed) - a humanistic, committed and multidisciplinary collective adept at design with care, a creative design method based on uses and taking into account individual and societal and environmental fragilities. The renovation of this building is envisaged as a real “act of care” for the hospital and the Berruyer territory as a whole, with the active participation of all the stakeholders concerned.

The opening of the space is planned for 2026, but from 2024 a regular cultural programme of concerts, debates and workshops will bring the building to life in parallel with its architectural renovation. As such, the PMO plans to collaborate with the Chair of Philosophy at the Hospital headed by the philosopher Cynthia Fleury.

Project leaders: Paris Mozart Orchestra, George Sand psychiatric hospital in Bourges and Department of Cher.

Confirmed partners: Tartu 2024 (EE).

YOUNG PROGRAMMERS ON THE MOVE

NOMADIC STAGE FOR A YOUNG AUDIENCE ON A EUROPEAN SCALE

Scène O Centre, regional performing arts network

Bourges 2028 wishes to bring together an inter-European community of young non-professional show programmers from 2026 on, tasked with putting together a programme of plays for young audiences broadcasted on a European scale.

Device dedicated to the concrete expression of cultural rights, promoting intercultural dialogue, the meeting between young Europeans and their empowerment, this project also contributes to the structuring of the network of live performances for young people at the European level.

The project is aimed at young Europeans aged 15 to 18, living in rural areas in the partner cities of Bourges 2028, and who wish to practise the profession of live performance programmer. Built in several stages, from 2026 to 2028, it offers complete support for participants (artistic practice workshops, training in the analysis and criticism of shows, public speaking training) and allows

them to attend around 20 performances of shows in 5 European festivals. During inter-group meetings, the young programmers will be able to discuss with their counterparts from other countries, in order to design together a European programme of shows for young audiences. The shows thus selected will benefit from aid for distribution on a European scale among the partners of Bourges 2028. They will also be presented as part of a festival dedicated to young people to be held in Bourges in 2028.

Project leader: Scène O Centre, network which brings together a wide diversity of cultural actors in the performing arts from the Centre-Val de Loire Region.

Partners: Assitej international, Ligue de l'enseignement 18, Cemea Avignon, City of Avignon, Oulu 2026 (FI), Oulu Theatre Festival for young audiences (FI), Evora 2027 (PT), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Burgos 2031 (ES) and other partners among the cities of the Matrix network tbc.

EUROPEAN QUEER CABARET

COMPAGNIE MARTEAU (BOURGES)

The European Queer Cabaret is a Bourges 2028 project in partnership with Compagnie Marteau (burlesque cabaret in Bourges) and the Bourges LGBTQIA+ Centre which allows us to reflect on how we approach LGBTQIA+ issues in a rural area and a medium-sized town. The project aims to promote gender equality through a cultural and artistic event. Burlesque Stripping is the art of performing undressing while advocating self-acceptance and the valorization of differences while fighting against the injunctions and standards imposed on bodies and genders. This event will allow the uninformed to link the discipline and its feminist and inclusive values. In addition to the norms imposed on bodies, there is the question of norms imposed on genders with the reception of a mixed audience and the choice to open up to “Queerlesque” (dragqueen, dragking, boylesque, etc.) in resonance with rights activism. The Cabaret will offer workshops in Bourges but also in the Cher Department with European artists for co-creation residencies with the participants and restitution in the form of a show on the occasion of March 8 (International Women’s Rights Day) and Pride Month. Bourges 2028 will provide the company with low-carbon means of transport so that they can perform shows and workshops in rural areas and Bourges.

Project leaders: Compagnie Marteau, LGBTQIA+ Centre in Bourges, Bourges 2028.

Confirmed partners: Antre Peaux, Maison de la Culture, Trencin 2026 (SK), Oulu 2026 (FI), Katowice 2029 (PL).

OUR (EUROPEAN) STORIES

CICLIC, CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE

Our (European) Stories aims to explore the history of European, Asian, and North African immigration in the Cher region, specifically linked to industrialisation. The project will use archival documents and collaborate with Ciclic, a regional agency, to create fictional characters to narrate the immigration history of Cher and the Centre-Val de Loire region. Workshops and educational programmes will be conducted in schools and with migrant support associations to engage the community. The project also responds

to recent immigration discussions, such as the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights' report on racism and xenophobia in France. The fictional narratives will be presented in various formats, including short films, short stories, and plays, and will culminate in 2028 with the translation of these characters and their stories. The project will also collaborate with My European Story, a programme by Bodø 2024, to share stories and experiences across borders.

Partners: Ciclic, regional audiovisual agency, Bodø 2024 (NO), Esch 2022 (LU)
Bourges cultural associations: Collectif des mamans, Filles et fils de harkis, Centraider, Le Cercle (Rosières), Universities of Orléans and Tours, Accueil et Promotion, El Qantara, Ligue de l'Enseignement 18.

PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMME ASSOCIATED WITH OUR (EUROPEAN) STORIES

MIGRATIONS IN CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE CHRISTODOULOS PANAYIOTOU (CY)

Archaeologist and visual artist Christodoulos will explore the hidden histories of Centre-Val de Loire and migration relationships through research and archival work for Bourges 2028. The project will include a conference and exhibition, with The Island Club as a partner. Christodoulos' work encompasses various mediums and focuses on uncovering hidden narratives in history, often using Cyprus and Greece as a starting point. He has participated in major international events such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta 13.

SOMETHING STRANGE IS HAPPENING CHRISTOPHE HALEB (LB)

Christophe Haleb works with young people in France and around the world to create films and narratives that explore themes such as urban development and the social realities of young people. For Bourges 2028, he will be creating an installation of mobile images and stories in European border zones, focusing on the capacity of young people to co-create inclusive versions of being in the world. The project will involve young people from various cities in France and Europe.

MISSING WOMEN

Much current research shows the invisibility of women (and particularly female composers) throughout the history of music: harpsichordist and musicologist Claire Bodin took up the subject by creating "Présences Compositrices" and the digital portal "Ask Clara". Cellist Héloïse Luzzati created "Elles Creative Women" and "La Boîte à pépites", while singer Flore Benguigui of the pop group L'Impératrice launched a podcast "Cherchez la femme" dedicated to the music industry. This major exhibition aims to highlight European female composers from the 9th to the 21st century, from Élizabéth Jacquet de La Guerre (FR, 17th-18th centuries) to Kaija Saariaho (FI, 21st century), from Francesca Caccini (IT, 16th-17th century), centuries to Olga Neuwirth (AT, 21st century), from Hildegard von Bingen (D, 12th century) to Jacqueline Fontyn (BE, 21st century), from Saint Cassiana of Constantinople (9th century) to Violeta Dinescu (RO, 21st century) in passing through current composers of electronic music, jazz or film scores...

In classical music, a few seasons ago only 1% of works by female composers were programmed in European institutional concerts. By choosing to dedicate an exhibition to European female composers, we affirm the interest, value, the richness of a little-known repertoire that we wish to highlight and to which we want to do justice. We also want to deconstruct 2 stubborn presuppositions: "they do not exist or are few in number" and "their works are of mediocre quality", and make obsolete the paradox between the rarity of female composers within the programmes and the very great interest of their works.

Faced with centuries of invisibility, there is an urgency to act, and "on the ground" action will allow not only awareness but the discovery and presentation of thousands of works.

In parallel with the exhibition, the PMO will devote a large part of its 2028 programme in Bourges to female composers.

Project leaders: Paris Mozart Orchestra.

Confirmed partners: Skopje 2028 (MK), Budweis 2028, WomenPedia (CZ), Katowice 2029 (PL).

GEORGE SAND

A FERTILE LAND FOR TOMORROW

CURATOR: EVELYNE JOUANNO (FR) WITH ANTRE PEaux ART CENTRE (BOURGES)

The project will focus on contemporary attitudes and practices, including feminine identity, nature, ancestral knowledge transmission, and modern witchcraft. The inaugural exhibition, Guardians of Bridges and Passages, will explore modern witchcraft and eco-feminism, focusing on healing, ecology, and resistance. The exhibition will also explore the role of witchcraft in contemporary culture and its resurgence, while fostering connections with Berry's traditions and ancestral knowledge. Experts will lead conferences, workshops, and discussions, allowing participants to explore the historical and cultural contexts of magical and alternative practices. The project aims to build bridges with local communities and encourages active participation.

Some of the art works considered for the exhibitions by these artists:

Marina Abramović (RS), Madison Bycroft (AU), Marion Laval-Jeantet (FR) / Object Oriented Art, Ana Mendieta, Shen Yuan (CN/FR), Buhlebezwe Siwani (ZA), Tschabalala Self (US), Tabita Rezaire (DK/FR) and local artists

An important parallel programme entitled "Les maîtres sonneurs" (based on a book by George Sand) will be organised in the form of "vigils" inspired by a rural tradition. These festive evenings will combine readings and staging of popular stories from Europe and Berry. They will be accompanied by culinary dishes prepared by regional chefs, with an emphasis on local know-how and local products. The objective of these vigils will be to revisit and promote the culture of the countryside, by highlighting the environmentally friendly practices and the social values associated with them, while targeting the issues of sustainable development.

Partners: Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence Tours, Tivoli Initiatives Bourges.

FROM THE RIVER

CURATOR: EVA BAROIS DE CAEVEL (FR), WITH ANTRE PEAUX ART CENTRE (BOURGES)
GEORGE SAND THROUGH THE PRISM OF HYDROFEMINISM

The figure of George Sand, particularly with regard to her relationship with the Indre river and what we will therefore call her “writing of water” features prominently in this project. It consists of an exhibition, discussions, workshops, performances, and music around the “mysteries of water”, capable of making links between recent reflections on hydro-feminism, and in particular the way in which it nourishes contemporary artistic practices. Whether sometimes perceived as a symbol of life, regeneration or associated with its reverse side, death and confinement, or even as a reflection of the unconscious, water is a recurring theme in Sand’s work.

The hydro-feminist approach gives us a chance to reread the thinking, drawing or writing of George Sand with a less binary, more fluid look and in dialogue with contemporary artistic practices. It will also help to consider the links between her feminist commitment and her activism against deforestation, the exhaustion of resources and the blind quest for profit.

Project leader: Eva Barois de Caeval (FR).

Partners: Antre Peaux, ENSA, Bourges libraries.

THE GEORGE SAND PRIZE

CURATOR: EVA BAROIS DE CAEVEL (FR), WITH ANTRE PEAUX ART CENTRE (BOURGES)
GEORGE SAND THROUGH THE PRISM OF HYDROFEMINISM

In the dynamics of Bourges 2028, a George Sand Prize will be awarded annually to a work of a European woman (EU and wider Europe) that reflects the work of George Sand, who contributed to shaping 19th-century European culture and literature. The prize will be awarded to a work that focuses on women’s emancipation, social integration, or is specifically rooted in the territory. The work can be a novel, document, essay, or biography, audiovisual content and will be chosen by an independent jury, initiated by Bourges 2028 in association with the Société des Gens de Lettres (SDGL). The first edition of the prize will take place in fall 2025.

Partners: Société des Gens de Lettres, European Society of Authors Berlin (DE), Bourges libraries.

THE MAESTRA 2028

Why a competition and an academy exclusively for female conductors? The question is legit, but then again, although more and more female conductors are leading successful careers, discrimination against them is still all too common. With the International Competition for Female Conductors & La Maestra Academy, the Paris Mozart Orchestra and the Philharmonie de Paris have a threefold objective: to encourage vocations, to unite the international musical world around specific commitments to female conductors, and to offer the youngest among them the support they have often not fully benefited from during their education.

The first editions of the La Maestra Competition, held in Paris in 2020 and 2022, were an exceptional success with female conductors from all over the world: 220 applications, 51 nationalities, a wide variety of backgrounds, an exceptional artistic level... Maison de la Culture de Bourges hosted concerts of the winning conductors of 2022 contest, and Bourges 2028 and Maison de la Culture will be continuing in 2024, 2026, 2028 with many specific actions in schools on gender equity challenges.

Partners: Paris Mozart Orchestra, La Philharmonie de Paris, Maison de la Culture de Bourges.

DECOLONISING 30 YEARS OF VIDEO ART, NEW MEDIA AND CINEMA

CURATION: PASCALE OBOLO (CM), WITH ANTRE PEAUX ART CENTRE (BOURGES)

With the closure for renovation of the Centre Pompidou, **Pascale Obolo (CM)** proposes a decolonial revisiting of the centre video art and cinematic collections over the last 30 years, putting into perspective the creations presented at various major film and video festivals in France, Europe and the rest of the world.

“Decolonising 30 Years of Video Art” is an essential undertaking to propose new narratives that are rarely explored, to enable marginalised and silenced voices to express themselves and be recognised by a wider audience. Our aim is to highlight artists who have been historically invisible or under-represented in the collection. And also to create a more inclusive, decentred and deconstructed history of video art through a decolonial lens, based on a re-reading of the Centre Pompidou collection - the first museum in France to collect video art.

The exhibition “Decolonising 30 years of video art” gives us the opportunity to promote the diversity of critical voices and raise public awareness of decolonial issues by organising discussions, workshops and guided tours that highlight the decolonial perspectives present in the video works.

The project further offers the possibility of continuing a research project initiated in Antre Peaux in 2017 with the artist Pierre Michelon, in collaboration with David Legrand and Seloua Luste Boulbina, on the decolonisation of collections in national museums.

Pascale Obolo is a Cameroonian curator. She has worked on several international curations linked to the decolonisation of collections or related publications, notably at SMAK Gent (BE), in Berlin (DE), at the Rencontres d'Arles (FR), she recently coordinated in 2023 a programme of events around the latest exhibition by the artist Zanele Muholi at MEP- Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris

Partners: Centre Pompidou, FUSO Festival Lisboa (PT), CPH:DOX Festival Copenhagen (DK), FID Marseille (FR), OVNI Festival Nice (FR), ENSA, EMAP European Media Art Platform, Videobrasil, São Paulo, (BR).



CENTRE POMPIDOU @ PALAIS JACQUES COEUR

CURATION: CENTRE POMPIDOU

The Centre Pompidou will set up a seasonal exhibition in Bourges each year from 2026 onwards at the Palais Jacques Coeur, masterpiece of Renaissance architecture, around design, sustainable design and the rewriting of design by giving women their place. To date, only 15% of the Centre Pompidou's design collections contain works by women artists. The history of architecture and design is very much intertwined with the evolution of modern art, the disciplines intersect, the artists exchange and influence each other. This is why the Musée National d'Art Moderne also has a leading design collection. The Centre Pompidou's design collections are among the most important in the world. They include nearly 8,000 works, representing 900 designers, and range from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Female creation in architecture will also be highlighted thanks to the wealth of the internationally renowned FRAC fund, dedicated to contemporary art and research architecture, from the 1950s to the present day.

Partners: Centre Pompidou, Centre des Monuments Nationaux - Palais Jacques Coeur, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine - Paris, ENSA Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art Bourges, ESAD Ecole Supérieure d'Art et de Design Orléans, FRAC Centre-Val de Loire, Parvis des métiers in Bourges, Campus des métiers et des qualifications d'excellence in Tours, City of Vierzon, European partners tbc.

FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE

CURATOR: JULIE CRENN, WITH ANTRE PEAUX ART CENTRE, (BOURGES)

Based on peasant realities, this project invites us to think about a set of issues linked to rurality. Designed as a cycle of exhibitions, it will punctuate the overall artistic programme between 2026 and 2029:

2027

Artists and peasants will deal with current representations of the peasant world by artists who are mainly sons and daughters of peasants. **Eco-feminism: the legacy of the witches of Berry.** Berry is a land of witches. Invited artists, aware that a heritage (knowledge, gestures, way of existence, resistance, counter-power) must be transmitted, will activate visible and invisible manifestations.

2028

Slow down - the time of the seasons seeks to make visible the cyclical movements and mutations of landscapes.

Slowing down - a thought of degrowth will bring together artists who, from an anti-productivist perspective through their gestures and intentions, broaden the spectrum of time and space.

2029

The farm: an area to defend considers the farm as an alternative place of research from which new thoughts and new forms of resistance emerge in the face of our societies where financial powers prevail over our food, our water, our bodies and therefore our lives.

Alive aims to expand peri-urban, rural and other borders to invite us to a common song, an eulogy to the living, to interdependencies as fragile as they are powerful.

At the same time, artistic residencies in a rural context will allow the creation of works in situ in Bourges and in the Centre-Val de Loire region.

Project led by: Julie Crenn, Antre Peaux.

Partners: FRAC Réunion.



AGEING ARTFULLY

A PROJECT BY MOHAMED EL KHATIB AND VALERIE MREJEN (FR)

EHPADs (French nursing homes) have the reputation of being places of “the last hour”. Art centres are perceived as austere and inanimate places. Both nursing homes and art centres are places of passage whose image we want to reimagine using art in a way that is intimately linked with the residents. It is not a question of implanting art in an EHPAD, but rather of making it appear because it is already there. The challenge is to bring out forms of life and artistic expression, and to value them as ways of being in the world one last time.

A prototype project was designed and implemented in June 2022 with the teams and residents of an EHPAD in Chambéry by the artists Mohamed El Khatib and Valérie Mréjen.

The projects are underway with some of Bourges 2028 partners: in Avignon with the Avignon Festival, in Brussels with the Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles.

Bourges 2028 proposes that the two artists develop a project within the largest EPHAD in France, the Bellevue residences, located in Bourges, and that the experiences developed between staff, doctors and residents be made accessible either through a digital or physical medium to a wider audience.

Partners: Malraux, scène nationale de Chambéry, Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles, Résidences de Bellevue, Bourges, Mille Univers association, Centre-Val de Loire Regional Health Agency, Centre-Val de Loire Region, City of Avignon, Evora 2027 (PT), Oulu 2026 (FI), Broumov 2028 (CZ), Burgos 2031 (ES).

OUR GALLERY

A PROJECT BY ERIC MINH CUONG CASTAING (FR)

Bourges 2028 will set up new small art centres in a dozen high schools and colleges that have applied for projects. The art centres will be based on the model of the well-established gallery “La transversale” at Alain-Fournier high school in Bourges. In synergy with the National Education Academy in Orléans-Tours, a series of actions of mediation and artistic capacity building for the students will be implemented. The artists of the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri will carry out residences and present their work here as well.

The art centres in the schools will be Bourges 2028's ambassadors for the French Ministry of Culture's cultural pass, which will be integrated as a driving force to attract the younger audiences.

French artist Eric Minh Cuong Castaing will create a programme for young people with physical and mental disabilities in collaboration with local institutions that provide their medical support.

Partners: National Education Academy of Orleans-Tours, Lycée Alain Fournier - La transversale, Shonen Company - Eric Minh Cuong Castaing (FR), City of Vierzon.

Bourges 2028:
Not a question of implanting
art in an EHPAD but making
it appear because it is
already there

REVIVAL SHOPS

The centre of Bourges, like many small medium size cities across Europe, is emptying out. The traditional city centre is on the retreat as out of town malls and internet shopping drive away the traditional shopper. Empty shops scar the town centre. The traditional “department store” is becoming a thing of the past. But it doesn't need to be like this. Town centres need to be about more than shopping. Shops about more than selling. Experiences increasingly encourage people, families to come and spend time in the town. But towns need imagination and playfulness to bring new purpose and energy.

That's what we plan. So as part of a vast programme to revitalise the heart of the city, our empty shops will be reinvented. Some will be transformed into art galleries, highlighting artisanal riches and local know-how. Others will hold some of the collections of the redeveloping city museums but will also welcome art objects from other European Capitals of Culture, or curator Hou Hanru exhibitions, events and performances. Other spaces will be offered as child friendly places for young mums to share ideas about healthy eating and learn more about the surrounding countryside. And much, much more besides. This project will also connect with some of the best practice town centre regeneration projects e.g., from the UK.

Initiated by several local entrepreneurs and business leaders following the enthusiasm of the shortlisting, it offers a unique model in France after agreement from the tax services to the owners of empty stores to exempt the amount of the rent from tax by making a donation in sponsorship of these rents to Bourges 2028.

Project leader: The Ambassadors of Bourges, endowment fund.

Partners: Young Chamber of Commerce, Evora 2027 (PT), Budweis 2028 (CZ), Bad ischl 2024 (AT), Oneday Regeneration (UK).



GENERAL TIMELINE BOURGES 2028



PROJECTS	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029 - legacy
Opening party	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Closing party	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
LOTS OF NEIGHBOURS						
Gares végétales	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
European Inside Out			Green	Blue	Black	
RER Europa / The Loire Sun	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Trans Europe Culture	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
European Parliament of Rivers	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Shelters for Mobile Democracy	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Noirlac Cabanes	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Métro Europa	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	
European Citizen Council	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	
The Matrix	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	
THE LANGUAGE OF EUROPE						
European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri	Green	Blue	Black	Black	Black	
Défilé	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Money (and Art)	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
The Silence			Green	Blue	Black	
Euro Renaissances	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	
Jacques Tati	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
The Language of Food	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Intergenerational canteens	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Sarkis, Cultural Incubator	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Gaia - 24. Opera del Mondo	Green	Blue	Black	Black		
Printemps de l'Europe	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Odyssey	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Baroque Renewal 2028	Green	Green	Green	Black	Black	
André Malraux an Imaginary Museum	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Connected Micro-Folies	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Liszt! From Bourges to Europe	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
European Pocket Theatre	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Duke Jean de Berry	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
European Light Nights	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW						
Departure Class			Black	Black	Black	
Zanele Muholi Visual Activist	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
MAI (Muholi Art Institute) in Bourges	Green	Blue	Black	Black	Black	
Symbiocene	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Sounding the ceramics	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Awaking the Silenced	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
On the Spectrum	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Music! For Sanity	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Young Programmers on the Move	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
European Queer Cabaret	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Our (European) Stories	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Migrations in Centre-Val de Loire	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Something Strange is Happening	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Missing Women	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
George Sand	Green	Green	Green	Black	Black	
The Maestra 2028	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	
Decolonising 30 years of video art, new media and cinema	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Centre Pompidou @Palais Jacques Coeur	Blue	Black	Black	Black	Black	
From the Countryside	Green	Green	Green	Blue	Black	
Ageing Artfully	Green	Blue	Black	Black	Black	
Our Gallery	Green	Blue	Black	Black	Black	
Revival shops	Black	Black	Black	Black	Black	

Q07 Choosing events and projects

PRE-SELECTION PHASE

The programme presented in the first bid book which brought together around 30 projects was designed by Pascal Keiser, our general commissioner, Louise Tournillon our general coordinator, Boris Vedel, director of Printemps de Bourges, Claire Gibault, director of the Paris Mozart Orchestra and Olivier Atlan, director of the Maison de la Culture de Bourges and an artistic advisory committee made up of around 50 representatives of cultural institutions and artists in the region, including the directors of the city's museums. Several projects were initiated with international partners following the project's 3 international design conferences during the first round.

FINAL SELECTION PHASE

The programme presented in this final application was developed by the same team supplemented by Mathilde Cocq who joined us as deputy director of Bourges 2028 association after having been deputy director of Orleans National Drama Centre in Centre-Val de Loire Region and director of a French national stage in Paris, and a team of international curators around Hou Hanru, David Moinard, Anne-Laure Chamboissier, and the same artistic support committee as at preselection. A session at the beginning of July allowed local stakeholders to take the project further and make their proposals, some of which were retained (see details Q9 and Q10) and integrated into the projects of this final bid book.

In this process, we initiated the interaction of this selection and its contents with a carbon assessment expert, Hermann Lukan, which led us to have only 3 exhibition projects requiring potential movements of works on long distances and 3 requesting long distance travels of people. Each project has a curator (sometimes two) who are clearly named. Our aim is and was to decentralise the implementation bringing together local artists, institutions and international players to build capacity and resilience for the future of the artistic field in the region.

OPEN CALLS TO COME

Sharing the governance of Bourges 2028 with residents of the city, of the conurbation, of the closer and wider region, with people from elsewhere in Europe and with artists from everywhere is written into the inner core of Bourges 2028.

This will be reflected in how we build and choose the remaining projects to complete our Bourges 2028 programme.

An ECoC must cater to many different expectations, preferences, and tastes. Our programme already covers many different areas and genres, and is addressed to many different audiences. We still think that everyone who proposes new projects or participates in calls should remember why we are doing this: to create Territories of the Future. Any additional projects we select will have to follow and embrace this central narrative and our 3 programme lines.

What we can say at this point is that our approach to selecting new projects - apart from being rooted in our concept - will be based on the three strategically most important objectives of this bid:

- Artists at the centre of Bourges 2028, internationalisation/ pan-European artistic production,
- Low-carbon European mobility,
- Local and European citizens integrated in the governance of Bourges 2028 / exploring cultural rights.

The objectives already constitute some of the criteria we want to apply. For example, all the project criteria – including the ones developed by stakeholders and partners – must adhere to the low-carbon charter developed by Bourges 2028. The project teams, whether within Bourges 2028 or by external partners, will have to cooperate with the Carbon Balance Commissioner in the Bourges 2028 organisation, so that decisions do justice to programmatic, artistic, and ecological imperatives. Ecology-driven agility seems to be more than necessary in view of the foreseeable worsening of the ecological situation in the years to come and the changes in social expectations in relation to the foreseen ecological reorientation. Which means we **must** be able to adapt projects to a low-carbon, low environmental impact type of implementation.

There are also many projects in our programme that need to be filled with content which will happen mainly through calls for projects. In some cases, these will address a specific type of participants (e.g., professionals, people with disabilities etc.), in other cases they may be open for everyone, yet in others the calls might be linked to very specific content requirements. Probably most of the calls for projects will be issued within our project European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri. 20% of the projects entered through calls for the ECA (projects with a value of around 2 M €) will be decided by the European Citizen Council. A further 10% by the Bourges 2028 committee within the Youth Regional Council, 10% by differentiated audiences and 60% by Bourges 2028 artistic direction. The criteria will be developed for each call individually and adhere to some of the above mentioned "basic requirements".

Finally, inspired by Bodø 2024, we decided to dedicate a budget of 5 M € to activities for children and young people from 0 to 25 years. This budget and the selection of projects and activities will be entirely managed by a group of young people up to age 25.

PLAN FOR A LOW CARBON EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Organising an ECoC in the next 10 years gives a special responsibility, considering the challenge of the century which is the mitigation of climate change. The trajectory set to safeguard the planet's habitability by the Paris Agreement and the European Climate Law implies a profound paradigm shift, since it involves reducing our emissions by 2030 by 55% compared to 1990, meaning 80% based on our current emissions. The European Capital of Culture in 2028 will have to achieve this objective. And Bourges 2028 is committed to this, making it the backbone of its bid and its implementation: the objective enshrined in the European Climate Law will be its compass for all programmatic and organisational decisions.

Sustainability through art: Bourges 2028 wants to fully experiment with the role of catalyst for social transformation that artists' imaginations and utopias can play, with the leverage of an ECoC's reach.

Sustainability in art: Bourges 2028 wants to be the first ECoC that really takes the necessary steps to be low-carbon in its implementation, at all levels of the project.

To achieve this, it will implement a demanding and coherent strategy

based on three points:

- A carbon budget not to be exceeded,
- Real-time management tools, to inform all programming and organisational decision,
- A low-carbon charter.

All the ECoC's stakeholders will be invited to follow the charter to ensure the necessary changes in practices from the outset. The project will be discussed in a participatory process in 2024 in order to build a consensus around the common commitments.

All these tools will enable Bourges 2028 to adapt the projects in real time to be in line with the ecological ambition and the defined carbon budget.

Q08 Combining cultural heritage and experimental cultural expressions

Berry has an extremely rich history and it is always surprising to discover the extent to which artistic practices and the love of art are anchored in our traditions. Whether it is the ancestral practice of clay and ceramics, or the art patronage in the mediaeval period by Jean de Berry and his financier Jacques Coeur who commissioned the most beautiful works of their time, or even the more obscure and forgotten folklore of Berry witches and local dances supposed to repel demons. The agricultural traditions that have spanned the ages through the agricultural shows but also through a particular way of seeing nurturing nature. But also its contemporary cultural history which must be celebrated for its audacity and innovation in order to bring culture closer to the public. We have designed our artistic programme to pay homage to these practices and traditions.

RER Europa – The Loire Sun aims to highlight the heritage of the Centre Val-de-Loire region by blending its historical, cultural, and environmental aspects with contemporary art and sustainable tourism, creating a unique and immersive experience that both preserves and reimagines the region's heritage for the 21st century. **Euro Renaissances** draws inspiration from the Renaissance period, which has significant historical and cultural importance in the Centre Val-de-Loire region. Bourges 2028 will benefit from the decentralised collections of the Centre Pompidou which will be exhibited in heritage places in the region such as the Château de Rivau or the Château de Talcy as well as during the Archipel Festival in autumn 2023.

Jacques Tati's film "Jour de fête" was shot near Bourges, in the small village of Sainte Sévère. This film is a cultural relic that captures the landscape, lifestyle, and social interactions of the region during the time it was filmed. By drawing parallels between Tati's theme of rapid modernisation of society and the current issues of metropolisation and globalisation, the project emphasises the ongoing relevance of these critiques and how they relate to the heritage and identity of the territory. The 2 exhibitions that form the **Duke Jean de Berry**, a European Heritage project highlight how the Hour Books commissioned by Jean de Berry were an inspiration to the likes of Walt Disney and comic strips - and help us to approach heritage and its relevance in today's world.

Additionally, much of our programme features **digital and immersive experiences** in connection with heritage, giving our mediaeval, Renaissance and industrial heritage a contemporary twist. Our **Euroverse and Miniverse exhibitions** - Sainte Chapelle specifically - will especially make destroyed heritage visible in digital forms. Together with our close partners from the cutting-edge IT company Ledger we will bring the Sainte-Chapelle and its riches virtually back to life. Pun intended.

The exhibition on **Money (and Art)** hosted in various spaces of the **Cultural Mile** aims to explore the relationship between money and contemporary art. By linking Bourges' historical figures and their influence on economic and artistic development, the project connects historical patronage to the art business today. Heritage buildings come to light with European stories and histories in our project **European Light Nights**, giving the floor to mapper artists from all over Europe. The festival, very popular with families, is a great way to make Europe concrete for Berruyers - and bring heritage into the spotlight of the 21st century through current technology.

George Sand: A Fertile Land for Tomorrow curated by Evelyne Jouanno and the Antre Peaux Art Centre explores contemporary attitudes and practices, including feminine identity, nature, ancestral knowledge transmission, and modern witchcraft. We tend to forget how modern the keen thinkers and artists of the past were. **From the River: George Sand through the Prism of Hydrofeminism** curated by Eva Barois de Caebel and Antre Peaux sheds light on Sand's feminism and activism against deforestation and resource exhaustion.

From the Countryside a multi-year project (2026-2029) focuses on revitalising local traditions. Artists will explore contemporary rural life, with an emphasis on those from farming backgrounds. Farms are shown as vital centres of resistance against big finance taking control over food and life. In the project **The Language of Food**, Emmanuel Perrodin will delve into the culinary heritage of the Centre-Val de Loire, particularly of the Renaissance. This project intersects history, food, and banquets, exploring the region's rich culinary history with a contemporary twist into artistic production. An unmissable destination in our region is certainly the village of La Borne, known for its ceramic tradition since the 12th century. 80 ceramists from 13 European countries live in the village today.

For **Sounding the Ceramics**, Tarek Atoui will explore those local traditions with contemporary art forms involving local young people.

One of the very first bodies created for the Bourges ECoC candidacy was an artistic committee bringing together around 50 representatives of local cultural institutions and associations. The committee met once a month for over a year to discuss their involvement in the ECoC. Beyond helping to think about the major projects for Bourges 2028, the main question for these operators was how to open their programmes to Europe. These meetings, the first of their kind for our local stakeholders, made it possible to bring together all the forces around Bourges 2028. From these meetings, many crucial elements emerged for our overall concept and our artistic programme.

In 2022, the 3 European conferences that we organised on medium-sized towns, climate change and the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, made it possible to clarify our artistic project. The exchanges with local artists like Karine Bonneval, Isabelle Carlier and Barthélémy Antoine-Loeff made it possible to develop numerous projects in our artistic programme. In parallel with the Bourges 2028 artistic committee, the application was able to benefit from the "Debouts de la Culture" - a gathering of around forty cultural actors from Bourges and its surroundings. Founded in 2020 to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis which shook the cultural world with the cessation of programming, these gatherings aim to reflect on new directions for culture in the local context.

In July 2023 we co-organised with the City of Bourges a special "Debouts de la Culture" Bourges 2028. During a day of workshops, it was about listening to the forces of the territory, responding to their

possible concerns regarding the ECoC and above all nourishing our artistic programme which had to move to the next level in terms of ambition and artistic innovation. Local artists and cultural structures were present for this time of discussion before writing the second application.

To complete the involvement of local artists and cultural organisations, we organised in partnership with the Centre-Val de Loire Region, on October 19, a day of prefiguration of the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri at the FRAC Centre-Val de Loire. The aim was to invite project leaders likely to be part of a European pathway but also operators wishing to be supported in the implementation of an eco-responsible approach alongside their creative process. Pascal Keiser presented our Bourges 2028 candidacy, Hermann Lugan came to talk about low-carbon mobility and eco-responsible approaches in artistic creation, Nicolas Bertrand and Helena de Winter came to present European networks and the set-up of European projects while Katie Kheriji-Watts represented On the Move to talk about mobility support. Artists will always be the priority of Bourges 2028, which is why if we are selected in December, we have put them at the heart of our ECoC project. First of all, 2 members of the Bourges 2028 Board of Directors must be artists. In fact, they will be constantly represented in our governance. Then, thanks to the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri, 50% of project calls will be intended for local artists and cultural structures.

Finally and most importantly, they are drivers of our artistic programme. The table below shows the involvement of local artists in the artistic direction of the programme and the local structures which are identified and confirmed as co-leaders of the Bourges 2028 projects:

LOCAL ARTISTS IN ARTISTIC DIRECTION	PROJECTS	LOCAL ARTISTS
	Opening Ceremony	Boris Vedel
	Gare Végétale in Blois	Gilles Clément
	World History of Europe (Trans Europe Culture)	Mohamed El Khatib
	We Can Be European Heroes (Trans Europe Culture)	Arnaud Pirault
	Euro Renaissances	Anne-Laure Chamboissier
	Odyssey	Jacques Vincey
	Liszt! From Bourges to Europe	Jean-Yves Clément
	Symbiocene and Closing Ceremony	Sandrine Salzard
	From the Countryside	Julie Crenn
	Ageing Artfully	Mohamed El Khatib

LOCAL CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS CO-LEADING ARTISTIC PROJECTS

PROJECTS

European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri

European Parliaments of Rivers

Noirlac Cabanes

Métro Europa

Duke Jean de Berry, A European Heritage

Printemps de l'Europe

Odyssey, The Silence, Rythm of the Rails, Art on Rails creations, Baroque Renewal 2028

Connected Micro-Folies

Liszt! From Bourges to Europe

Symbiocene

Sounding the Ceramics

On the Spectrum

Missing Women

Music! for Sanity

Young Programmers on the Move

European Queer Cabaret

Our (European) Stories

European Pocket Theatre

George Sand: A Fertile Land for Tomorrow + From the River

From the Countryside

Our Gallery

Pompidou / Europe

Centre Pompidou @Palais Jacques Coeur

Revival Shops

LOCAL CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

Printemps de Bourges, Maison de la Culture, Antre Peaux Art Centre, Noirlac Abbey, Paris Mozart Orchestra, Maison de la Culture de Bourges and Union Pragmatique.

POLAU (arts & urban planning centre in Tours)

Noirlac Abbey

The very essence of the project implies that all the cultural institutions and cultural NGOs of Bourges and the Bourges plus conurbation are involved in the design of the Metro lines.

Museums of Bourges

Printemps de Bourges

Maison de la Culture de Bourges

El Qantara association

Conservatory of Bourges

Natural History Museum of Bourges

Contemporary ceramic centre of La Borne

ENSA (National School of Arts in Bourges)

Paris Mozart Orchestra (head office in Bourges since 2021)

Paris Mozart Orchestra (head office in Bourges since 2021)

Scène O Centre

Marteau Company

Ciclic (regional agency of the Centre for books, images and digital culture) and the departmental and municipal archives,

Léla Company

Antre Peaux

Antre Peaux

La Transversale Gallery in Alain-Fournier High School

Antre Peaux, ENSA (National School of Arts in Bourges)

Palais Jacques Coeur

Local cultural organisations in connection with Les Ambassadeurs de Bourges

Boris Vedel
Bintou Dembele (FR)
Opening Ceremony

Eva Jospin (FR)
Agence Bento (BE)
Gare Végétale Bourges

Gilles Clement
Atelier Bivouac (FR)
Gare Végétale Blois

Petra Blaisse
Rem Koolhaas
OMA Agency (NL)
Gare végétale Paris Austerlitz

David Moinard (FR)
Vinciane Despret (BE)
The Loire Sun

Mohamed El Khatib
Patrick Boucheron (FR)
World History of Europe

Alexandra Badea (RO)
Roman Grygoriv
Illia Razumeiko & Co (UA)
The Rhythm of the Rails

Marta Gornicka (PL)
European Resilience Choirs

Yngvild Aspeli (NO)
European Puppet Stories

Camille de Toledo (FR/DE)
European Parliament of Rivers

Sarkis (AM)
Cultural Incubator

Kae Tempest, Damso,
Nekfeu, Justice,
Etienne de Crecy,
La Femme &
European guests
Printemps de l'Europe

Claire Gibault &
Paris Mozart Orch. (FR)
Musique ! for Sanity

Hou Hanru (CN/FR/IT)
Défile, Money (and Art)

Tiago Rodrigues (PT)
The silence

Rä Di Martino (IT)
Wang Bing (CN)
Jacques Tati in Berry

Zanele Muholi (ZAF)
Visual activist

Estelle Zhong
Mengual (FR)
Learning to see: Les Heures

Symbiocene
Indigenous peoples
ambassadors
Closing ceremony

JR (FR)
Inside Out Europe

Centre Pompidou
@ Bourges 2028

Departure Class

**european
dimension**

Chapter 3



Q11/1

Current European themes, European integration, intercultural dialogue

The tough summer of 2023 was characterised in France and Europe by social fragmentation, violent protest and extreme climate shots. And there seemed to be a real schism between the actions some people wanted to see and what those in power thought was necessary. So where does Bourges 2028 come in? What can a medium sized city do to turn this tide of disengagement – with civic society and with nature.

Bourges, and its partners, want to act as a positive mediator and advocate of European values. This is not lip service. Our programme offers some genuine solutions to the issues that face us in France, in Europe and beyond.

Europe is still not obvious in Bourges. Although with our projects *Métro Europa* and *RER Europa* we have already made some European aspects more tangible in the daily life of the people here. But European themes, topics and issues are well present – not only since the riots and heated debates of this summer.

Europe is still contested most in regions away from the large cities – in places that, apparently, do not matter. And it is increasingly confronted everywhere with too many doubting whether our system is even democratic – and whether they matter. Whether democracy should look again at the way it is practised by local, regional and national governments or the EU commission.

ECoC alone cannot solve all these issues. But it can help remind us what a union of Europe means. Peace, economic and cultural exchange between countries that were at each other's throats for centuries, a quick move on COVID vaccines, united moves in the war against Ukraine and a joint approach to climate change issues.

Bourges 2028 specifically wants to contribute – as stated in our artistic vision – to help communities and individuals everywhere in Europe to come out of emergency mode and instead to access the path of conflict resolution. Coming out of a state where one only sees the red alarm of climate change and politicians scolding young people for being angry and one gets so frustrated that it seems easier to lean towards quick-fix populist truths. Encouraging people out of that and inviting them to enter a state of empowerment, where we understand and see there are good practices and ways to communicate and things we can do and that make a lot of sense. An artistic production of international and local artists creating for a pan-European context. That is what Bourges 2028 wants to contribute to the European project.

Still focusing on the question “What can Bourges bring to Europe and what can Europe bring to Bourges” which was our guiding principle in the previous bid book, we developed a three-level pan-European strategy that we were able to build more deeply during this second phase of our application.

1. Put artists at the centre of the project, and push them to internationalise their projects in a sustainable manner with dedicated support.

Projects: European City of Artists – Melina Mercouri (and all the projects that will be generated through its open calls) → *Odyssey* → European Pocket Theatre.

2. Develop for the first time within an ECoC artistic programme a low-carbon European mobility programme organised for artists and citizens to integrate the European territory and its citizens into Bourges 2028.

Projects: *Gares Végétales* → *Trans Europe Culture* (incl. *The Rhythm of the Rails*, *World History of Europe*, *European Puppet Stories*, *European Resilience Choirs*, *We can be European Heroes*) → *European Parliament of Rivers* → *Symbiocene*, *Journey to the Future*.

3. Find a response to the crisis of representation in France and in Europe by integrating local and European citizens into the governance of Bourges 2028 and exploring cultural rights.

Projects: European Citizen Council → *The Matrix* → *Departure Class* → *The Train of Beautiful Differences* → *Sounding the Ceramics* → *On the Spectrum* → *Missing Women* → *Young programmers on the move* → *Music! for Sanity* → *European Queer Cabaret* → *Our (European) Stories* → *A Fertile Land for Tomorrow* → *From the River* → *The George Sand Prize* → *Ageing Artfully*

Our European dimension lies in the story we want to tell Europe. It goes like this: Every place in Europe matters and every human and non-human matters. That is what *Territories of the Future* means. Enticing people in the territory of Bourges to understand that Europe is our future. At the same time making Europe understand that it must turn to the territories where it is most contested - the “places that do not matter”. Turns out they do.

Q11/2

Connections with European artists, operators, and cities

We have gone all in on European and international partnerships. You had not noticed, right? Just joking, we feel it is hard to overlook. And the best thing is: All the partners and artists mentioned throughout the book are confirmed – except for those very few where it is clearly stated. We did not need any wish lists – because we either made the contacts to the institutions and artists ourselves or we had our confirmed curators bring in their contacts. And some impressive names, too, like JR, Zanele Muholi, Rem Koolhaas, Gilles Clément, Mona Hatoum, Nick Cave, Hito Steyerl, Sarkis, Eva Jospin and Alessandro Sciarroni. 90% of our projects are connected to some kind of transnational, European or international partners.

As is easily visible, almost every project already has a confirmed curator and whether they are from France or anywhere else – we have sworn them all in – to the task of bringing Europe and the world to Bourges. At the risk of repeating ourselves, we do not tire of mentioning our network of the Matrix, which comprises eight European Capitals of Culture and has already started working together.

Next to the other ECoC and candidate cities we wish to cooperate with (see more in Q13) the Matrix and the ECoC “family” gives us a well-established network of partners that provide further access to partners of partners.

Within the programme there are two more projects that not only have European or international partners, but also breathe internationalisation and Europeanness all the way to the backbone of their build-up: The Trans Europe Culture as a pan-European low-carbon artistic mobility programme and the European City of Artists – Melina Mercouri. Here, as we have said already, the plan is to create a place where we give artists the tools to create on a truly pan-European scale.

A new aspect that we have developed in this selection round is strengthening our ties with Ukraine. In 2022, when Russia invaded the country, the City of Bourges entered into an emergency solidarity twinning with the City of Korosten in northern Ukraine. In March 2022, the Bourges sent two buses to pick up 43 women and 57 children and bring them to safety in Bourges. Since then, the link between the two cities has been extended and enriched. In July 2023, the City of Bourges welcomed an official delegation from the

City of Korosten led by the Deputy Mayor in charge of Culture and Promotion of the City, Natalia Chyzhevska, to conclude a long-term partnership. The creation of a Franco-Ukrainian centre dedicated to the friendship between Korosten and Bourges was marked in two parks in the two cities.

We will call on Ukrainian artists to create new video mapping scenographies for our European Light Nights project. We will invite residents of Korosten to be part of our European Citizen Council. And we will establish a university exchange between art students from Korosten and ENSA Bourges as part of the Our Gallery project. Additionally, our project Gaia-24. Opera del Mondo is led by two Ukrainian curators and features the Kyiv October Palace and Lviv Zankovetska Theatre.

Our programme is connected to transnational partners from Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, as well as many international partners from all over Europe and overseas like Lebanon, China, Colombia, Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa, India, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil and more. We have listed the confirmed partners and the projects which they curate or co-operate with us on:

ARTIST / ORGANISATION

PROJECT

Bento agency (BE), Vinciane Despret (BE), Permafunghi, Brussels (BE)

Gare Végétale Bourges

Inside Outside directed by Petra Blaisse (NL), OMA Agency / Rem Koolhaas (NL)

Gare Végétale Austerlitz

Alessandro Sciarroni (IT)

Rediscover our Dances (The Loire Sun)

Christodoulos Panayiotou (CY)

Migrations in Centre-Val de Loire

Anna Colin (FR/UK)

The Centipede with a 1000 Rolling Feet

Christophe Haleb (LB)

Something Strange is Happening

Alexandra Badea (RO)

The Rhythm of the Rails

Marta Górnicka (PL), Maxim Gorki Theatre Berlin (DE), Euroszene Leipzig (DE), Spring Festival (AT), Powszechny Theatre Warsaw (PL)

European Resilience Choirs

Tanzhaus Düsseldorf (DE), Comédie de Genève (CH) Festival Out of the Box (NL), Théâtre National Wallonie Bruxelles (BE)

The Train of Beautiful Differences

Novi Sad 2022 (RS), Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT), Ukrainian Institute Kiev (UA), Bambej University (SEN), City of Diourbel (SEN)

Parliament of European Rivers

AES+F, Francis Alÿs (BE), Nick Cave (AU), Mona Hatoum (PS), Hito Steyerl (DE), and around 30 international artists, Rockbund Art Museum Shanghai (CN), Shangqi Art Shenzhen (CN), Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (JP)

Défilé

Rä di Martino (IT), Wang Bing (CN)

Jacques Tati, The Birth of a Filmmaker

Tai Kwun Contemporary Art Centre, (CN), Power Station of Art, Shanghai (CN) and around 20 international artists

Money (and Art)

Arter, Istanbul (TUR), Kadist, San Francisco/Paris (FR/US), Floating University, Berlin (DE), Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (CN), Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome (IT), Dekoloniale, Berlin (DE)

Sarkis – Cultural Incubator

Roman Grygoriv and Illia Razumeiko (UA), Kyiv October Palace (UA), Lviv Zankovetska Theatre (UA), Rotterdam O. Festival (NL)

Gaia-24. Opera del Mondo

Nuits Botaniques (BE), Eurosonic (NL), Artmania (RO), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES), YourEurope and ETEP European networks / Kae Tempest (UK) Aheneah (PT)

Printemps de L'Europe / Rap is the new poetry

Leonardo Garcia Alarcon (AR) and Omar Porras (CO), Cité Bleue Theatre (CH), Kléber-Méleau Theatre in Lausanne (CH), Choeur de Namur (BE), Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen (DE), Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (FI), Athens Conservatoire (GR), Udruga Festival Kvarner (HR), Ghislierimusica (Pavia, IT), Riga Early Music Center (LV), Joventuts Musicals Torroella de Montgrí (ES), Academia de Música de Espinho (PT), Progressione (Budapest, HU), Towarzystwo Kulturalne FUGA (PL), Centre for Slavic Music (Brno, CZ)

Baroque Renewal 2028

Tarek Atoui (LB)

Sounding the Ceramics

Daiara Hori (Tucano, BR), Ander Sunna (Sami, SE), Pauliina Feodoroff (Sami, FI), Maret Anne Sara (Sami, NO), Sofia Jannok (Sami, SE), Amanda Kernell (Sami, SE), George Nuku (Maori, NZ), Hugo Araujo (BE/MEX/COL), Jimmy Nelson (UK), Manish Arora (IN), Saya Woolfalk (JP/USA), Jeremy Shaw (CAN/DE), Julien Comte Gaz (AU/FR), Oliver Beer (UK), Mélanie Bonajo (NL), Prune Nourry (FR/USA), Zadie Xa (CAN/KR), Iwalja Klinke (DE), Jesse Jones (IE)

Symbiocene, Journey to the Future

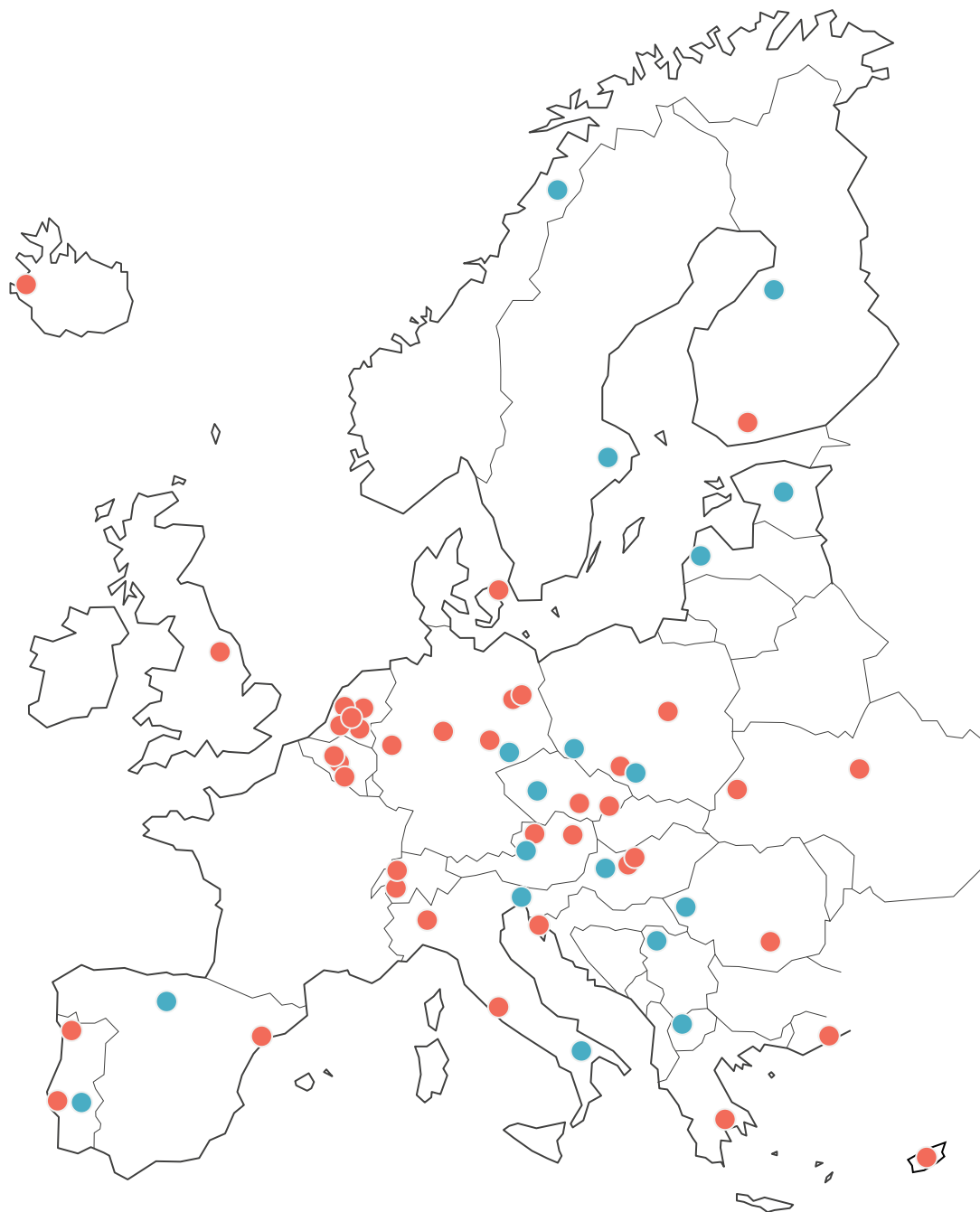
Susan Philipsz (UK/DE)

Awakening the Silenced

Pascale Obolo (CMR), FUSO Festival Lisbon (PT), CPH:DOX Festival Copenhagen (DK), EMAP European Media Art Platform, Videobrasil, São Paulo (BR)

Decolonising 30 years of video art, new media and cinema

EUROPEAN PARTNERS



EUROPEAN PARTNERS

- Spring Festival (AT)
- Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT)
- Bento Agency (BE)
- Permafunghi (BE)
- Théâtre National Wallonie Bruxelles (BE)
- Nuits Botaniques (BE)
- Choeur de Namur (BE)
- Kanal Centre Pompidou (BE)
- Comédie de Genève (CH)
- Festival Out of the Box (CH)
- Cité Bleue Theatre (CH)
- Kléber-Méleau Theatre in Lausanne (CH)
- Studio Christodoulos Panayiotou (CY)
- Centre for Slavic Music Brno (CZ)
- Floating University, Berlin (DE)
- Maxim Gorki Theater Berlin (DE)
- Euroszene Leipzig (DE)
- Tanzhaus Düsseldorf (DE)
- Dekoloniale, Berlin (DE)
- Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen (DE)
- CPH:DOX Festival Copenhagen (DK)
- Joventuts Musicals Torroella de Montgrí (ES)
- Helsinki Baroque Orchestra (FI)
- Athens Conservatoire (GR)
- Udruga Festival Kvarner (HR)
- Sziget (HU)
- Progressione Budapest (HU)
- Reykjavik Arts Festival (IS)
- Ghislierimusica (IT)
- Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome (IT)
- Riga Early Music Center (LV)
- OMA Agency / Rem Koolhaas (NL)
- Rotterdam O. Festival (NL)
- Eurosonic (NL)
- Powszechny Theatre Warsaw (PL)
- Towarzystwo Kulturalne FUGA (PL)
- Academia de Música de Espinho (PT)
- FUSO Festival Lisbon (PT)
- BOCA Biennial Evora (PT)
- Artmania (RO)
- Pohoda (SK)
- Arter Istanbul (TUR)
- Ukrainian Institute Kiev (UA)
- Kyiv October Palace (UA)
- Zankovetska Theatre (UA)

ECOC PARTNER CITIES

- Matera 2019
- Novi Sad 2022
- Timisoara 2023
- Veszprem 2023
- Tartu 2024
- Chemnitz 2025
- Nova Gorica 2025
- Trencin 2026
- Oulu 2026
- Liepāja 2027
- Evora 2027
- České Budějovice 2028
- Broumov (candidate for ECoC 2028 not designated)
- Skopje 2028
- Katowice 2029 (Candidate City)
- Burgos 2031 (Candidate City)
- Uppsala 2029 (Candidate City)



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

- Adélaïde philarmony (AU)
- Ministry of Culture, Benin (BJ)
- Videobrasil, São Paulo (BR)
- Bandjou Station (CM)
- Rockbund Art Museum Shanghai (CN)
- Shangqi Art Shenzhen (CN)
- Tai Kwun Contemporary Art Centre (CN)
- Power Station of Art, Shanghai (CN)
- Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (CN)
- Fondation H (FR-MG)
- Reykjavik Arts Festival (IS)
- Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (JP)

- Think Tanger, (MA)
- Qatar museums (QA)
- Diriyah biennial foundation (SA)
- Bambey University (SN)
- City of Diourbel (SN)
- Dream City Tunis (TN)
- Fondation IKSU (TR)
- Art Jameel (UAE)
- KADIST Paris, San Francisco (US/FR)
- MET New York (US)
- Performa New York (US)
- Muholi Art Institute (ZA)

Q12 Attracting the interest of a European and international audience

Bourges 2028 is approaching the European and international audience with a multi-level strategy. Not only do we want to attract visitors – more important is to trigger discourse and spark interest in the models that our small and medium-size cities Matrix can use – as well as many other small and medium-sized cities in Europe.

The levels on which we offer an international audience an interesting experience whether they come to Bourges physically or read, hear, or join our projects remotely goes through three elements of the strategy:

- A really great artistic experience built around a coherent narrative of Territories of the Future,
- The innovative Bourges 2028 low carbon (travel) experience internationally and locally,
- A sustainable Tourism strategy by 4 touristic partners working jointly.

Our low carbon travel options are aimed at showing our audience that environmental protection does not have to come with a raised finger. We think that turning around travel habits towards European Capitals of Culture, but also other all-time favourite cultural events can only be achieved if there are some incentives involved. For us this mainly means connecting low-carbon means of transport to artistic content.

GETTING HERE IS PART OF THE ADVENTURE

In 2028, the New European Grand Tour will once again be a learning journey for Bourges and for Europe. If there is indeed a common European heritage, it is the history of rail. We are working on a tailor-made travel proposal based on existing lines. Imagine 6 young Europeans in backpacks: Jakub (Czechia), Lucia (Spain), Maria (Finland), Andrei (Romania), Luka (Croatia) and Sofia (Italy). By going to the Bourges 2028 and Interrail websites, they can choose several routes to visit the European Capitals of Culture (Bad Ischl, Chemnitz, Matera, Nova Gorica, Timisoara and many more) before arriving in Bourges at the end of their journey. They will benefit from free tickets for the major Bourges 2028 exhibitions and events.

With projects like The Loire Sun (RER), with Métro Europa and all the artistic projects of Trans Europe Culture like the European Puppet Theatre by Yngvild Aspeli, the European Resilience Choirs or the European Inside Out we can bring an enjoyable aspect to slower and eco-sustainable travel. Making the route very much part of the destination is the new approach.

We are also debating in France – the world's most successful tourist destination – how to change over-tourism – i.e. surtourisme as we call it. 80% of tourism is concentrated in just 20% of France. With the Olympics coming here next year, our tourism minister has launched 40 alternative routes with which to lure visitors off the beaten track. And what better destination than bringing them to Bourges, Cher and Indre.

4 strong tourism partners in the region have joined forces to create a Bourges 2028 tourism strategy. The Tourism Agency of Cher, the Regional Tourism Committee of Centre-Val de Loire, the Tourism Office of Bourges and the Tourism Department of the Regional Council have developed a joint approach to improve the

visitors' experience and at the same time meet the low-carbon commitments:

- Developing an environment conducive to maximum hospitality,
- Support from Tourism Agency of Cher to train tourism professionals in eco-responsibility and slow tourism,
- Working with the various stakeholders to improve accessibility in tourism practices, and to develop innovative solutions for the tourism experience for targeted audiences,
- Optimising, proposing innovative solutions at each stage of the visitor journey (inspiration and preparation phase, sojourn phase, post-sojourn phase).

Since we insist on rail as the preferred mode of access to Bourges 2028 events, a significant increase in passenger numbers is expected throughout the event at Bourges station. The pilot projects of Gare Végétales in Paris Austerlitz, Blois and Bourges will soon give us a taste for how we can best welcome our train travellers in our region. The four tourism partners, the Region Centre-Val de Loire, and its rail operator SNCF will focus particularly on welcoming French and foreign tourists at train stations.

EXPLORING THE PLACE WITH ALL SENSES

Moving around within the Bourges 2028 area will offer some artistic surprises along the way with our projects **Métro Europa** with imaginary métro lines that allow visitors and locals to move around Bourges in the most sustainable way (and getting in those steps for the day!) with the plus of discovering hidden gems, artistic interventions and arriving at destination in style – already full of joyful experiences.

The Loire Sun RER lines will move people on biomethane and hydrogen operated buses through the region and offer trips to explore the nature, culture and art of our towns and countryside. Once you have an overview of the area and have already attended quite a few artistic activities, eaten some lovely food at one of the events of our project **The Language of Food**, you might be hungry for a different kind of nourishment. Then it's time to visit our exciting art exhibitions. Centre Pompidou closes its doors for renovation and transfers its contemporary art into unusual spaces around the region within the project **Euro Renaissances and Centre Pompidou @ Palais Jacques Coeur**.

Next, get a glimpse of some of the most prestigious art commissioned by Jean de Berry in **Les Heures** curated by Estelle Zhong Mengual. Follow the path of **Jacques Tati** and his cinema in **The Birth of a Filmmaker** curated by Italian artist Rà di Martino and Chinese curator Wang Bing. Or go on a **Journey to the Future** with around 30 international artists from all over the world including many indigenous people enriching our **Symbiocene** exhibition about how humans can live in harmony with their non-human surroundings.

Listen to music of female composers in our project **Missing Women** or to sound installations that the Lebanese artist Tarek Atoui develops with young people from our communities in **Sounding the Ceramics**. You might be surprised to find queer culture in smaller towns around Europe – but that is what Territories of the Future is all about! Moving away from creating perspectives only in the metropolises. Bourges-based Compagnie Marteau will draw you in with their **European Queer Cabaret** and within the **European City of Artists**, local company Léla will cooperate with three resident artists from abroad each year and create quirky **European Pocket Theatre**. We could go on dropping names like that of Chinese curator Hou Hanru who will create several exhibitions together with local art

students and internationally renowned artists like Hito Steyerl, Nick Cave and Olaf Nicolai. Rem Koolhaas and his OMA office will give their take on one of our Stations of Cultivation and Claire Gibault and her Paris Mozart Orchestra now based in Bourges will bring the Music! for Sanity to the psychiatric hospital George Sand – whose character will in turn feature in some of our eco-feminism projects like A Fertile Land of Tomorrow and From the River.

Lots to look forward to and explore in Europe's new Territories of the Future.

Q13 Links and cooperation plans with cities holding the European Capital of Culture title

Throughout our bid phase, Bourges 2028 developed collaborations with past, present and designated European Capitals of Culture.

In 2022, we went to Esch-sur-Alzette 2022 for a working meeting with the programme team. In addition to soaking up the atmosphere, we were able to meet local artists and share the emotions aroused by the team a week after the Opening.

In the same year, we travelled to Liverpool 2008, Lille 2004, Avignon 2000, Brussels 2000 (and candidate 2030), Marseille 2013 and Matera 2019 to get their take on the long-term strategy and learn about it for our project. In 2023, we visited Budweis 2028 with whom we hope to share the title in 2028, and Broumov 2028 (not designated) to build bridges for common projects. This year, we also went to the Nordic countries, to meet Bodø 2024 and Oulu 2026 to conclude partnerships and enrich our European relations, as well as travelling to Veszprém and Timisoara 2023 to learn about legacy planning and lessons learned so far.

During his strip to Veszprém our Mayor had the opportunity to learn a lot from a city on a human scale like ours. Indeed, Veszprém was facing many difficulties similar to Bourges like a lack of medical staff

and students. Since the beginning of their ECoC year, they noticed a 60% increase of student registration at university. Where they struggled with resident doctors for their hospital, they now had to turn down applications. This feedback showed us how ECoC can be a lever for opportunities beyond culture. Getting to know the ECoC teams was an exciting part of the bid. These exchanges have also developed our culture of Europe, its heritage and its traditions, have broadened our European dimension and have increased within the Bourges 2028 team a feeling of belonging to a common identity.



Yann Galut, Mayor of Bourges (FR) and Dagmar Škodová Parmová, Mayor of Budweis (CZ) jointly inaugurate the Melina Mercouri esplanade on October 12, 2023 on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Maison de la Culture de Bourges.

We have successfully established partnerships with many ECOCS and plan to develop more connections. So far we have discussed cooperation in these projects with these cities:

ECoC

**BUDWEIS 2028
(CZECH REPUBLIC)**

PROJECTS

- European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri
- Trans Europe Culture
- European Parliament of Rivers
- Connected Micro-Folies
- European Citizen Council
- Missing Women
- Young programmers on the move
- Revival Shops
- The Matrix
- New Patrons, RER Europa

TOPICS AND PROJECTS OF COOPERATION

Budweis 2028 has already joined our Matrix network. Further we will cooperate on women empowerment and citizen participation as per their projects Portkeys and WomenPedia.

Found in Translation will join European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri open calls.

Kulturista will join New Patrons in RER Europa.

Ars Biologica project will join Gares Végétales project and European Parliament of Rivers with joint initiatives.

Confluence will join European Parliament of Rivers.

WomenPedia will join Missing Women.

Kroj Pride will join défilé.

Emerging Houses will join Revival Shops.

Hotspots and Inspire will join Shelter for Democracy and European Citizen Council.

SKOPJE 2028 (NORTH MACEDONIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing Women • European Citizen Council 	<p>Developing and promoting the role of women in the cultural and creative world (their project SheLeaders VR). Also, partnership on a youth programme called “Meet the Creative Industries”.</p>
ÉVORA 2027 (PORTUGAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri • The Matrix • Trans Europe Culture • European Light Nights • Language of Food • Gares Végétales • Youth Programme • Sounding the Ceramics 	<p>Evora 2027 has joined the Matrix and we have agreed following various working sessions to collaborate on the following projects of their programme. Lab and Meeting_line cultural resource centre will operate joint calls and actions with European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri as of 2025. Evora will be one of the participating cities in Trans Europe Culture within the World History of Europe project. Their Dive Project will be broadcast in night sessions on European Light Nights. ECA will launch a call to complete Sun Celebration project by Evora 2027 on the Megalithic sites in Berry. Bourges 2028 will send Michelin starred chefs of Centre-Val de Loire to Gastronomy: beauty and resilience programme in Evora. Evora's Parasites and Funghi project will complete the Gare végétale project in Bourges with Eva Jospin and the mycelium. Evora's Power Puppets project will be a southbound extension of Yngvild Aspeli's Trans Europe Culture project in Bodø with a trip Paris/Bourges/Madrid/Evora. Evora's project Travelling Light will be joined by a class of Centre-Val de Loire. Evora's Towards a New Wave programme around ceramics will have joint calls with ECA and Sounding the Ceramics in Bourges 2028.</p>
LIEPĀJA 2027 (LATVIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Citizen Council 	<p>Liepaja also works towards more citizen participation which makes Liepaja's citizens potential participants for our European Citizen Council.</p>
TRENČIN 2026 (SLOVAKIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Light Nights • European Queer Cabaret • European Citizen Council 	<p>We agreed to connect Trenčín's project Castel Contemporary - (video mapping on heritage buildings) to our European Light Nights and cooperate on issues of minorities and representation.</p>
OULU 2026 (FINLAND)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing Artfully • European Queer Cabaret • The Matrix • The Language of Food • Young Programmers on the Move • The Maestra 2028 	<p>Oulu 2026 is a member of the Matrix and we have found lots of common ground on LGBTQIA+ in the rurality, art in hospitals and senior homes, as well as capacity building for young cultural programme makers. Food programme exchanges on the Arctic Food Project. Finally we will join projects on the creative districts, Axereal project twinning projects and exchanges with Oulu Urban Culture project.</p>
NOVA GORICA 2025 (SLOVENIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans Europe Culture • Gares Végétales • Metro Europa • European Citizen Council 	<p>Nova Gorica 2025 is a strong ally on the train and rurality topics especially through their project Think Tank Train.</p>
CHEMNITZ 2025 (GERMANY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Le Printemps de l'Europe • Trans Europe Culture • European Citizen Council 	<p>People who feel they do not matter is a big topic for Chemnitz 2025, too and we will invite citizens from Chemnitz to join us for European Citizen Council as well as participating in their NONSTOP Europa! Theatre festival. Kosmos Chemnitz Festival connects well to our Printemps de l'Europe.</p>
BODØ 2024 (NORWAY)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our (European) Stories • Trans Europe Culture • The Matrix 	<p>Bodø 2024 is a partner in the Matrix. Further we agreed on a strategic partnership for youth projects built around their project My European Story. Strong ties are on our European Puppet Stories which runs on the Norwegian section of our Trans Europe Culture.</p>

<p>BAD ISCHL SALZKAMMERGUT 2024 (AUSTRIA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans Europe Culture • European Parliament of Rivers • The Matrix • Revival Shops • Gares végétales 	<p>Bad Ischl 2024 is a member of the Matrix and we have a similar strategic approach to public transport connections for culture. They are a partner in all topics of rurality and the connection Culture/Nature e.g., with their project H2 Oh-No.</p>
<p>TARTU 2024 (ESTONIA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the Spectrum • Music! for Sanity • The Matrix • Low-carbon ECoC 	<p>Next to being a member of the Matrix, our projects on mental health and neurodiversity connect to their project Stand Up for Your Mind.</p>
<p>NOVI SAD 2022 (SERBIA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament of Rivers 	<p>Novi Sad lies on the banks of the Danube, one of the four rivers we will work on for the European Parliament of Rivers and a precious asset in this network.</p>
<p>MATERA 2019 (ITALY)</p>	<p>Partner in the project Partnership for Excellence - Centres of Vocational Excellence ERASMUS-EDU-2023-PEX-COVE carried by Matera 2019.</p> <p>Joint bid on Mobile Democracy for European Culture Foundation call 2023 "European Pavilion".</p>	
<p>BROUMOV 2028 (CZECH REPUBLIC) (not designated)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Parliament of Rivers • Departure Class • European City of Artist - Melina Mercouri • Ageing Artfully 	<p>We have strong ties to Broumov and want to continue our cooperation on our projects connected to their The Healing Landscapes on the mystical power of nature healing people. Their project On Stage invites those whose voices have not been properly heard to the stage - people who feel they do not matter. Their project Heroes of the Flow will invite in 2028 two illustrators from each of the three 2028 ECoCs for the Symposium of Illustration in Broumov selected by a Czech-French curatorial board, celebrating the cooperation between the ECoC cities.</p>
<p>UPPSALA 2029 (SWEDEN) Candidate City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RER Europa • Gares Végétales 	<p>We share the interest of green transport and jointly decided to work on our RER Europa and the Gares Végétales for their take on urban green transformation and low-carbon mobility.</p>
<p>KATOWICE 2029 (POLAND) Candidate City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing Women • European Queer Cabaret 	<p>Katowice 2029 is interested to cooperate specifically on gender equality issues and on the quest for Cultural Rights in Europe connecting to their gender project Between Arts & Crafts and their drag and burlesque project Stay with Us.</p>
<p>BURGOS 2031 (SPAIN) Candidate City</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure Class • Young programmers on the Move • Ageing Artfully 	<p>The Burgos collective GAP (Gremio de Artistas Plásticas) proposes, fourthly, the project Lumen Gentium and the Time of Resilience', an installation of concave stained glass windows, like half domes, manufactured with recycled plastic and located in the Facade of different buildings in the city. They will work in collaboration with ARBU (Association of Alcoholics in Rehabilitation), while the co-design of the project is carried out with Jean-André Vialla, president of Antre Peaux, from Bourges and a member of Bourges 2028 Board of Directors.</p>



outreach

Chapter 4

Q14 Involvement of the local population

Participatory governance is key in what we bring as a proposal to Europe: citizens participate in the decision-making process of Bourges 2028 and co-curate exhibitions while this all questions the economy of offer vs demand in art. We also think our approach is a major breakthrough with respect to rurality. We put emphasis on the connection of citizens of a landlocked region like ours in Europe with other European citizens. Bourges 2028 is not a static involvement of Bourges citizens only: it is a pan-European movement of citizens with shared artistic experience who become mediators in terms of new sustainable ways of travel, co-creation, tourism and rural area development through combining art, culture, business, and nature. That is what we mean by our artistic vision *On a Human(e) Scale* - a voice for those who feel unheard. Whether it is people, rivers, fungi, birds or trees.

We carried out a unique series of European conferences open to citizens, artists, and actors of social and economic society to learn from different ECoC projects and innovative solutions in France and Europe. The use of group discussion management techniques and simultaneous translation technologies with our partner Panthéa based in Berlin has allowed us an impressive fluidity of exchanges, sometimes with 10 foreign partners, while reducing the carbon impact of travel. Several of the flagship projects in our programme come from this interplay between local stakeholders with national and European counterparts. And the Matrix concept came from there, too.

More large-scale meetings and small-scale workshops were scheduled after preselection, and a caravan has been touring the city sharing the project in the outskirts. We launched agoras for the design of our Metro Europa network to have citizens define the themes, lines, stations, and routes.

In total, nearly 500 citizens and city stakeholders participated in these conferences and design workshops which allowed us to further develop experience in participatory and active citizen processes. About 1000 used our RER Europa and a few thousand the Metro Europa prototype projects. If we secure the title, Bourges 2028 will structure these agoras by supplementing them with citizens to build a tool for the design, monitoring and evaluation of projects.

During the second phase of our bid we have continued prototyping flagship projects in order to further involve the population in the Bourges 2028 dynamic. With Metro and RER Europa in 2022 and 2023, we prototyped 2 strong participatory projects around the main axes of Bourges 2028: ecological transition, citizen participation, and contemporary art. We also have launched monthly meetings of the Matrix with a special session dedicated to the New European Bauhaus in October 2023.

ARTISTIC INVOLVEMENT

Examples of how the local population of Bourges and the region will be able to participate and co-create in the preparation and during the ECoC year include the mentioned RER and Metro Europa.

Metro Europa is designed as a 100% participatory project.

The process of co-creation will continue for editions of Metro Europa throughout the years. Citizens, students, and inhabitants actively participate in decision-making processes, contributing to the design, station selection, and overall planning of the programming. We focus on direct involvement in decision-making with our **European Citizens' Council** which will have representation in our governance structure - but especially will be managing 20% of the budget allocated to artistic projects. The **Gares Végétales** are ways of inviting the public to learn how to create plant work with landscape artists. The **New Patrons initiative**, initiated by the Fondation de France, aims to democratise access to culture by reversing the traditional logic of cultural policy.

All of the projects in **Trans Europe Culture** focus on meeting people and discovering cultural treasures, emphasising the experience of travel over rushing to a destination. This approach encourages participation and interaction among travellers. The project encourages practical, positive low-carbon behaviour for long-distance travel by encouraging travellers to choose eco-friendly transportation options. Whether citizens sing out their joy and frustration in the **European Resilience Choirs**, or get collective goosebumps when stepping in front of a microphone in **We Can Be European Heroes**, or interact with the fascinating puppets of Norwegian artist Yngvild Aspeli in **European Puppet Stories** - the experience of deep artistic experiences will indelibly be linked to eco-sustainable travel in positive ways.

The **European Parliaments of Rivers** is not only a body to promote and defend the rights of rivers at a time when they are most threatened, it is above all a body of sharing and exchange. Around the parliaments, anyone can be part of it through site visits, on the banks of the rivers or directly on barges, but also artistic workshops on the theme of the river and its biodiversity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The dynamic of **volunteering** is an important way to develop citizens' participation and sense of belonging to the project. Volunteers are also friends and family, allowing us to reach a large audience in an inclusive way. Bourges 2028 will develop its existing volunteer programme by structuring and strengthening it. We wish to draw inspiration from projects putting citizens forward, particularly for welcoming and guiding visitors to the various exhibitions which will be made by residents/citizens, following the example of the *Rencontres d'Arles*. We want to develop a series of incentives allowing us to aim for a high quality volunteers programme. Special attention will be paid to target audiences of seniors, young people and young dropouts, and LGBTQ+ to create more awareness and bring groups of people together that rarely meet in daily life. With the support of the Centre International de Jeunesse, young people are offered a real intercultural, social and intergenerational encounter via international youth volunteer projects.

Hospitality is an important part of engaging residents and making them communicators of Bourges 2028. Through the Bourges 2028 site, we will offer a welcome and hospitality programme for our locals to take care of national and foreign visitors which can take the form of a guide in the city (with training and a "diploma" awarded by Bourges 2028), exhibitions and possibly accommodation based on the structure of welcoming festival-goers during the *Printemps de Bourges*, which makes it possible to accommodate several thousand festival-goers each year in a Berruyer family-friendly setting.

The **involvement of citizens in monitoring** will allow us to have short-term feedback (on a quarterly basis) of the activities, and indicators

on different objective parameters linked to citizens' feelings about their level of participation and involvement in the Bourges 2028 project from the design years 2024 and 2025. This will allow for corrective actions if necessary.

Q15 Participation opportunities for less privileged groups

Bourges 2028 benefits from the Centre-Val de Loire Region structural frame. The Region has been a leading Region in France and Europe for more than 20 years ensuring equality for gender, against discrimination, and people with disabilities as pillars of the economic, cultural and social development. More recently, by adopting permanent democracy, the Region has included equal access to civic and democratic life as a determining issue in confronting mistrust, stalling and the weakening of our common capacity to build the general interest. This Regional structural framework includes a political impetus, a dedicated budget, strong partnership dynamics, citizen participation, communication around actions, and result indicators.

From this Regional existing structure, we have focused our bid on the importance of making all people feel valued within a territory where centralisation policies in France and Europe have caused

resentment among marginalised communities. The tragic death of Nahel M., killed at point-blank range by a police shot sparked protests highlighting this feeling of neglect especially among marginalised and disadvantaged populations. The riots by youth all over France, including small and medium-sized cities, which is new, were like a stroke for the Bourges 2028 team. It fed a new debate among us: we need to be better than this. And if it means completely reshaping how we are considering youth in our bid book then let's do so because we are now in front of an emergency. Our project is for people who feel they do not matter, and whoever feels that way shall remain our top priority.

To create participation opportunities for marginalised and disadvantaged audiences we have worked to better include these audiences in our artistic programme.

THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH

Today, the number of young people under the age of 24 in a situation of financial, health, and food precariousness in France is set by the Ministry of Health at 1.3 million (10-20,000 in Centre-Val de Loire). Seriously impacted by the covid crisis, a generation is suffering and a significant number use the food bank, and drop out of the system. This situation sometimes affects young graduates who drop out for family reasons, depression or drugs. They are called "invisible". The situation is made even more complex in rural areas.

We have identified several barriers that prevent the inclusion of youth in Bourges 2028 project and we build proposals to remedy these barriers.

BARRIERS OF YOUTH

DEDICATED ACTIONS

GOVERNANCE

Creation of a Bourges 2028 committee within the Regional Youth Council inspired by the Bodø 2024 youth council. This key group will be a place for co-construction and evaluation of Bourges 2028 projects dedicated to young people. The young members of this council will become real players in Bourges 2028 projects.

Youth representatives in the citizen council of Bourges 2028 managing the calls of the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri.

Inspired by Bodø 2024 and with their support and experience, we decided to engage a total budget of 5 million € dedicated to youth from 0 to 25 years. This budget will cover specific sections for youth in the general exhibitions or shows (10% of the budget of these projects), or specific calls for and by the youth.

AWARENESS

Specific communication tools with the region like Yep's platform (Regional Youth services, financial support for equipment, foreign travels and study, regional transportation) (20,000 young people members) and specific channels of social networks etc.

TICKETING/COST

Ticketing of all Bourges 2028 exhibitions will be free for young people below 20

Free access through national programme Pass Culture for schools

MOBILITY/ACCESS

As a support to Bourges 2028 mobility for youth, Centre-Val de Loire Region announced free train tickets for youth aged 15-25 on weekends and holidays as of 2023.

Mobility free for public transport in Bourges and Bourges Plus Conurbation as of 2023 for everyone.

PRECARIOUSNESS

Specific programmes for youth in danger and/or conflict with State/authority

Some examples from our artistic projects and other activities:

Departure Class is a programme of artistic creation and social transformation which detects “invisible” young people through local actors, associations or local youth missions, and offers them a cycle of social reintegration through the practice of intensive artistic workshops of 7 months (writing, singing, dancing, music) and the creation of a show presented in public at the end of the course. At the same time, they are supported in redefining a career path and personal objectives in order to find a job.

In our project **European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri 10%** (or 1 million euros) of the calls are decided and monitored by the Bourges 2028 committee within the Regional Youth Council.

Metro Campus Line – The weakness of the current student fabric in Bourges led us to question how to integrate them more concretely into the city. Thus we proposed – within the framework of the METRO EUROPA project – to create jointly with the students of Bourges, a **Campus Line** which will bring together emblematic student places. This is an initiative that will develop better cooperation between schools that are too closed in on themselves and will encourage students to learn more about cultural programming.

Neighbourhood Youth Caravans – In 2023, during the application phase, we set up **youth caravans** that circulate in the neighbourhoods. The caravans are responsible for promoting the candidacy to young people and getting potential volunteers to join the project. They are accompanied by musical entertainment produced by the Bourges youth musical scene. This is an action that we will continue in the 2024-2028 build up phase of Bourges 2028.

Come on Berry, let's go party! This project focuses on young people and parties, highlighting the strong prevalence of youth-organised events in Europe rather than institutional ones. An example is the recent **teknival** in Cher Department, drawing over 80,000 participants, raising concerns about event management and safety. To address this, the project will facilitate capacity building, training and event planning for young organisers.

THE ART OF AGEING

Barriers for seniors and elderly people are lack of representatives in the process and difficulties with mobility and access.

Almost 25% of the population of Bourges is over 65 years old and is expected to continue to increase in the next 10 years. In May 2023, the City of Bourges was awarded the prestigious title **Senior-friendly City**, one of 11 cities in France. The label aims to promote territorial dynamics and to support local stakeholders step-by-step in the implementation of a dynamic of continuous improvement of elderly people's lives. Bourges 2028 is 100% behind this vision. With the project **Ageing Artfully** led by author and director Mohammed El Khatib, we will reinvent the limits and the definition of an artistic space in elderly homes. Artists in residence will contribute to a model of shared creation that puts residents, artists and caregivers into positive dialogue. We will create links with European peers – such as residents of European elderly homes like we started with Oulu 2026 or to adapt some of our Trans Europe Culture projects to match elderly representation.

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS HEALTH

Mental Health and Community

The Centre-Val de Loire and Cher regions have a suicide rate higher than the national average. According to the latest public health bulletin on suicidal behaviour, Centre-Val de Loire ranks 7th among the regions most affected by suicide. A situation even more accentuated among women.

Faced with this overwhelming observation, Bourges 2028 is firmly committed to promoting good mental health. To do this, it benefits from a partner of choice: the **Paris Mozart Orchestra**, director **Claire Gibault**. Since the second round, the PMO has decided to settle in an artistic residence in the **George Sand psychiatric hospital**, one of the largest in France with more than 1,000 beds, in a wing of the hospital which is currently abandoned. It is an 850m² building in the middle of an open park planted with century-old oak trees. The space will be designed to encourage social connections, facilitating interactions among different groups, including intergenerational gatherings, interactions between hospital patients and local residents, and collaborations between artists and caregivers/patients. Knowledge sharing is also emphasised.

Bourges 2028 is also committed to the care of **autism** by developing partnerships with a reception structure for young adults on the spectrum in a rural area near Bourges, La Châtaigneraie. Since its creation in 2009, this establishment has been structured around 2 main axes which correspond to the Bourges 2028 bid: **art and nature**. With Bourges 2028, La Châtaigneraie in partnership with the Papotin newspaper will work together on following major Bourges 2028 events through podcasts, radio and TV shows.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The project **Train of Beautiful Differences** will allow us to raise collective awareness among all Bourges 2028 stakeholders of the challenges of disability integration. This real case study will put us in a position to implement equitable representation of artists with disabilities, audiences and staff. This programme will be deployed with the help of Audiens, the national welfare organisation for entertainment professionals in France. The Centre-Val de Loire Region is a model in the recruitment of staff with disabilities, which represents 11% of its staff (the legal obligation in France is 6%). Bourges 2028 is committed to reaching this threshold of 11% in its staff.

THE EMBRACE OF DIVERSITY

Immigration and History

In **Our (European) Stories** project, we will focus on immigration in the Cher Department and the Centre-Val de Loire Region. This lesser-known and under-documented aspect of the history of our territory presents a unique opportunity for exploration. While it may not be a central theme in the region's history like in traditional migration community destinations, immigration has played a constant and evolving role in local economic and demographic development. Through various thematic workshops, we aim to foster acceptance of migrant communities in the region and encourage a sense of shared community. Together with our partners, we will launch a call for contributions to collect amateur images and videos spanning from the 1920s to the 2020s. These collected materials will serve as the foundation for various exhibitions and workshops, including those conducted in schools and with associations assisting migrants and promoting international solidarity in Bourges.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusivity

We were asked during our preselection presentation why we had not yet started working with the **Bourges LGBTQIA+ Centre** when we mentioned it in our first bid book. When the application was launched, the LGBTQIA+ Centre had just been created and was faced with the difficulties of a nascent structure (no premises, few volunteers and no dedicated help desks). To be honest, they had other problems than putting up with us. The creation of an LGBTQIA+ association in a medium-sized town raises issues. "To be queer you have to leave", we sometimes read about LGBTQIA+ people living in the countryside. Isolation, lack of representation and listening, and difficulty in accessing specific medical services are some of the difficulties. Several good news since then. On May 30, 2023, the LGBTQIA+ association inaugurated its premises. The City of Bourges has made an office available at the Val d'Auron social centre. To go further, the Municipal Council of the City of Bourges voted unanimously on June 22, 2023, a motion declaring Bourges an **LGBTQIA+ freedom zone** following a resolution of the European Parliament of March 11, 2021.

Thus, proposing a **European Queer Cabaret** in our artistic programme also means thinking about how we approach LGBTQIA+ issues in a rural area and a medium-sized city. The project aims to promote gender equality through a cultural and artistic event. The Cabaret will offer workshops in Bourges but also Cher Department with European artists for co-creation residencies with the participants and restitution in the form of a show on the occasion of March 8 (International Women's Rights Day) and Pride Month.

Homelessness

We will work with the Abbé Pierre Foundation and its partners to include in several projects an **It's not Luxury** moment allowing vulnerable audiences to attend Bourges 2028 events in symbiosis with other audiences. The festival **It's not Luxury** has existed since 2017 in Avignon; the Foundation's teams carry out exceptional empathetic and collective work.

Q16 Audience development plans, education and schools

André Malraux will guide us once again. His visionary statement that "every child of sixteen, however poor, should have genuine contact with their national heritage and with the glory of the spirit of humanity" is in many ways a definition of audience development before the term was even coined. And that drives our approach to go beyond our usual audience.

Our strategy of audience development follows four axes:

1. **Develop the messages of Bourges 2028 in strategic locations with daily high frequency of people, with renowned names in culture and art.**

Our Gares Végétales programme allows us to reach all audiences, particularly the non-users of culture in Bourges and thanks to SNCF in 3,000 train stations in France.

Projects with internationally renowned artists like Rem Koolhaas, Eva Jospin, JR, or rappers with Printemps de Bourges, allow us to convey strong messages in these places of high frequency for each and every age group. We will use large-scale and impact media e.g. rap and current music, comic strips, and short videos. With the same

strategy large-scale festivals supporting the bid with strong media coverage will be used to spread the messages: Festival d'Angoulême (comic strips) in January, Printemps de Bourges (current music, rap) in April, Festival d'Avignon (performing arts) in July.

2. **Bring Culture close to where people live**

Programmes like the Metro Europa allow us to be present in the outlying districts of Bourges. RER Europa, acting in its location, allows us to map the territory and be present in rural areas, places where the audience is more difficult to convince and seek. In all cases, projects where citizens are actors and co-creators of concepts and projects are favoured.

3. **Develop specific actions for the most fragile, in-danger audiences**

Target audiences in schools, the elderly or on medical care can be reached through important institutional channels as we set out in Q15. We will develop specific channels with intermediaries such as local youth missions or the Abbé Pierre Foundation and its partners for young "missing" audiences, migrants or homeless people all of whom are "invisible" to current cultural institutions. Our aim is to guarantee cultural rights for all and to make Bourges 2028 a project of inclusion, empathy and social transformation. We will develop specific communication with the LGBTQ+ community with the same attention.

4. **Connect citizens to the project and redevelop common narratives in a fragmented society**

Projects like the agoras, European Citizen Council, the New Patrons, portable democracy or the shelters give room to democratic exchange and conflict resolution through mutual understanding.

LINKS WITH EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS

- **Deploy national EAC label**

The City of Bourges places significant emphasis on artistic and cultural education (EAC) as a key element of its cultural strategy, aligning with the **Artistic and Cultural Education** programme offered by the Ministry of Culture. In collaboration with the Centre-Val de Loire Region, Cher Department, and Bourges City, they have developed three interconnected EAC schemes: "Aux z'arts les enfants" for nursery and elementary schools, "Léz'arts ô collèges" for middle schools, and "Aux arts Lycéens and Apprentices!" for high school students, all involving artists or artist groups engaging directly with students.

Bourges aims to earn the 100% EAC label from the Ministry of Culture and has partnered with Guingamp, a fellow Matrix network city with this distinction. This partnership will aid in realising Bourges 2028's EAC ambitions.

The city has also received the "Educational City" label for its Chancellerie-Gibjoncs-Moulon district, underscoring its commitment to providing cultural access to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The local community actively contributes ideas and initiatives, with cultural activities playing a central role in their vision for a brighter future.

- **Deploy Pass Culture initiative**

The Pass Culture is an offer from the French Government to give a culture budget to young people aged 18 in the form of a culture cheque of 300 euros. The proposal is supplemented by the possibility for schools to undertake visits to cultural institutions.

- **Internationalising school exchanges and experiences**

In the dynamics of Bourges 2028, several school projects for European networking of classes are being structured, in particular, My European Story carried by Bodø 2024 with several ECoCs or via the Connected Micro-Folies project. Several Trans Europe Culture training projects will see school exchanges structured, for example, World History of Europe.

“Bourges 2028 partnering up with My European Story (Bodø 2024): The project was part of Bodø’s application to become the European Capital of Culture. Through My European Story, secondary school pupils from all over Nordland will be able to tell their story and bond more closely with European youngsters in the same cohort. The school classes in each location must be linked together and have contact with a school class of the same age either in a European twinning municipality or another capital of culture. The purpose of the project is for the students to tell their stories, about their lives and local communities, and exchange these with young people in other cities in Europe.

Partners of the project: Primary School with Bilingual Classes Nowy Sacz (Poland), Evora 2027, Skeiða and Gnúpverjahreppur (Iceland), Goethe-Gymnasium (Chemnitz 2025), Oulu 2026, Melenci (Serbia), Saint Sava Primary School, Gornij Milanovac (Serbia), Bourges 2028”

We are considering submitting Erasmus+ projects with various partners in the ECoCs network with whom contacts are in progress.

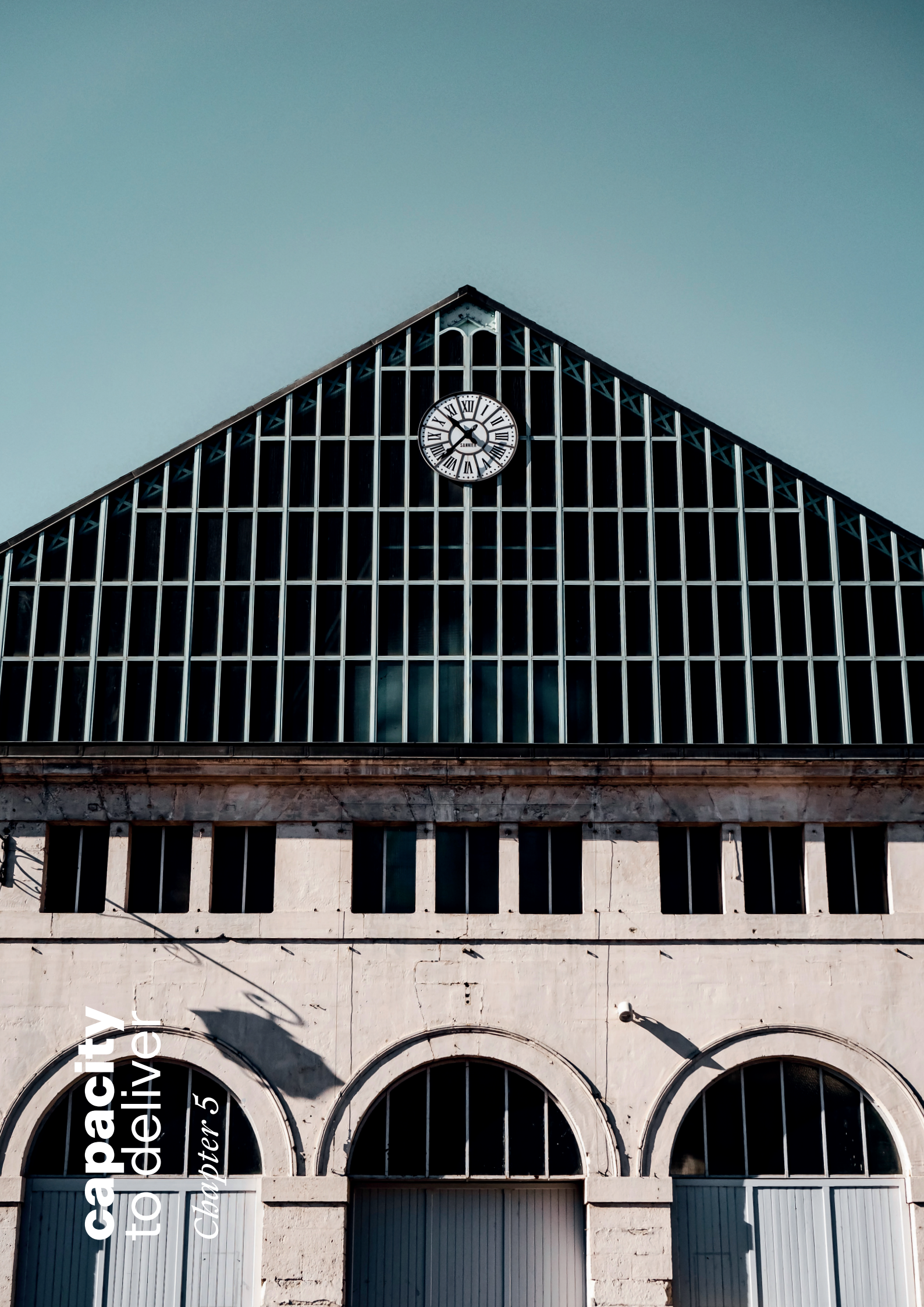


TARGET AUDIENCE: CHILDREN	PROJECTS	SPECIFIC ACTIONS
	Jacques Tati, the Birth of a Filmmaker	Partnering with sociologist Emmanuel Ethis and INSEAC of Guingamp, the National Centre for School Artistic Education, this project offers an education programme on Jacques Tati’s cinema for young audiences.
	Duke Jean de Berry, a European Heritage	School children are invited to imagine what the Book of Hours of the 21st century and Bourges 2028 would be. The project will create a time capsule for generations after 2028.
	André Malraux, an Imaginary Museum	In partnership with the museums and libraries of Bourges, we will conduct workshops in schools of all the districts to offer the children the possibility of designing their ideal museum combining digital means and physical objects. for great interactive restitution.
	Symbiocene	The Superheroes of the Symbiocene: Kids Project is an exciting part of the Mother Earth exhibition. It will feature interactive installations, engaging games, scientific experiments, and practical outdoor workshops preparing children to become ambassadors in the defence of the rights of nature.
	Intergenerational Canteens	Lunchtime will become a time of sharing between children and elderly people in nursing homes or isolated people with artistic interventions or activities to raise awareness of healthy eating.
	Our (European) Stories	The initiative will work with Ciclic, the regional film and book agency, to depict the history of immigration. Children will be invited to participate in workshops to express their experiences.

	PROJECTS	SPECIFIC ACTIONS
TARGET AUDIENCE: TEENAGERS	European Parliament of Rivers	The project provides an excellent opportunity for high school students to engage with real-world environmental issues. Several high school classes in the Centre-Val de Loire territory and in Europe will participate in the artistic festival.
	Connected Micro-Folies	The three Micro-Folies of Vierzon, Bourges and Nevers will be prototypes from 2025 to develop communities with a number of European Micro-Folies on the model of the Cafés Europa of Mons 2015. It will be a place of learning and meeting for teenagers.
	Departure Class	Bourges 2028 will develop two Departure Class per year from 2026 to 2028 with a mixed class of local and European students.
	Our (European) Stories	Workshops will engage schools and migrant support associations to create fictional characters and stories around the history of immigration, presented in short films, podcasts, plays and others.
	Our Gallery	Small art centres will be created in a dozen high schools and colleges based on the model of the well-established gallery "La transversale" at Alain Fournier High School in Bourges.
	Young Programmers on the Move	The Bourges 2028 project aims to establish an inter-European community of young non-professional show programmers starting in 2026. Their task is to curate a program of plays for young audiences to be broadcast across Europe.

	PROJECTS	SPECIFIC ACTIONS
TARGET AUDIENCE: YOUNG ADULTS (UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, FIRST JOBS, UNEMPLOYED ETC.)	Opening and closing Ceremonies	We will involve youth and schools in various aspects of the opening and closing ceremony, from its design to the final days. The students from the Campus Pyrotechnics of the Future in Bourges will participate in the creation of the fireworks for the opening celebration.
	Gares Végétales: Landscaping School Blois	The project will involve students from the Blois Landscape School, the Blois Agricultural Campus and other European landscape schools, fostering a collaborative design and implementation process.
	New mobilities - EDF Mazières	Bourges hosts the regional branch of the National Institute of Applied Sciences which today has around 2,000 students including 25% or Erasmus students. The Mazières site will be a springboard of tremendous opportunities for the school's Energy, Risks and Environment Department.
	European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri	Euro Fabrique, initiated by RMN Grand Palais during the French Presidency of the EU in 2022, invited students from 40 European art schools. Bourges 2028 will continue this initiative in partnership with RMN Grand Palais, the Strasbourg School of Decorative Arts, and the National School of Art in Bourges. Starting from 2024, Bourges 2028 will extend the project to 20 more schools, involving curators, artists from Bourges 2028, and enthusiastic students.
	Métro Europa: Campus Line	Within the framework of the Métro Europa project, the Campus line will bring together emblematic student places.
	Departure Class	Bourges 2028 will develop two Departure Class per year from 2026 to 2028 with a mixed class of local and European students.





capacity
to deliver

Chapter 5

Q42 Political support and commitment

From the beginning of the bid the support of our public partners has been strong and it has even been reinforced since the preselection.

The Mayor of Bourges has visited with various delegations former ECoCs on multiple occasions (Liverpool 2008, Matera 2019, Marseille 2013, Lille 2004) to benefit from their feedback and make them aware of our candidacy. He also talked to teams and Mayors in many current and designated ECoCs (Budweis 2028, Evora 2027, Vespem 2023, Timisoara 2023, Bas Ischl 2024), as well as with contenders for the title (Broumov, Aveiro) in order to present our candidacy and build lasting partnerships.

The Deputy Mayor for culture Yannick Bedin went with our artistic staff to Esch-sur-Alzette 2022, Bodø 2024 and Oulu 2026. These meetings demonstrate the strong commitment of the Mayor and his team to promoting our bid throughout Europe. They enabled us to deploy the Matrix and to launch a number of joint projects with our European counterparts in a relationship of mutual trust. As a mark of their appreciation and trust, the Mayor of Budweis and a delegation from Budweis 2028 travelled to Bourges on October 12, 2023 to attend the inauguration of the Esplanade Melina Mercouri and review shared projects and initiatives.

The Mayor and a Bourges delegation have also visited Brussels in person on two occasions to present our bid to members of the Commission and to present the Matrix's contributions to the ongoing discussions on the New European Bauhaus Mission. He also initiated the Matrix concept by contacting his counterparts in the cities concerned directly and attending all the network meetings.

From the outset, the Mayor, the President of the Bourges Plus Conurbation and the President of the Region assured us that their teams would be available to support Bourges 2028 in promoting the bid and developing the artistic programme, to approach local partners and to benefit from their expertise in certain sectors (education, gender equality, museums, green spaces, infrastructures, local economic fabric for the city and the conurbation, transport, tourism, youth, training, integration, regional planning and the environment, tourism, outreach, European programmes for the region). Discussions were fluid and regular thanks to the assignment of a person 100% dedicated to the application in each authority.

A number of projects have been designed in conjunction with the departments of the City, the Conurbation and the Region, and will be co-developed with them departments during the implementation phase of the ECoC.

The unfailing commitment of our public-sector partners was demonstrated at two finance committees in May and June 2023, attended by all the founding members of the organisation (city of Bourges, Bourges' conurbation, Cher Department, Centre-Val de Loire Region), during which the ECoC budget was approved.

Q43 Plans for infrastructure projects

We have made many adjustments to the investment strategy for Bourges 2028. To avoid getting caught in a delay in the delivery of certain buildings planned for 2028, we have decided to focus mainly on pre-existing locations not requiring work or just a light renovation.

CHANGE IN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY: THE CULTURAL MILE

Following the shortlisting and the panel's remark to have a plan B following the uncertainties linked to works and infrastructure projects, we set to work to find a more solid plan A. With all the stakeholders of Bourges 2028 involved in this brainstorming we could turn the table, and imagine a new cultural journey within the historic city centre which does not require new work and allows us to deploy the DNA of the project and the territory of the future: exhibitions in existing sites thus low carbon and without construction risks, not identified by the public as contemporary art exhibition or performance venues. This playground can extend to empty stores transformed into exhibition/performance spaces, and existing Bourges museums. The examples of tri Postal in Lille or Kanal Center Pompidou in Brussels in its pre-works phase inspired us a lot and allowed us to create an exceptional Cultural Mile. The Cultural Mile allows a total surface area of nearly 15000 sqm within walking distance.

It consists of the following existing venues :

- Château d'Eau château d'Art, a city cultural venue 500 sqm
- New Maison de la Culture with its exhibition places 1000 sqm
- Pavillon d'Auron, 5500 sqm (Trade show space)
- Palais Jacques Coeur 4000 sqm
- Halle au blé 3500 sqm (Saturday market space)
- Hôtel Dieu 1300 sqm

To avoid the risks of delay in the delivery of the Grand Museum we decided to focus on the 1st phase of the works consisting in renovating two museums, the Estève Museum and the Hotel Lallemand that will be delivered in 2027. The Hôtel Dieu dedicated to the European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri will also be completed in 2027. In case of any delay in the delivery of these buildings, we can manage to carry out the ECoC year without using them, thanks to the already existing ones.

PLAN FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

The investments planned for arts and cultural infrastructure between 2021 and 2028 have been updated. The total amount of investment expenditure over a period of eight years reaches 99,8 M €, which represents a significant investment considering the size of the city and its surroundings. These investments will help change the face of the city centre by giving space and places back to its residents. What emerges with undeniable evidence is a strong commitment to the artistic and cultural fields and a desire to offer Berruyers a better living environment. The infrastructure and the developed content support the impacts and are part of the long-term legacy of the ECoC.



CULTURAL MILE

- A** Château d'eau Château d'art
- B** New Maison de la Culture
- C** Jacques Coeur Palace
- D** Halle au Blé
- E** Hôtel Dieu: European City of Artists - Melina Mercouri

VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITION VENUES

- La Box - Gallery of the National School of Arts
- Auron Pavilion
- Berry Museum - Hotel Cujas
- Estève Museum - Hôtel des Echevins
- Museum of Decorative Arts - Hôtel Lallemand
- Natural History Museum of Bourges

REVIVAL SHOPS BOURGES 2028

- Rue Coursarlon
- Aux Dames de France
- Magasin Aubrun
- Rue d'Auron
- Rue Moyenne

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	CONNECTION WITH BOURGES 2028	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN EUROS	PLANNED DELIVERY DATE
New Maison de la Culture of Bourges	This ultra-modern equipment offers a very high-level programme every year in all disciplines of artistic creation, giving pride of place to young artists and offering the audience spaces for meeting and dialogue with creators.	Main venue for Odyssey, World History of Europe, European Puppet Stories, European Resilience Choirs, Baroque Renewal 2028 and MAI (Muholi Art Institute)	39 300 000	Delivered end 2021
Soft mobility paths	Creation of a route dedicated to the movement of cycles and pedestrians, which connects cultural facilities (Water Tower, Castle of Art and Old and New House of Culture) and the city centre with the Town Hall and the Cathedral. Accessible to people with reduced mobility, with eating areas and green spaces.	Low-carbon approach. Improved guidance for residents and visitors.	2 500 000	2024
Cujas Square	Reclaiming an open-air parking space for the people. With green spaces, a new exhibition space, an esplanade for cultural events, and an inclusive childrens' playground. The Puit des Carmes (historical well) will be highlighted with a sound and visual installation tracing the history of Bourges.	Improved urban space with cultural offer.	7 500 000	2024
George Sand Psychiatric Hospital	Renovation of a 800 sqm 19th century building inside the hospital.	Music! for Sanity	3 300 000	2026
Former Maison de la Culture transformed into the Hôtel Communautaire de l'Agglomération Bourges plus	The first French Maison de la Culture transforming into a House for the Bourges Plus Conurbation (removed from the list of buildings available for the ECoC because the exhibition space is too small for our exhibitions)	The former Maison de la Culture de Bourges is a highly symbolic building in the life of the city. It is a building built between 1936 and 1938, art deco style which is an integral part of the landscape of Bourges. Abandoned and squatted for more than 10 years is a real heartbreak for the Berruyers and a constant source of questions for visitors in Bourges. This second life given to it by the Bourges agglomeration is an opportunity for our ECoC and it will be part of our Cultural Mile.	20 000 000	2026
Modernisation and extension of the main public library of the City of Bourges	Adapting to contemporary uses	Associated venue for Duke Jean de Berry, a European Heritage, From the River and the George Sand Prize	12 000 000	2026
Brownfield of Axéréal	The 4,000 sqm brownfield transformed to offer workspaces, shared tools, a restaurant, housing and artists' lodgings for CCI	A creative industry centre for both commercial and non-commercial activities.	3 500 000 (tbc)	2027
Friche Mazières	Former electricity plant transformed into mixed exhibition and space for green mobility entrepreneurs (2,500 sqm)	A unique creative district in France and in Europe on new European mobility.	3 500 000 (tbc)	2027
Hôtel Dieu	A former hospital in the heart of the city transformed into a service centre for artists and 20 housing units. HQ for our ECoC project European City of Artists	European City of Artists - Mélina Mercouri	1 200 000	2027
New Media Library in the Northern Districts of Bourges	High-level equipment in the less privileged northern city. A place for culture, sharing, meetings, open to multiple disciplines beyond the book.	Associated venue Learning to see (Duke Jean de Berry, a European Heritage), From the River and the George Sand Prize	7 000 000	2028
TOTAL			99 800 000	

Q44 The Last Word(s)

France is full of magnificent places. Not just the usual suspects. Places like Bourges for example. And the future of sustainable tourism, sustainable regions and a sustainable Europe depends on finding space for places like Bourges.

Europe deserves to discover the places off the beaten track because they are at its heart. Yet there is a worry, especially in the so called “bigger countries”, that they struggle with artistic excellence and a capacity to deliver.

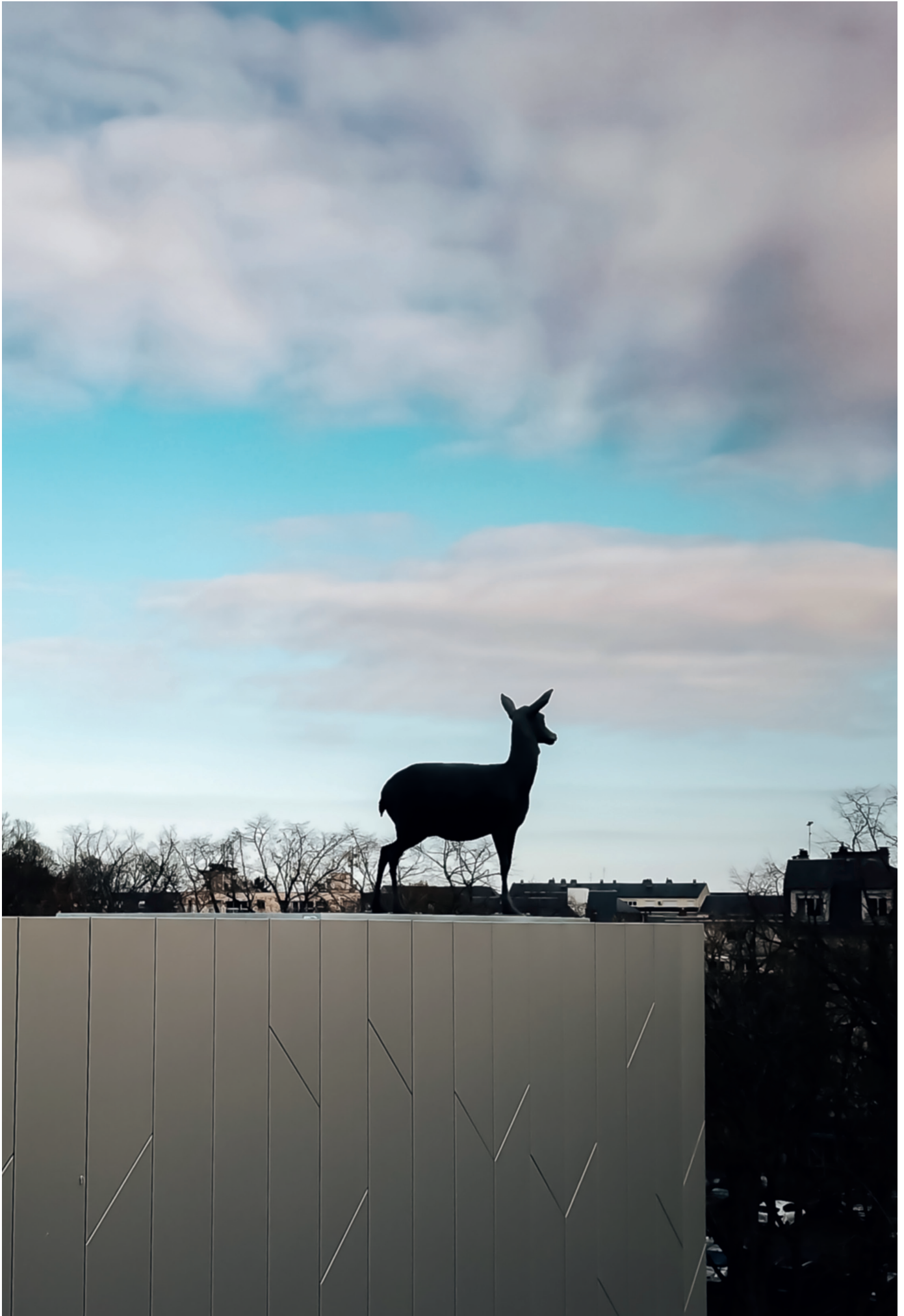
Recent ECoCs of a similar size to Bourges have shown that this need not be so. Leeuwarden, Matera, Veszprem and others have shown that smaller, agile cities have the ability to deliver the golden combination of outstanding culture but with an impact which touches the lives of each and every citizen. Moreover, in a way that is not possible in much bigger cities.

But can a “big country” trust a smaller city to deliver? That is something Bourges 2028 has put front and centre in planning our programme, our organisation and our partnerships.

Three things are central to our approach. First, genuine artistic excellence. World class artists and cultural organisations are at the very core of the design of our artistic programme. They have totally bought into our vision of a place where artists have a fundamental role in finding creative solutions to the very biggest challenges facing all cities today. Whatever their size.

Second, young people. At a key moment, their lives were put on hold because of the pandemic. No school. Online University studies. No partying. No dating. We have invested heavily in programming to support what has become known as the “ghost generation”, to try to overcome the deep sense of dislocation many young people feel. There really can be a future here.

And finally, organising in a way which is truly resilient. Pandemic, war, terrorism, climate change. Who knows what the next 5 years will throw at us? We don't. But what we have done is to build a genuinely robust project which has been designed to withstand even the biggest geopolitical and climate crises. Yes to reusing existing buildings rather than big infrastructure projects which end up being unfinished. Yes to introducing an innovative low carbon transport systems linking the rurality to the metropolis. And yes to investing in keeping and attracting talent – of all disciplines – to ensure the territory of the future is in safe hands.





« If humanity wants to survive as a species, it must learn to emancipate itself from the great paradigms that have guided it since the Enlightenment. »

Bruno Latour

Philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist

BID BOOK TEAM

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Carbon balance curation: Hermann Lugan

With Louison Bergman, Elisabeth Braoun, Faustine Damman, Charlotte Jacquet, Elisabeth Sanson, Anaïs Smart, Monia Triki, Yves Vasseur

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Photo on p.75: © Adagg, Paris, 2023

For his 'L'écoute' (Listening) project, Centre-Val de Loire artist in residence Olivier Leroi created a resonant interplay between the three sites of Place Séraucourt in Bourges – Maison de la Culture Malraux, the Château d'eau - Château d'art, and the new Maison de la Culture – by placing a sculpted animal on top of each one. Here, the doe on the new building of Maison de la Culture.

FRENCH TRANSLATION

Jennifer Joffre, Bourges

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Bourges 2028



