

Detailed programme

Day 1. Monday, 11 May 2026

Setting the stage: understanding the context and challenges

Conference Venue: [Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences \(Cēsu Street 4, Valmiera\)](#)

Time	Session details
9:00 - 9:30	Registration & coffee
9:30 - 10:00	<p>Welcome and opening <i>Room C129</i></p> <p>Speakers: Rūta Muktupāvela (Advisor on Cultural Policy to the Minister for Culture of Latvia and Professor at the Latvian Academy of Culture), Agnese Davidsons (Rector of the Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences), Agnese Lāce (Latvian Minister for Culture of Latvia [<i>video message</i>]), and Nancy Duxbury (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p> <p>Moderator: Ieva Zemite (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)</p>
10:00 - 10:45	<p>Plenary session <i>Room C129</i></p> <p><i>Unpacking the IN SITU legacy: Research, capacity-building, and policy</i></p> <p>Speakers: Nancy Duxbury (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal), Lidia Varbanova (National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Kr. Sarafov”, Bulgaria), André Torre (National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, France), and Helena Walther (University of Hildesheim, Germany)</p> <p>Moderator: Paola Di Nunzio (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>
10:45 - 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 - 12:00	<p>Keynote speech <i>Room C129</i></p> <p><i>‘All that is old is new again’: Place-Based Innovation and Value Creation in the Age of AI</i></p> <p>Speaker: Susan Luckman (Adelaide University, Australia)</p> <p>Moderator: Nancy Duxbury (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>

Time	Session details
12:00 - 13:00	<p>Plenary session Room C129</p> <p>The power of connection: Strengthening rural creators through collective action</p> <p>Speakers: Michaela Charisi (European Network of Cultural Centres, Belgium), Ella Overkleeft (Rural Radicals, The Netherlands), Henk Keizer (AREA Network, Denmark), Marta Lozano Molano (Wazo coop, Spain), and Sabīne Vandāna (Valmiera County Manor Network, Latvia)</p> <p>Moderator: Sílvia Silva (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>
13:00 - 14:30	<p>Lunch break</p>
14:30 - 16:00	<p>Concurrent thematic sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Session - Policy and planning frameworks for non-urban development Room C114</p> <p><i>Cultural and creative industries in peripheral policy frameworks: the case of Poland</i>, Jaroslav Dzialek, Monika Murzyn-Kupisz, and Arkadiusz Kocaj (Institute of Geography and Spatial Management, Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland)</p> <p><i>West Iceland Regional Plan of Action</i>, Sigursteinn Sigurðsson (West Iceland Regional Office, Iceland)</p> <p><i>Culture Forward: Culture as Civic Infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada</i>, Eliza Tudor, (Nevada County Arts Council, USA)</p> <p><i>From Policy to Transforming Communities through longitudinal arts investment</i>, Katie Lowry and Peter Prendergast (The Arts Council of Ireland, and Cork County Council Library and Arts Service, Ireland)</p> <p>Moderator: Erna Kaaber (Bifröst University, Iceland)</p> <p>Session - Inclusion, gender and intersectional agency Room C129</p> <p><i>A Systematic Literature Review on Cultural Inequalities</i>, Flora Maravalhas, Pedro Borrego, Ana Lúcia Romão, Bernardo Valente, Sandra Firmino, José Soares Neves, and Luís Manuel Baptista (Public Administration at the Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal)</p> <p><i>Inclusion through Culture: Cultural and Creative Industries in the Borderland Parts of Croatia's Lika Region</i>, Emā Bašić and Jaka Primorac (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Institute for Development and International Relations, Croatia)</p> <p><i>Place-Based Innovation Through Gender Lenses: CCIs as Tools for Post-Disaster Recovery in Norcia</i>, Naomi Camardella and Mara Carando (University for Foreigners of Perugia, Italy)</p>

Time	Session details
	<p><i>Clapping into Being: Hijra performances and the Creation of Social Space on Non-Urban Bangladesh</i>, Zobaida Nasreen (University of Dhaka, Bangladesh)</p> <p>Moderator: Nevena Dobрева (National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Kr. Sarafov”, Bulgaria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session - Heritage, local knowledge and collaborative stewardship Room C217 <p><i>From Historical Castle to Living Cultural Ecosystem: Artistic Place-based Innovation in a Non-urban European Context</i>, Mahmoud Saleh Mohammadi and Sofie Renap (Spazio Nour, Italy/Belgium)</p> <p><i>Values-based Heritage Re-imagination and Interpretation. The Case of the Beļava Manor House</i>, Ilze Vanaga (NGO "Dēms", Latvia)</p> <p><i>The Manor Network as a Catalyst for Community Collaboration and Sustainable Heritage Management in Valmiera County</i>, Sabīne Vandāna (Valmiermuiža Association of Culture, Latvia)</p> <p>Moderator: Ilona Kunda (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)</p>
16:00 - 16:15	Coffee break
16:15 - 17:30	<p>Plenary session Room C129</p> <p>Culture in action: Practical lessons from non-urban creative practices</p> <p>Speakers: Michaela Charisi (European Network of Cultural Centres, Belgium), Mark Justin Rainey (University of Galway, Ireland), Jorge Gallardo (Be.Time, Spain), Milica Milović (Magnet, Serbia), Dorien Jongasma (Imágenes y Palabras, Spain), and Marta Vētra (LAUX, Latvia)</p> <p>Moderator: Oleksandra Nenko (University of Turku, Finland)</p>
18:00 – 22:00	<p>Evening with dinner and mingling at Valmiera Theatre (Lāčplēša Street 4, Valmiera).</p> <p>Short presentation of Valmiera county & Mayor’s greetings.</p>

Day 2. Tuesday, 12 May 2026

From knowledge to action: translating research findings into strategies

Conference Venue: [Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences \(Cēsu Street 4, Valmiera\)](#)

Time	Session details
9:30 - 11:00	<p>Plenary session Room C129</p> <p>Vibrancies at the European peripheries: Cultural sprouts from the IN SITU Labs</p> <p>Speakers: Erna Kaaber (Bifröst University, Iceland), Mark Rainey (University of Galway, Ireland), Daniela Soares and Isabel Soares de Albergaria, (University of the Azores, Portugal), Oleksandra Nenko and Katriina Siivonen (University of Turku, Finland), Ieva Zemīte (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia), and Antonija Letinić (Kultura Nova Foundation, Croatia)</p> <p>Moderator: Paola Di Nunzio (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>
11:00 - 11:30	<p>Coffee break</p>
11:30 - 13:00	<p>Concurrent thematic sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Session - Interweaving agriculture, culture, and bioregional innovation Room C129</p> <p><i>Exploring contemporary agricultural art initiatives in Austria, Karin Heinschink and Ingrid Machold (Federal Institute of Agricultural Economics, Rural and Mountain Research – BAB, Austria)</i></p> <p><i>Agriculture meets River Lore: Agri- and Culture Project at River Uskelanjoki, Finland, Elina Tuomarila (John Nurminen Foundation, Finland)</i></p> <p><i>The interrelation between built heritage and agriculture for sustainable preservation: the case study of the village of Velika Hoča/Hoçë e Madhe in Kosovo, Sabrina Salis and Ylber Veseli (OSCE, Kosovo)</i></p> <p><i>Bioregion as an innovative form of public-private cooperation for the preservation of local culture, Dace Kaufmane, Līga Paula, and Amanda Lejniece (University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvia)</i></p> <p>Moderator: Katriina Siivonen (University of Turku and Finland Futures Research Centre, Finland)</p>

Time	Session details
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- **Session - Living Traditions: Craft, music, local knowledge and sustainability**

Room C114

*Revitalisation of Heritage Wool and Wool Crafts to Promote Sustainability in Lapland - Outcomes of Wool Innovation Project, **Minna Kovero, Elina Luiro, and Tanya Kravtsov** (University of Lapland, Finland)*

*Weaving with the Trees - Place-based Explorations into Sustainable Wool Craft Practice, **Tanya Kravtsov** and **Minna Kovero** (University of Lapland, Finland)*

*Making A Scene: Using Gaelic “traditional social knowledge” to grow creative communities for the future, **Rhona NicDhùghaill** (University of Stirling, Scotland)*

Moderator: **Lidia Varbanova** (National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Kr. Sarafov”, Bulgaria)

- **Session - Place-based learning and living laboratories**

Room C217

*Inequalities and territorial asymmetries in cultural access and participation in Portugal, **Bernardo Valente, Pedro Borrego, Ana Lúcia Romão, Flora Maravalhas, Sandra Firmino, Luís Manuel Baptista, and José Soares Neves** (Centre for Public Administration and Public Policies - CAPP, Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Universidade de Lisboa - ISCSP-ULisboa; Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology – Iscte, University Institute of Lisbon - CIES-Iscte, Portugal)*

*Territory Schools and Community Activation for the Revitalization of Mountain Cultural Landscapes in Asturias, **Jean-François Alberghi, Paloma Sánchez-Broch, Pablo López Gómez, and Margarita Fernández Mier** (University of Oviedo, Spain)*

*Fostering Innovation and Collaboration through Place-Based Learning at the Turaida Museum Reserve, **Leonarda Kestere-Klavina** (Turaida Museum Reserve, Latvia)*

*Design-Build as Place-Based Innovation: Creating New Experiences through Temporary Interventions in Valmiera, **Dina Suhanova** (Art Academy of Latvia, Institute of Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture, Latvia)*

Moderator: **Andris Klepers** (Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia)

13:00 - 14:00 **Lunch break**

Time	Session details
14:00 - 15:30	<p>Concurrent thematic sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Session - Culture as core infrastructure: Health, employment, and civic resilience Room C217</p> <p><i>Generational leadership exit as a small cultural & creative ecosystem concern, Ali FitzGibbon (Queen's University Belfast, Ireland)</i></p> <p><i>Addressing Rural Challenges by Connecting the Culture and Health Sectors and Policies: Lessons Learned from Implementing the Arts-on-Prescription Model in Cēsis municipality (Latvia), Inga Surgunte and Baiba Tjarve (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)</i></p> <p><i>Supporting Regenerative Tourism Cultural Entrepreneurs, Milton Almeida (Royal Roads University, and Centre for Social Studies University of Coimbra, Canada/Portugal)</i></p> <p>Moderator: Antonija Letinić (Kultura Nova Foundation, Croatia)</p> <p>Session - Sustaining artistic presence and social cohesion Room C114</p> <p><i>Municipal Artist-Employment Projects in Finland: A Decade of Initiatives and Their Impacts, Anne Lehtelä (Independent artist and Specialist in artists' working conditions at the Finnish Arts and Culture Agency, Finland)</i></p> <p><i>Film festivals as places-based innovation practices: evidence from two grassroots initiatives in peripheral Italy, Caterina Francesca Ottobrini and Mariia Samareva (EURICSE, GSSI - Gran Sasso Science Institute, Italy)</i></p> <p><i>Rooted Innovation vs. Transient Placement: A Comparative Study of Cultural Interventions in Non-Urban Croatia, Antonia Kuzmanić and Dunja Bovan (ROOM 100, House Collective, Croatia)</i></p> <p>Moderator: Ieva Zemīte (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)</p> <p>Session - Narratives of place: Memory, senses, and intangible heritage Room C129</p> <p><i>Relearning Place(s): Creative and Sustainable Innovation in Non-Urban Territories, António Oliveira, Mekelle University Ethiopian Institute of Technology - EIT-M School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Ethiopia.</i></p> <p><i>KONSERVE: Regenerating non-urban culture through intangible cultural heritage, Zülâl Fazlıoğlu Akin and Alise Katrina Pundure (The Ohio State University, USA)</i></p>

Time	Session details
	<p><i>Rural dramaturgies: thinking alternative stories of rural place in Haren and the former Limburg mining area</i>, Vivi Focquet, Leontien Allemeersch, and Ewoud Vermote (Kunstenplatform PLAN B, Belgium)</p> <p><i>Reclaiming the Cosmos: Fostering a Connection to the Night Sky in the Scottish Highlands and Islands</i>, Bailee Allen (The Glasgow School of Art, Scotland)</p> <p>Moderator: Oleksandra Nenko (University of Turku, Finland)</p>
15:45 - 18:00	<p>Study visits</p> <p><u>Option 1</u>: Cultural heritage / Valmiera museum</p> <p><u>Option 2</u>: Contemporary art / KURTUVE art space</p> <p><u>Option 3</u>: Creative industries / Future Innovation quarter</p> <p><u>Option 4</u>: Rural culture / Valmiermuiža manor</p>
19:00 - 21:30	<p>Concert and dinner at Valmiera Cultural centre, Riga Street 10, Valmiera</p>

Day 3. Wednesday, 13 May 2026

Looking ahead: defining pathways forward

Conference Venue: [Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences \(Cēsu Street 4, Valmiera\)](#)

Time	Session details
9:30 - 10:30	<p>Plenary session <i>Room C129</i></p> <p>Capacity building for the future: Tools and strategies for creative innovation in non-urban areas</p> <p>Speakers: Nevena Dobрева (National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts “Kr. Sarafov”, Bulgaria), Jude Ortiz (Algoma University, Canada), Antonija Letinić (Kultura Nova Foundation, Croatia), and Ilona Asare (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia)</p> <p>Moderator: Daniela Soares (University of the Azores, Portugal)</p>
10:30 - 11:00	<p>Coffee break</p>
11:00 - 12:30	<p>Concurrent thematic sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Session - Technology, gaming, placemaking and rural innovation <i>Room C129</i></p> <p><i>Gamified Eco-Trails and Child-led Innovation: The “BÖLEKTAU” Case as a Transferable Model for Non-Urban Cultural and Creative Placemaking</i>, Irina Kharitonova and Alexandra Kharitonova (Public Foundation “Creative & Innovation Institute”, Kazakhstan)</p> <p><i>From Cherry Orchards to Digital Studios: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships Driving Place-Based Innovation in Rural Portugal</i>, Luís Leça, Mariana Salvado, and Matilde Caria (INOVA+, Innovation Services, S.A; Fundão Municipality, Portugal)</p> <p><i>Digital Creativity Against Depopulation: Video Games and Cultural Industries as Drivers of Regional Resilience in Rural Portugal</i>, Mariana Salvado, Luís Leça, and Matilde Caria (Fundão Municipality; INOVA+, Innovation Services, Portugal)</p> <p><i>Digital media and the semiotics of place in the rural creative economy</i>, Simon McKerrell (Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland)</p> <p>Moderator: Maria Batle (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>

Time	Session details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Session - Strategic agency: Funding, protecting, and collaborating rural cultural spaces Room C114</p> <p><i>Rural Arts Organizations: Adaptive Hubs of Cross-Sector Collaboration</i>, Sarah Ayers (Flyover Art, USA)</p> <p><i>From Cultural Practice to Community Resilience: A Decade of Place-Based Innovation in Rural Latvia</i>, Zane Matesoviča (British Council Latvia, United Kingdom/Latvia)</p> <p><i>Staying Power: Creating and Protecting Cultural Spaces in Valmiera, Latvia</i>, Matthew Richter (Cultural.Space, Scotland/USA)</p> <p>Moderator: Carolina Castaldi (Utrecht University, The Netherlands)</p> <p>Session - Social infrastructure and place-based rural strategies Room C217</p> <p><i>The impact of social economy and the Third sector on a cultural base local development in Italian inner areas</i>, Carlo D'Angelo (University of Molise, Italy)</p> <p><i>NGO Islands of Selonia. Smart regional strategy for the Sēlija historical land</i>, Daina Alužāne, Ieva Jātniece, Inga Krekele, Jānis Dzimtais, and Santa Šmite (Association Community Cooperation Network "The Islands of Selonia", Latvia)</p> <p><i>Catholic church as important actor in keeping and cultivating creative place in Latgale (example of Balvi region)</i>, Juris Vuguls, and Erika Vugule (Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Faculty of Economics and Social Development, Institute of Humanitarian and Social Sciences, Latvia)</p> <p>Moderator: Isabel Soares de Albergaria (University of the Azores, Portugal)</p>
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 - 14:30	<p>Plenary session Room C129</p> <p>Where is innovation coming from? Rethinking place-based creativity through a non-urban lens</p> <p>Speakers: Tim Wojan (Massive Data Institute, United States of America), Carolina Castaldi (Utrecht University, The Netherlands)</p> <p>Moderator: Tongjing Wang (National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, France)</p>

Time	Session details
14:30 - 15:30	<p>Plenary session <i>Room C129</i></p> <p><i>Shaping future policies: EU policy frameworks for non-urban creative ecosystems</i></p> <p>Speakers: Ruth Artiles Valero (European Network of Cultural Centres, Belgium), Helena Walther (University of Hildesheim, Germany), Maryline Filippi (National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, France)</p> <p>Moderator: Erna Kaaber (Bifröst University, Iceland)</p>
15:30 - 16:00	<p>Coffee break</p>
16:00 - 17:00	<p>Plenary session <i>Room C129</i></p> <p><i>Closing considerations and future directions</i></p> <p>Speakers: Nancy Duxbury (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal), Baiba Tjarve (Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia), Susan Luckman (Adelaide University, Australia)</p> <p>Moderator: Sílvia Silva (Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, Portugal)</p>