



Young
European
Sculpture

OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

YES MASTERCLASS #3, AAL, Kuldīga - Latvia

Sept. 23rd to Sept. 27th, 2024 (Sept. 22nd and 28th are travel days)





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1. The Young European Sculpture (YES) Project — Presentation

YES is a networking project between higher education sculpture courses in Europe.

YES's ambition is to work towards the relevant professionalisation of students who wish to specialise in sculpture and to prefigure joint training in European higher education. The initiative involves TALM Higher School of Art and Design (FR) (coordinator), the Academy of Fine Arts of Carrara (IT), the Art Academy of Latvia (LV) along with the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (PT), with guidance from the Agency Erasmus+ France / Education et Formation (FR).

YES Project partners seek to establish a joint annual masterclass in three partner countries (France, Portugal, Latvia) and address challenges related to common curricula and modules in the subject area of sculpture. The project wishes to foster the mutualization and exchange of good pedagogical practices, approaches, and skills in the field of sculpture to create new synergies between the actors of higher education in the sculpture of our countries, which is something that does not exist in sculpture for the moment.

The Young European Sculpture (YES) Project receives 3-year funding from the Erasmus+ program KA220-HED Cooperation partnerships in higher education (2022-2025).

The project and all its activities will be developed around three major and transversal axes — Materials; Space; and Society and Social practices:

Materials — If digitalization appeared to be a prelude to a process of progressive dematerialization and virtualization of artistic practices, recent years have seen a progressive convergence between material and digital, thanks to the advent of innovative technologies that allow the material translation of digital projects.

Digital technology offers a space for experimentation, learning, and research, challenging contemporary creation. This promise must be qualified, however, as the ecological footprint of digital technology and, more broadly, of artistic creation is far from neutral, and schools must now demonstrate their capacity for innovation, making sustainability and transition issues part of their teaching methods.

The question of considering artistic work in the economy of the means and in a logic of recyclability, using bio-sourced materials and digital sobriety, has become essential.

Space — “How sculpture can be found all around”. Students are led to investigate considering multiple dimensions (geographical, historical, biological, technical, cultural, social, legal, and political).

Working in public places for the benefit of the public space requires technical, theoretical, and methodological skills. Students need to deepen their historical,



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practical, and aesthetic understanding of artistic forms in relation to public spaces, whether natural or urban.

Public space is not limited to physical spaces: it extends more and more to the media, the web, and social networks: exploring the spaces with increased potentialities.

Society and Social practices — Analysing the social function of art and the artist's role in the public sphere.

Reflecting on the collective and non-specialized uses of art, on the emergence of new audiences, and the redefinition of their place.

Identifying how sculpture and artistic methodology can generate societal innovations and contribute to critical, technological, and philosophical debates.

2. Program for the YES Masterclass #3

Art Academy of Latvia in collaboration with Kuldiga District Municipality, is delighted to announce the YES Masterclass #3 (**Amplifying Voices and Challenging Power**), to be held in the historic city of Kuldiga. Known for its charming old town, which was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2023, Kuldiga provides a picturesque and inspiring setting for this immersive workshop. The main pedagogical theme of Masterclass #3 is the meeting between innovation and tradition. Participants will engage in a series of reflective and experimental activities designed to explore new perspectives and methodologies in sculpture training. This exploration aims to evaluate the possibilities, advantages, and potential limitations of these experimental approaches.

Workshop procedures and results:

1. Participants will be divided into four working groups supported by different teachers.
2. Each working group will be assigned a workspace, a package of raw materials, and a set of tools.
3. The work of each working group will be developed according to the major axes already defined in the YES project (materials, space, society, and social practices).
4. The masterclass spans seven days, with five days dedicated to intensive teaching and learning activities tailored for sculpture students. These sessions will provide a mix of theoretical and hands-on experiences, fostering a deep understanding of the subject matter. The remaining two days are reserved for travel, ensuring participants can fully immerse themselves in the experience from start to finish.

The YES Masterclass #3 program includes the opening session in the renovated space of the Needle Factory in Kuldiga, fieldwork/drawing sessions, participation in lectures



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and workshops. The work of the four main workshops will be developed in the close relationship between the Kuldīga Digital Innovation Hub, Kaļķu street quarter, Studija Space, Kafejnīca Didro and Kuldīga Artists residence where exhibition will be organized at the end of the work week.

Workshop #1 Onion of identity Led by prof. Aigars Bikse, workshop aims to dive into the dynamic interplay between place, identity, and the human form as you explore the ever-evolving tapestry of society and the individual. Workshop offers a comprehensive investigation into the contexts of place and the multifaceted aspects of identity. You'll engage in research that examines the human figure not only as a physical entity but also as a profound metaphysical subject. Participants will partake in life model studies, exploring the intricate layers of identity through the "onion of identity" concept. This hands-on approach culminates in a captivating photo session titled "Stories Told by Young People," where you'll capture the models you've crafted against the vibrant backdrop of the city. The cityscape and the models will merge to become your canvas, creating powerful visual narratives that reflect on identity and cultural differences.

Workshop #2 Working Class Hero Discover the power of art in activism led by Associate Professor Kristians Brekte. This workshop invites you to create impactful banners focused on rural activism, crafting site-responsive and site-specific objects that capture the spirit of the moment and place. Immerse yourself in the realm of agit-prop protest banners and traditional socialist art, delving into themes of realism, heroism, and collective ideals. Engage with the art of resistance through street symbols, signs, and urban counterculture, all of which reflect political and cultural struggles. Participants will also explore monuments commemorating the events of 1905 and 1919 in Kuldīga, gaining insight into how these historical moments have shaped modern sculpture in Eastern Europe and Latvia. This is your chance to connect with the heritage of socialist art and its contemporary relevance, transforming historical influences into powerful, functional artistic expressions. Join us to create iconic agitprop posters using simple materials like paint, paper, stencils, and photocopying, picket signs, flapping flags and craft banners and installations that resonate with today's cultural and political landscapes. Make your mark with art that speaks volumes.

Workshop #3 Eastern border Led by Liene Mackus. An immersive woodworking workshop that delves into the profound connection between us and nature. Focusing on the local and personal, this workshop transforms trees from living organisms into meaningful creations of wood. Rediscover the beauty and significance of woodworking as matter, metaphor, and philosophy. In Latvia, forestry is a cornerstone of the economy, with primary commercial species including pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), birch (*Betula pendula*), spruce (*Picea abies*), white alder (*Alnus incana*), aspen (*Populus tremula*), and black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

This 'hands on' workshop will explore a variety of effective construction techniques using easily available tools, materials and processes. Basic tools and material will be provided to complete one project.

Workshop #4 Historical memory led by Egons Peršēvics. Dive deep into the dynamics of public monuments and their evolving societal functions. This workshop will



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explore how shared and official interpretations of the past shape societal cohesion, focusing on the intricate histories of post-Soviet Eastern European countries and the broader European integration process. Through a comparative lens, participants will investigate how Latvia navigates its historical memory, contrasting these approaches with broader European practices. Discover the narratives and social representations that bridge the past, present, and future, and uncover the factors that influence the adherence to specific historical narratives. Examine the regulations of collective memory in public spaces (monuments, street names etc.). In this hands-on workshop, you'll create objects that capture historical memory and transform spaces—whether in your home, community, or public areas. Basic tools and materials will be provided for you to complete one project. Embark on an enriching journey through memory, monuments, and identity.

The YES Masterclass #3 Objectives — Amplifying Voices and Challenging Power:

In times of global crises, whether conflicts or disasters, artists play a crucial role in reflecting the experiences of communities. Yet, they often face significant repercussions for their work. In such emergency situations, the cultural and creative sectors emerge as symbols of resilience and hope, with artistic expression becoming an act of courage.

The YES Masterclass #3 is dedicated to empowering artists and amplifying their voices. We're on a mission to:

1. **Investigate Narrative Power:** Explore how images shape narratives and influence perceptions of events and entire historical periods.
2. **Defend Artistic Freedom:** Stand against unethical business practices, ignorance, and political deceit. This is especially crucial in environments where state-controlled media and censorship of alternative voices are prevalent.
3. **Fuel Artistic Research:** Ignite new possibilities for artistic research through themed explorations and experimental practices, encouraging innovative approaches and creative thinking.
4. **Strengthen International Collaboration:** Enhance international collaboration networks by sharing experiences, practices, and knowledge. This will improve work programs at partner institutions and create better opportunities for student collaboration and professional growth.
5. **Champion Democracy:** Advocate for artistic freedom as a fundamental pillar of democracy. We aim to explore ways to safeguard this essential right and highlight its critical importance in maintaining a free and just society.

Through these objectives, the YES Masterclass #3 aims to bridge innovation and tradition while fostering a vibrant environment where artistic voices can thrive, challenge power structures, and inspire global change.

NB: materials provided – wear old clothes – you may get messy!



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3. Eligibility

This Open Call is open to all Fine Arts students, preferably in the area of Sculpture, enrolled at the Art Academy of Latvia and partner institutions in 2024/2025. Priority will be given to 1st cycle students in their final year, and 2nd and 3rd cycle students, but all eligible applicants are encouraged to apply. The applicants should fulfil the following requirements:

- Interest in the manipulation of materials resulting in a three-dimensional object.
- Interest in rural and spatial issues.
- Interest to alter the perception of space.
- Interest in working with an international team of students.
- A minimum of intermediate English language skills for communication purposes.

4. Support

The selected students will freely attend the Art Academy of Latvia Masterclass between the 23th and 27th of September 2024, including travel, accommodation, and food.

5. How to Apply

All applications must include the following elements (in English) in a single PDF file:

- A letter of intent (written in English; max.: 400 words) explaining the main motivations and how they relate to the YES program/project. Please include in the letter an order of preferences regarding the workshop you wish to be included (this suggestion is not binding and only serves to help define more balanced work teams).
- Portfolio (5 pages with projects and descriptions explaining the projects and the relation/relevancy to the YES program/project).
- Short biography (max.: 150 words).
- Proof of enrollment at the partner institution 2024/2025 (this can be sent in the original language of the partner institution).

All applications should be made through an online form:

<https://forms.gle/iF53Ga6YvVN7Ch9ZA>

6. Submission Deadline: June 15th, 2024

7. Evaluation criteria

Letter of intent explaining the main motivations and how they are related to the YES program/project (40%):



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- Interest in working from the economy of means; recyclability, manipulation of materials resulting in a three-dimensional object etc.
- Interest in rural and spatial issues.
- Interest in relational and dialogical practices.
- Interest in working collaboratively with an international team of students.
- An order of preferences regarding the workshop you wish to be included in.

Portfolio (60%):

Projects and descriptions explaining the projects and the relation/relevancy to the YES program/project (materials, space, society and social practices).

8. Communication of the selected students: June 26th, 2024

9. Process selection: all submissions will be analysed by an international jury composed of the partners of the YES Project.

10. Project partners



11. YES MASTERCLASS #3 partners



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