

Pop-Kultur/2023

Press release from 4th September 2023

Three days of Pop-Kultur 2023 come to an end: A festival of community and diversity

- Around 10,000 visitors on the festival grounds
- Impressive concerts, Commissioned Works, a free programme and football highlights
- Ten Years of Pop-Kultur: Anniversary edition to take place on 28th-30th August 2024



Sho Madjozi © Camille Blake

The 2023 edition of the Pop-Kultur festival came to a successful close on Friday night, capping off a multifaceted festival as a celebration of togetherness. Around 10,000 people attended over 100 events in the courtyard and various venues of the Kulturbrauerei – with concerts, talks, 15 Commissioned Works and the project »Can I Kick It? Yes, You Can!« that comprised over 20 events.

At the opening on Wednesday, singer-songwriter **Charlotte Brandi** set the tone for a wide-ranging festival edition in the Palais – and played again later in the evening for a devotedly attentive audience. Afterwards, Senator for Culture and Social Cohesion in Berlin **Joe Chialo**, the cultural policy spokesperson of the FDP parliamentary group **Anikó Glogowski-Merten** (MP), Pop-Kultur festival director **Katja Lucker** and the Pop-Kultur programme team of **Yeşim Duman**, festival dramaturg **Christian Morin** and **Pamela Owusu-Brenyah** opened the festival.

As festival director **Katja Lucker** sees it, the 2023 edition has sent a strong,

positive signal to the cultural sector: »On all three days, we experienced the great joy brought by inspiring music and the current topics surrounding it. People are eager for the communal experience that music and discussion can provide. Our audience is open-minded and likes to immerse themselves in experiments. This is not something we can take for granted, and we consider ourselves lucky that over the years, Pop-Kultur has become a set date among the city's cultural offerings.«

Community and togetherness were also the great unifying themes of **A Song For You**, the much-hyped Berlin choral project, whose Commissioned Work »UNRAVEL a return to self through collective expression« saw long queues outside the Palais and provided for truly healing intimacy. **Anika's** Commissioned Work »Lost Voices« was about giving voices to those who don't. Set against an imposing stage design with a giant lung and bathed in red light, Anika's touching performance reminded us how important it is to breathe consciously, even in moments of difficulty.



BRKN © Dominique Brewing

On the other hand, **Krista Papista's** »Fucklore: Bellringers« was loud, noisy and discomforting. The experimental Cypriot artist took folklore and tradition into the present with a procession from the RambaZamba Probebühne to the Çaystube with shattered plates along the way. Local avant-garde rapper **BRKN** proved to be a great entertainer, making the crowd of dedicated followers and newfound fans go wild, singing along over the piano and saxophone. The rising star wasn't the only hyped act on opening night, though: The four-piece New York band **cumgirl8** left an impression with their brand of electro-punk that manages to be both glamorous and feminist, and **Sorry** from London delivered a polished tongue-in-cheek indie performance in a casual hoodie look filled with plenty of understatement.

Not only the indoor locations were packed: The free programme at the Çaystube curated by Yeşim Duman was also very well attended. Earlier in the evening, the R&B newcomer **EVİN** enchanted the audience – who later turned into the main act themselves! »Karaoke Xpress by gal sherizly, Nhu Huỳnh & MC Coach Trinity« provided the Karaoke playlist including football anthems.

This collective singing experience could be attended free of charge as part of the football focus »Can I Kick It? Yes, You Can!« along with other events taking place around the Çaystube as well as in the Kulturbrauerei's cinema. With the

»Pop-Kultur Soccer Club«, the public could get energised by shooting at a goal wall and playing foosball. The main focus, however, was on the significance of sport from queer-feminist and post-migrant perspectives in the run-up to the 2024 European Football Championship.



»Can I Kick It?!« panelists from left to right:
Luam Kessette (host), Josephine Henning, Tülin Duman,
Claudia Roth, Dauaride Empere © Yvonne Hartmann

In the noteworthy talk »**Can I Kick It!?**«, Minister of State for Culture **Claudia Roth**, who is also the chairperson of the supervisory board of the Foundation Football & Culture EURO 2024 GmbH, joined co-founder of CSV Afrisko **Dauaride Empere**, activist **Tülin Duman** and ex-national player **Josephine Henning** to discuss the role of diversity, participation and anti-racism in sport, which is often perceived as white and male.

In the »Pop-Kultur Diskurs« programme on Thursday, the panels »Pride & Performance« and »Disability Pride« drew audiences to the Haus für Poesie, which was filled to capacity for both. The talk »Culture in a Warzone« with **Dmytro Kyrpa** live from Kyiv gave insights into maintaining a cultural enterprise in times of war and why this is essential. Meanwhile, **Nikita Netrebko** and **Serhiy Yatsenko**'s Commissioned Work »Kyiv Black Box« could transport visitors to Kyiv club Closer on all three days of the festival: in a shipping container, a club night was recreated audio-visually, complete with power cuts for a discomfoting experience.



Inna Shparber and Mark Petersen © Käthe deKoe

With the Deaf Performance they created for Pop-Kultur, **Inna Shparber** and **Mark Petersen** generated emotions of a completely different kind. Underpinned by high-pitched, bass-heavy Goa techno, they made the music and the performance physically tangible, creating a unique experience even for those who can hear.

Fuffifufzich's »Kontrollverlust Romantico«, featuring a string section and a Ferrari curtain backdrop, sent the packed Kesselhaus into kitschy, sing-along ecstasy.

Drag Syndrome, the world's first collective of drag performers with Down's syndrome, thrilled the audience with their colourful lip-sync dance performances in the Palais. Afterwards, **Rasha Nahas** won over the audience with her brilliant guitar riffs.

Sho Madjozi brought incomparable energy for the main stage. Joined by her dancers, the South African, multi-award-winning rapper and singer gave her all.

On Friday, the festival had an extra focus on African pop cultures. At the panel »Spotlight on African Music Festivals – Fostering Stronger Collaboration Between Music Festivals and Actors From the African Continent and Berlin«, established festival makers from different countries from the African continent discussed possibilities for cooperation. There were also Afro-German artists such as **Albi X** and **Kwam.E** who got the crowd nodding along, as **Ansu** had done the day before.

In addition, Pop-Kultur once again showed that quieter sounds, too, can fill the biggest venues to the brim. Israeli band **Lola Marsh** played their dreamy, romantic indie-pop, **The Düsseldorf Dusterboys** refused to be pigeonholed into any genre, and slowcore rockers from **Codeine** let their melancholic songs glide through the room almost meditatively. Musician **Mariana Sadovska/Vesna** also created a touching commissioned work combining traditional and contemporary influences, lyricism and

painful war experience. Poetry, Sadovska stated, was the only possible creative answer to Russia's aggression and the speechlessness it provokes.

Berlin rapper **Wa22ermann** and the Swedish queer electro-pop artist **Tami T** were two artists whose fanbases shook the foundations of Pop-Kultur locations. In fact, Wa22ermann's concert was so packed that admission had to be stopped at certain points.



Augustus Williams and Souci © Dominique Brewing

It was not only the Çaystube that ensured good vibes in the Kulturbrauerei's courtyard. The Detroit-Berlin co-creation residency consisting of **Augustus Williams** and **Souci**, for example, put on a proper mini-rave in the Frantz Garten. Pop-Kultur festival goers got together and partied with passion and not least with the over 200 participants from the **»Pop-Kultur Nachwuchs«** programme at the outdoor stage, which was open to the public free of charge. Across all three days, the Frantz Garten was a crowd puller with selected acts from newcomer programme and the residencies as well as a jam session by the **Goethe Talents**.

The 10th anniversary edition of Pop-Kultur will take place from the 28th to 30th August 2024.

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