

Resilient Ties – Detailed Programme Description

Introduction

This conference does not ask you to give more.
It asks what makes it possible to keep going.

Resilient Ties starts from a simple premise: resilience does not exist in isolation. In cultural work, it is often framed as an individual capacity—the ability to cope, adapt, and continue despite pressure. In practice, this often leads to exhaustion, blurred boundaries, and the quiet normalisation of unsustainable conditions.

Rather than offering ready-made solutions, the conference creates a space to look more closely at what makes it possible—or impossible—to continue working in culture today. It brings together individual experiences and collective realities, recognising that what we carry personally is always connected to how cultural work is organised and supported.

The programme is rooted in the context of Central and Eastern Europe and connected to broader European developments in cultural policy and funding. Across two days, it moves between shared moments, smaller group work, conversation, and practice.

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Day One – 19 May

Focus: What we carry / What is happening

09:30–11:30 (optional) – Morning walks for early arrivals

Participants arriving earlier are invited to join optional guided walks that introduce the city through its history, architecture, and the legacy of Solidarity. These walks offer a gentle entry into the conference, creating space for informal conversations and first connections, while also grounding the event in its local context.

Guides: Local guides

From 11:00 – Registration

Registration opens in the late morning and remains available throughout the lunch period. This flexible format allows participants to arrive at their own pace, settle in, and begin engaging with others before the programme formally starts.

11:30 - 12:30 – Lunch

The first shared meal of the conference provides time to connect informally, meet other participants, and ease into the collective space before the programme begins.

12:30 - 13:00 – Opening session: Resilient Ties – Welcome & Introduction

The conference officially begins with welcome remarks, an introduction to the programme, and essential organisational information. This session sets the tone for the two days ahead, outlining the intentions behind Resilient Ties and framing the space as one based on openness, reflection, and shared responsibility.

Speakers: Marta Szadowiak, Local Government Representative

13:00 - 13:30 – What are we carrying into the room

This collective exercise invites participants to pause and reflect on what they are bringing into the space—experiences, tensions, expectations, and questions. By moving from individual reflection to shared awareness, the session helps build a common ground and prepares the group for deeper engagement in the programme.

Facilitators: Agata Etmanowicz, Kasia Szewciów

13:30 - 14:30 – From personal survival to collective care (conversation)

This conversation addresses the realities of burnout, emotional labour, and moral pressure in cultural work—conditions that are often treated as individual challenges but are deeply rooted in structural contexts. The session questions the widespread expectation that individuals should simply “cope” and instead reframes care as a collective and political practice. By doing so, it opens a space to think about what makes it possible to remain present, engaged, and capable of acting together over time.

Speakers: Alona Karavai, Fariba Mosleh

14:30 - 15:00 – Break

A pause in the programme, allowing participants to rest, process the previous discussion, and prepare for the next part of the day.

15:00 - 17:00 – Wellbeing under pressure (parallel sessions)

During this block, participants take part in one of four parallel sessions. Each session offers a different entry point into the topic of pressure and sustainability in cultural work, combining discussion, shared reflection, and practice-based approaches. Participants are encouraged to choose the session that resonates most with their current experience, interests, or questions.

1. Starting in Culture: Work, Pressure, and Possibility (conversation)

This session brings together early-career cultural professionals to share their experiences of entering and sustaining work in the sector. It offers insight into how the field currently functions from the perspective of those who are just beginning their careers. The conversation explores pathways into the sector, barriers and expectations, access to resources and networks, and the realities of building a sustainable practice over time. It also reflects on how younger generations engage with cultural institutions and where connections are being built—or lost.

Facilitator: Bianka Machová

2. Structural Pressures on Cultural Work: Running NGOs in Difficult Times (visual discussion)

Focusing on the realities of Central and Eastern Europe, this session addresses the challenges of running cultural organisations under conditions of unstable funding, political pressure, and institutional fragility. Through a shared, discussion-based format, participants reflect on responsibility, compromise, independence, and the limits of sustainability. The session also explores relationships between organisations and local communities, and asks what it means to maintain independent cultural work in a changing and often uncertain environment.

Facilitators: Adrianna Majdzińska, Agnieszka Wołodzko, Veronika Matějková

3. Hold Back Pressure (Forum Theatre workshop)

This workshop uses Forum Theatre as a method to explore moments in which pressure becomes visible—socially, relationally, or internally. Participants work with real-life situations in which agency is limited or lost, and are invited to actively step into these situations to test alternative responses. Rather than discussing what should be done, the session focuses on action, experimentation, and the possibility of small but meaningful shifts in moments of tension.

Facilitator: Jarek Rebeliński

4. Culture & Health: Formulating the Cultural Sector’s Vision (case studies & exchange)

This session explores how cultural work intersects with health and wellbeing, drawing on concrete project examples. Participants engage in discussion and peer feedback to examine both the potential and the limitations of culture in contributing to social resilience. The session creates space for critical reflection on how cultural initiatives can support wellbeing without

being reduced to a substitute for formal care systems.

Facilitators: Kornelia Kiss, Marie Wittig, Edyta Ruta, Marta Ciesielska

17:00 - 18:00 – What is breaking, and what is holding? (collective reflection)

This session brings participants back together for a shared reflection on the realities they are currently navigating in their work. Using input from the group, it maps pressures, challenges, and sources of support present in the room. It also creates space to recognise both common experiences and important differences across contexts, and to articulate what kinds of solidarity feel meaningful and necessary.

Facilitator: Klaudia Nowicka

18:00 - 18:20 – Evening surprise

A short, informal programme element designed as a transition from the structured part of the day to a more relaxed evening.

From 20:30 – Networking in the city

An opportunity to continue conversations in a more informal setting, strengthen connections, and build relationships across contexts.

Day Two – 20 May

Focus: How we respond / What we do with it

08:40 - 09:20 (optional) – Good morning programme

The second day begins with an optional movement-based session designed to gently activate the body and focus attention. Through rhythm, simple movement, and collective energy, participants are invited to reconnect with their physical presence and prepare for the day ahead. No prior experience is required.

Facilitators: Tomasz Lipski, Kasia Szewciów

09:30 - 10:15 – Solidarity under pressure (dialogue)

This session shifts the focus from individual and organisational experiences to broader questions of solidarity. It examines how solidarity operates beyond moments of crisis, addressing issues of power, asymmetry, responsibility, and fatigue. The discussion invites participants to reflect on what long-term, non-extractive solidarity can look like in contexts marked by unequal conditions and varying levels of safety and capacity.

Speaker: Jana Schafferova

10:15 - 11:45 – Resilient Ties in practice (parallel sessions)

This block focuses on practical responses and approaches. Participants once again choose one of four sessions, each offering a different way of engaging with the challenges discussed earlier.

1. Case clinics: peer-to-peer exchange (working session)

This session creates a structured space for participants to bring real challenges from their work and explore them collectively. Through facilitated peer exchange, the group reflects on these situations, offering perspectives, questions, and possible strategies. The focus is not on finding perfect solutions, but on shared thinking, mutual support, and learning from each other's experiences.

Facilitators: Sulisława Borowska, Małgorzata W. Mnich-Kamińska

2. Inclusion & access as cultural resilience (conversation/exchange)

This session approaches inclusion not as a technical issue, but as an ongoing practice connected to power, representation, and participation. It invites participants to reflect on who is present in cultural spaces, whose voices are heard, and what responsibilities cultural organisations carry in addressing structural barriers. The conversation focuses on moving beyond isolated initiatives toward more thoughtful and systemic approaches.

Facilitator: Maya Weisinger

3. What's coming next? Culture, policy, and funding in Europe (info session & exchange)

This session provides an accessible introduction to current developments in European cultural policy and funding. It outlines the roles of key institutions and ongoing processes that will shape the future of the sector. At the same time, it creates space for discussion, allowing participants to reflect on how these changes affect their work and where there is room for engagement and influence.

Facilitators: Chrissie Faniadis, Tamara Kamińska, Kornelia Kiss

4. Holding and releasing: working with tension through movement (choreotherapy workshop)

This session invites participants to explore how tension, pressure, and resilience are experienced physically. Through simple movement-based and choreotherapeutic exercises, participants shift from thinking to sensing, working with posture, breath, and interaction. The

session offers an alternative way of understanding and responding to pressure, grounded in bodily awareness and presence.

Facilitator: Kasia Szewciów

11:45 - 12:15 – Break

12:15 - 13:15 – What do we owe each other? (closing plenary)

The closing session returns to a fundamental question: what do we owe each other in cultural work today? It reflects on responsibility within relationships—between colleagues, institutions, communities, and across borders—while acknowledging differences in conditions, risks, and capacities. Rather than aiming for consensus, the session creates space to articulate what feels necessary, possible, and fair.

Speaker: Chrissie Faniadis

13:15 - 13:30 – Final exercise and closure

A short closing moment to gather insights, acknowledge the shared experience, and formally conclude the conference.

13:30 - 14:30 – Farewell lunch

A final shared meal, offering time for informal conversations, reflection, and closing exchanges.

14:30+ – CAE Members Meeting

A dedicated meeting for CAE members, taking place at the Old Town Hall on Korzenna Street.

Extra information's:

Alongside all event, a **Regenerative Space / Quiet Room** remains available throughout. This space allows participants to step back from the group setting, reflect, write, or engage in quiet one-to-one conversations, recognising that participation can take different forms.