

**Festival Program 2025**  
**19 – 29 June in Hanover**

**April 22 2025**

**11 productions by artists from 10 countries – and an outing to the Deister**

Today, festival director Anna Mülter and her team presented this year's Theaterformen Festival program in Hanover together. On 11 days in June, the Theaterformen Festival will once again present a diverse international program of theater, dance and performance. In her fifth edition as director, Mülter will show current works by artists that address issues with the means of theater that otherwise remain ignored: power structures that oppress women, gender-specific violence through deepfake technology, the suppression of deaf culture and exploitation of domestic staff in the Kafala system. They question social concepts of normality and step into a dialogue with Hanover as a living space.

The 2025 festival program takes place on the Staatstheater Hannover's stages, in the Deister region as well as along the Leine and Ihme rivers. 11 productions have been invited; among them are two world premieres. Discussion formats, an urban walk, an open studio as well as silent discos will accompany them.

**Anna Mülter** on this year's festival edition in Hanover:

*"Theater is a real visibility machine. On stage, the artists confront us with work that takes place secretly and with injustices that are overlooked: Former prison inmates fight with brave songs for their place in society, everyday violence against trans people is unleashed in a slapstick bloodbath and the exploitation of disabled artists in historic freak shows is appropriated with confidence and radically redefined. There is plenty to discover at the Theaterformen Festival: from gigantic spectacles to humorous lecture performances, from documentary musicals to a choreographic excursion into nature. I'm looking forward to an inspiring festival summer in Hanover!"*

**Prof. Dr. Joachim Schachtner**, Lower Saxony State Secretary for Science and Culture:

*"I'm thrilled that we can once again experience experimental theater productions from all over the world in Hanover this year. Anna Mülter and her team are once again proving their intuition for relevant current issues – for example, gender-specific violence in the digital realm or the relationship of power between humans and nature. I wish everyone inspiring experiences at one of the most important platforms for contemporary theater from a global perspective."*

**Eva Bender**, Head of Cultural Affairs of the City of Hanover:

*"Theaterformen has always been a fixed date in my calendar – as much as I am always looking forward to it, I find it difficult to choose among the performances, especially this time. Perhaps it's because many performances address rapid change in the world. I am very curious to get to know the*



**Niedersächsische Staatstheater  
Hannover GmbH  
Festival Theaterformen**  
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30159 Hannover

Fon +49 (0)511 9999 2500  
Fax +49 (0)511 9999 2989

**Staatstheater Braunschweig  
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Am Theater  
38100 Braunschweig

welcome@theaterformen.de  
www.theaterformen.de

*performances' various perspectives on this. And there's no way I'm going to miss out on 75 liters of fake blood..."*

**Lavinia Francke**, Secretary General of the Stiftung Niedersachsen:

*"For decades now, the Theaterformen Festival has been bringing the entire diversity of international contemporary theater to Hanover and Braunschweig. With Anna Mülter, the festival has become even more diverse and inclusive, and systematically questions our concepts of normality. Who represents our society on theater stages? What does this say about us? I'm looking forward to big spectacular productions like Florentina Holzinger's "A Year without Summer" and many up-and-coming voices addressing the urgent questions of our times."*

**Sonja Anders**, Director of the Schauspiel Hannover:

*"At the end of our season, after the big finale at the Schauspiel Hannover, Theaterformen is once again taking over our stages. Anna Mülter and her team have again assembled a fantastic program. I'm looking forward to once again seeing Lola Arias, Florentina Holzinger or Claire Cunningham. And having the many meetings at the festival center at the Kulturhof. Theaterformen brings important perspectives to Hanover. They are programmatic issues that celebrate diversity and togetherness – as a vibrant power of opposition in a society that is experiencing increasing limits and divisions."*

### **Two female directors between the past and future at the Schauspielhaus**

This year's Theaterformen festival will be opened by Lola Arias' *Los días afuera / The days out there*.

A group of cis women and trans people who have completed their jail sentences in various Argentinian prisons play scenes from their lives, which then become fiction, while their past still has a hold on them.

*A Year without Summer* is coming to the Schauspielhaus' big stage, the latest production by Florentina Holzinger, who is famous for her spectacular pieces and has been invited to the Theatertreffen no less than three times. Holzinger's announcement of the premiere in Berlin already caused advanced sales to crash the system. In the year 1816, a year without a summer, Mary Shelly created Frankenstein – simultaneously a genius and monster that subjugates nature. In the attempt at conquering nature, the body becomes an experimental field in Holzinger's piece that is subject to ever more radical environmental conditions.

### **Theater as a visibility machine**

In *MONGA*, Jéssica Teixeira sheds light on the brutality that societal concepts of normality exert on bodies. On the basis of the story of Julia Pastrana, who was brutally exploited in 19th century freak shows, she invites us to differentiate myth from truth in order to avoid repeating history.

In *Blood Show* by Ocean Stefan, the limits of the human body are tested and the dangerous idea of the "natural" questioned in an endless battle – it is a euphoric trans celebration of destruction!



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In *When I Saw the Sea* by the internationally celebrated dancer and choreographer Ali Chahrour, three heroes from true life tell of the injustices that labor migrants are subject to in Lebanon between a burning land and the Mediterranean Sea.

Eisa Jocson and Venuri Perera sweep away power structures that oppress women in *Magic Maids*, and reveal the invisibility of care work in their cleansing ritual.

The premiere of *DEEPER* by the director Gosia Wdowik addresses gender-specific violence in the digital sphere and asks young adults what effects deepfake technology has on their lives.

Diana Anselmo is premiering the lecture performance *PAS MOI* at our festival. In it, Anselmo analyzes the origins of the first technical instruments to transmit and record sound from a deaf perspective.

### **Choreographic excursions**

While Claire Cunningham takes us in *Songs of the Wayfarer* on a musical walk through natural, staged and emotional landscapes to personal summits and rest areas, Harald Beharic literally rolls out a moss rug and invites us to the Deister: Between porous rocks and under the treetops, six dancers captivate us with their rhythmic voices and movements.

### **WHERE RIVERS MEET**

After we moved indigenous perspectives into the focus in the KO'EYENE program in Braunschweig, this year we are inviting several of the project's artists to Hanover.

Baniwa, Ziel Karapotó and Olinda Tupinambá connect to the city, its landscapes as well as the Ihme and Leine rivers in four different event formats. Based on the understanding that we are a part of nature, they show us their interdisciplinary artistic practices, which range from performance to film on to installations and activism.

In *Confluences*, a performance will be newly developed on site. The program is curated by Jamille Pinheiro Dias and Jacqueline Azarmi Eskandani (Jacq).

### **Conversations and discussions**

In cooperation with the Universes and DIE VIELEN e. V., we will discuss strategies to defend democracy in *WIR MÜSSEN HANDELN!*. Among the panelists is Arne Semsrott, the editor-in-chief of "FragDenStaat", who wrote a manual for resistance that suggests concrete measures for a solidarity with one another.

In *RECLAIMING CRIP HISTORY*, the history and future of disability arts festivals in Germany will be discussed. In 1991, Ralph Büsing and Renate Weidner founded the "Europäische Behinderten-Kultur-Festival SPIRIT OF CRIPS", which took place in the Kulturzentrum Pavillon and was run independently by two disabled cultural workers. Today, the disability arts festival scene is exclusively in non-disabled hands. Renate Weidner will personally offer insights into the festival's two editions.



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### **Theaterhof festival center**

At the festival center, which will be in the Theaterhof between the Schauspielhaus and Cumberlandische Galerie this year, silent discos will take place every Thursday to Saturday in which the music comes from headphones and is transmitted through a bass belt for deaf guests. There is also catering at the festival center.

### **Barrier-free options**

The following barrier-free options are available for selected performances:

- Translation into German Sign Language (DGS) for deaf audiences.
- Audio description and/or tactile guidance for visually impaired audiences.
- Relaxed performances for neurodivergent audience members who are excluded by the strict conventions in performance spaces (silence, darkness, sitting still).
- Beanbags as alternative seating options.
- Content notes and information about sensory stressors so that visitors can independently decide whether a performance has low barriers for them.
- Early boarding. This is early admission into the auditorium. The offer is for everyone, especially visitors with visible and non-visible disabilities, who would like to arrive in a more relaxed way in the auditorium and choose a seat in peace in accordance with their needs.

### **Advanced booking starts on 25 April 2025.**

Ticket prices for the stage program lie between 5€ and 38€; some additional events can be attended at no cost.

The Theaterformen Festival 2025 is an event of the Niedersächsischen Staatstheater Hannover GmbH and is sponsored by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture, the Landeshauptstadt Hannover and the Stiftung Niedersachsen.

### **Press contact**

Alexandra Lauck

Tel. +49 511 9999 2506

Mail [lauck@theaterformen.de](mailto:lauck@theaterformen.de)

[www.theaterformen.de](http://www.theaterformen.de)

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