

Dr. Virginija Vitkienė, General Commissioner. The Season of Lithuania in France 2024. Concept Note. Contact: virginija.vitkiene@lithuanianculture.lt

THE SEASON OF LITHUANIA IN FRANCE 2024

12th September to 12th December 2024 in France

GENERAL COMMISSIONER: Dr. Virginija Vitkienė (Lithuania), PHD in Art History and Criticism, curator of contemporary art exhibitions (2004-2022), artistic director of Kaunas Biennial (2009-2017), CEO of Kaunas 2022 – European Capital of Culture (2018-2022).

IMPLEMENTED BY:

- Lithuanian Culture Institute, operator of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.
- French Institute, operator of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture for the foreign cultural policy of France.

I. FOUNDING PRINCIPLES:

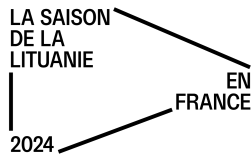
The programme of the Season of Lithuania in France is being co-created by Lithuanian and French partners through contemporary approach on shared cultural phenomena and history(-ies), complex present and imaginable future.

The Season of Lithuania in France 2024 aims to be:

1. A platform for Lithuanian and French partners to reinforce and invigorate values relevant to Europe's present and future: togetherness, human dignity, freedom, creativity, democracy, equality, and climate resilience.
2. A platform to increase visibility and awareness of contemporary Lithuanian culture with French audiences.
3. A collaborative platform for long lasting partnerships, collaborations and co-creation between French and Lithuanian institutions and professionals.
4. An inclusive project, addressing various audiences, especially young people.

II. INVOLVED DISCIPLINARY FIELDS

- Visual Art, Contemporary Art
- Performing Arts (Theatre, Dance, Contemporary Circus, Puppetry)
- Classical Music
- Contemporary Music, Sound Art, and Jazz
- Community arts (residency and local / personal narrative-based approach)
- Literature, Publishing, Debate
- Heritage
- Architecture, Urban and Landscape Design
- Cinema (Film, Documentary, Screen)
- Culture+ Education and Sports
- Culture+ Sciences (social sciences and humanities, biology, ecology, philosophy, etc.)
- Gastronomy;



- Audio, Digital Arts, VR, Video Games;
- Culture, Economics, Innovations, Technologies;
- Design (product design, graphic design);
- Fashion.

III. GENERAL IDEA AND TOPICS

SE VOIR EN L'AUTRE / THE OTHER SAME

The Season of Lithuania in France 2024 is united by idea THE OTHER SAME / **SE VOIR EN L'AUTRE** which became an invitation for Lithuania and France meet to get to know each other better through cultural partnerships, and to encourage each of us to see ourselves in another. Bringing together artists, thinkers and public figures, the programme visualises, voices and embodies diversity. Covering a wide range of contemporary cultural phenomena and media, creators of programme invite everyone to engage in a creative exploration and reflect on the past, the present, and possible future scenarios.

The programme of *The Season* will be unveiled through these themes:

- I. **Global Neighbourhoods**
- II. **Empowered Identities**
- III. **Unleashed Imagination**

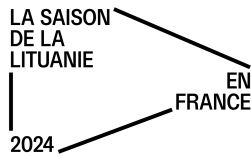
A Global Neighbourhood

The various realities of the Global Neighbourhood invite us to question the validity of the differences between nations, cultures and civilisations; they also encourage to think about the future of the world by seeing ourselves as agents of a single identity – humanity. The Anthropocene is an insistent reminder that as long as we are not aware of our commonalities, we will not reduce the impact of humanity as a whole on climate.

This theme also invites a polylogue on **migration and movement without borders and boundaries**. Mobility fosters creativity and resilience, but global migration, provoked and fuelled by the climate crisis, unequal opportunities, political instability, and violence, continues to pose ever new challenges. Refugee flows call for new principles of coexistence, firstly and most importantly by cultivating empathy and giving voice to vulnerable and essentially invisible groups and their identities. In this context, we need to ask again: when and under what conditions the other becomes the same? The themes of integration, discrimination and exclusion are becoming increasingly relevant, and can be reflected from post-political, East-West, South-North, centre-margins or other perspectives.

Empowered Identities

We hope that this programme line will make the voices of the less visible and sometimes muted groups be heard, namely those of women, people and communities with different origins, LGBTQ+ individuals, those belonging to different subcultures, refugees, war victims, people



with disabilities, and many others. National identities are complex and intricate: they are just an amalgam of different and ever-changing voices. We aim for this cultural programme to strengthen the ability to **visualise and embody diversity**.

The theme of Empowered Identities is an invitation to reflect on gender in contemporary Europe: the constantly evolving notions of gender, gender diversity and uncertainty, gender-based hierarchies, and **the role of gender** in art, academia, politics, leadership, and parenthood. This theme proposes to deconstruct and rethink the dichotomies of femininity and masculinity, motherhood and fatherhood, and to reconsider current gender systems in Lithuania and France.

The theme of Empowered Identities is about greater diversity in culture. In the context of Lithuania, it invites artists to reflect on the historical experiences of different personal and ethnic communities that have experienced genocide, atrocities or mass crimes. Creative explorations of these histories become an **opportunity for openness**, mutual trust, a fair assessment of the present, and hopes for a more just future.

The theme also aims to make **Ukrainian voices be heard**, and encourages joint projects between artists and institutions from Lithuania, France, Ukraine and other countries. The current political context of Europe will be explored through artworks and discussions on the challenges of building Europe's future together.

Imagination Unleashed

This theme invites Lithuanian and French artists to reflect on **future scenarios** and **fictions** as well as utopias and dystopias, using the most powerful tool of humanity – the ability to fantasise, to empower dreams, and to awaken imagination. It is an invitation to imagine and co-create the future of the place we inhabit (Lithuania, France, Europe, the world). It is an invitation to imagine the 22nd century and to propose future scenarios.

Imagination Unleashed is the common thread across the whole programme: weaved into all the themes of the cultural season, it should encourage everyone to revisualize, embody and verbalise humanness. This theme is an invitation to co-create hybrid ecologies of the future, where human communities, nature, ingenuity (in science and in art) and artificial intelligence will fit together in ways we cannot yet imagine. It is also an opportunity to imagine the impact of such connections on identities and coexistence. Which possibilities of the relationship between identities and otherness are still untapped and could be productive in facing the challenges that await us? This is just one of the many questions to consider while exploring this theme. We invite you to fantasise about what the world and Lithuania would look like under different systems of governance, following the logic of vulnerability as the main source of resilience and resistance to hegemonic totalitarian structures.

“The other is always different, but never entirely other” – Lithuanian philosopher Viktoras Bachmetjevas

Contacts

For the information on *The Season of Lithuania in France 2024* please contact Lithuanian Culture Institute sezonas2024@lithuanianculture.lt