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Situated formats around the science-art-technology debate: an introduction to European Digital Arts Festivals (DAF)

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Abstract
Digital Arts Festivals (DAF) are one of the most booming situated formats and performative experiences for debate, dissemination, exhibition and artistic practice around the science-art-technology intersection. From Ars Electronica or Transmediale and CTM in Berlin to the Spanish Sónar, L.E.V. or MIRA, more than fifty Digital Arts Festivals have appeared in Europe in the last few decades. Although the paradigm of the "festivalization of culture" has received a great deal of academic attention, DAFs have been minimally analysed. What are Digital Arts Festivals? How do they differ from other festivals? How can we define, categorize and analyse these festivals in depth in order to understand their role in cultural production and artistic creation today? In order to address these questions, this article presents the first results of an empirical study which began at the end of 2020 and is still ongoing and which concerns the paradigm of Digital Arts Festivals in Europe. Based on qualitative, multi-sited and wide-ranging research, and having generated a list of more than fifty DAFs in Europe and conducted a first round of semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten festival directors, I introduce a starting definition of Digital Arts Festivals. Based on three case studies from Southern Europe – the Semibreve festival in Braga, the MIRA festival in Barcelona and the ROBOT festival in Bologna – I present a theoretical apparatus and an analytical approach in dialogue with the concept of *festivalscape*, that allows us to expand the study of Digital Arts Festivals, especially from the tools of cultural sociology.

Keywords

festivalization; post-traditional festival; digital art festival; electronic music; cultural production

Formatos situados en torno al debate de ciencia-arte-tecnología: una introducción a los Festivales Europeos de Arte Digital (DAF)

Resumen

Los Festivales Europeos de Arte Digital (DAF, Digital Arts Festivals) son uno de los formatos situados y experiencias de representación de debate, difusión, exposición y práctica artística en torno a la intersección ciencia-arte-tecnología más en auge. Desde Ars Electronica o Transmediale y CTM en Berlín hasta el Sónar español, L.E.V. o MIRA, en las últimas décadas han aparecido más de cincuenta Festivales de Arte Digital en Europa. Aunque el paradigma de la «festivalización de la cultura» ha recibido mucha atención académica, los DAF se han analizado mínimamente. ¿Qué son los festivales de arte digital? ¿En qué se diferencian de otros festivales? ¿Cómo podemos definir, categorizar y analizar estos festivales en profundidad para comprender su papel en la producción cultural y la creación artística hoy en día? Para abordar estas preguntas, este artículo presenta los primeros resultados de un estudio empírico que comenzó a finales de 2020 y sigue en curso y que se refiere al paradigma de los Festivales de Arte Digital en Europa. Basándome en una investigación cualitativa, multicéntrica y de amplio alcance, y habiendo generado una lista de más de cincuenta DAF en Europa y realizado una primera ronda de entrevistas en profundidad semiestructuradas con diez directores de festivales, introduzco una definición inicial de Festivales de Arte Digital. Basándome en tres estudios de caso del sur de Europa: el festival Semibreve en Braga, el festival MIRA en Barcelona y el festival ROBOT en Bolonia, presento un aparato teórico y un enfoque analítico en diálogo con el concepto de festivalscape*, que nos permite ampliar el estudio de los festivales de arte digital, especialmente a partir de las herramientas de la sociología cultural.*

Palabras clave

festivalización; festival postradicional; festival de arte digital; música electrónica; producción cultural

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Introduction

In recent decades, there has been growing interest in post-traditional festivals as catalysts for cultural innovation and as beacons of creativity and expression of public culture. The term *post-traditional festival* has been legitimized by scholars over the last decade as a key concept at the forefront of growing interest in the "living dimension" (Sassatelli 2011) of culture and the "festivalization of culture" (Bennett *et al.* 2014). Unlike traditional festivals and carnivals, contemporary festivals derive specifically from the progressive fragmentation of culture and cultural pluralization, and thus offer an essential case study on identities and lifestyles, mobility flows, cosmopolitanism and artistic production as an expression of democratic debate (Sassatelli 2008).

Most of the recent scholarly approaches to contemporary festivals start from the theoretical framework of Sassatelli's definition of post-traditional festivals as sites of manifestation of aesthetic public culture. According to Sassatelli (2011), "sociability" is a fundamental concept in the study of post-traditional festivals, which are characterized by the intense and vivid nature of the performative dimension of culture and operate as a catalyst for aesthetic cosmopolitanism. The "hybridization" – of different artistic forms, expressions, and relation-

ships between the public and cultural production – is, according to Sassatelli (2011), another key element of post-traditional festivals that stands in contrast to the more purist quest for authenticity. Another key aspect of post-traditional festivals revolves around how they cultivate instrumental network value: post-traditional festivals often act as a hub and professional careers boosters in the field, that is, they serve as a bridge between professionals and stakeholders in the specific field and even as a gateway and accelerator for other networks of events and activities, which leverage the festival to become visible (Colombo & Richards 2017; Richards & Jarman 2021).

Key literature for the study of post-traditional festivals comes largely from the volumes *Festivals and the Cultural Public Sphere* (Giorgi *et al.* 2011) and The Festivalisation of Culture (Bennett *et al.* 2014). Other materials more focused on music festival culture and event culture include *Weekend Societies* (St. John 2017) and the reports of the *Euro-Festival* project, led by Gerard Delanty and Monica Sassatelli. Finally, the very recent contributions on showcase festivals have also been fundamental in the last year of research (Alhers 2021; Brzozowska & Galuszka 2023; Galuszka 2022; Everts *et al.* 2021). Other scholars have analysed post-traditional festivals in relation to different fields: music festivals (St. John 2017; Chalcraft & Magaud-

da 2011); film festivals (Segal & Blumauer 2011); performing arts festivals (Chang 2020); literature festivals (Giorgi 2011); and contemporary art festivals and biennials (Papastergiadis & Martin 2011; Sassatelli 2008). Also important, especially for the study of Digital Arts Festivals in Europe, are the contents, reports and publications of some platforms that specialize in the field, such as Shape Platform, ICAS, INES or We Are Europe.

However, multiple definitions surround the most important and internationally-recognized DAFs of the last decades, including Ars Electronica (Festival for Art, Technology and Society); Sónar (Advanced Music and Multimedia Art, recently renamed Music, Creativity & Technology); MUTEK (Digital Creativity and Electronic Music) or Transmediale Berlin (Art and Digital Culture). Indeed, in some of the most important academic contributions to the field, we find a diverse and blurred use of terminology to refer to such festivals (Colombo & Richards 2017; Magaudda 2017; Shintani 2006; Shintani & Kara 2010; van Veen 2009; 2017).

As major outlets for contemporary and digital art forms, electronic music and experimental audio, or technology-driven creative practice, Digital Arts Festivals offer a unique context for content delivery and audience engagement and constitute a vital platform for cross-disciplinary dialogue between new media artists, scholars, festival organizers, institutions, stakeholders and audiences in general. Despite their prominence in today's culture and their crucial role in facilitating synergies between art, science and technology, few academic pursuits have rigorously delved into their emergence and evolution as a phenomenon, or into their current nature and future perspectives as cultural drivers in our digital society.

What are Digital Arts Festivals? How do they differ from other types of festivals? How can we define, categorize and analyse them in depth? To answer these questions, in this article I present the first results of the research that I started at the end of 2020 and which is still ongoing:

1) a starting definition of Digital Arts Festivals to serve as a beacon in the current lacuna surrounding this booming type of festival;

2) a theoretical apparatus and an analytical approach mainly based on cultural sociology, articulated on the basis of two interrelated loci of action and in dialogue with the concept of *festivalscape* (Chen *et al.* 2019; Lee *et al.* 2008; Mason & Paggiaro 2012).

The first level concerns the organizational dimension of culture, that is, understanding Digital Arts Festivals as active and permanent organizational structures throughout the year – rather than merely as temporary weekend events. The second level refers to the situated and performative dimension of culture, based on the concept of *festivalscape* and the emerging notion of *event-vitrine*: in other words, assuming them as major, situated and temporary events.

1. Research design and methods

Due to the lacuna surrounding the booming European Digital Arts Festival scene, a preliminary, wide-ranging and structured desk study was developed in early 2021. First, I carried out structured desk research, reviewing the literature and the state of the art on the study of post-traditional festivals, partly presented in the introduction of this article. Second, I located the most representative Digital Arts Festivals in Europe. The selection criteria have been divided into two blocks: first, selecting only those festivals self-defined[1] as "festivals"[2] – usually accompanied by other terms such as *digital arts, electronic music* or *digital creativity*; second, a set of factors including geographical heterogeneity, size, trajectory and international recognition. In particular, only festivals over five years old and with over 3000 people in attendance were selected.

For the second phase, after generating a list of more than 50 European DAFs, I then selected 10, in accordance with the above criteria and access, in order to carry out a first round of semi-structured interviews with the director(s) of these festivals, mainly via video-call. Following the methodological approach proposed by *Grounded Theory* (Charmaz 2006), the aim of these interviews was to identify themes, arguments and dimensions of interest *grounded* in the object of study itself. I then worked the resulting data through a first phase of multi-coding, generating a set of provisional arguments, codes and categories, – both descriptive and analytical. I then developed a starting definition for the DAFs, which I will present in the next section of the article. This defining framework served to provide a grounded guideline template for the in-depth, semi-structured interviews, based on the arguments, themes, dimensions of interest and categories resulting from an initial approach to the object of study.

In the third phase of research, I initiated a multi-sited field study through three Electronic Music and Digital Arts Festivals in Southern Europe,[3] from the summer of 2021 to the end of 2022: the Semibreve festival in Braga, the MIRA festival in Barcelona and the ROBOT festival in Bologna. The empirical research was structured around five main tools:

1) in-depth semi-structured interviews with the director(s) of each of the festivals, each lasting between 60 and 90 minutes,

2) semi-structured interviews of a shorter duration, between 15 and 30 minutes, with each of the members of the driving team of each festival – usually between 6 and 10 interviews per festival;

3) participant observation during the entire main event of the festival, in the 2022 edition;

4) ethnographic experiences, shadowing and closely following the *modus operandi* of the directors and coordinators – mainly in the areas of production and communication – during the weeks prior to the event.

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5) Finally, I conducted at least one in-depth interview with a key player in the field, relatively external to each of the festivals, mainly from the field of specialized journalism. The number of interviews conducted, particularly those in group 2, was determined by data saturation: the degree to which new data repeat what was expressed in previous data (Saunders *et al.* 2018).

I conducted all interviews on an anonymity basis,[4] in order to allow participants to critically engage with the arguments discussed. In-depth interviews were conducted following a guide designed on the basis of the themes, concepts and categories resulting from the coding carried out in the second phase of the research:

1) history and origins of the festival;
2) definition and identity;
3) festivalscapes (formats, experiences, aesthetics and contents, discourses and communication);
4) organizational dimension (main functions: direction, production, communication)
5) instrumental value; impact on the field
6) economic dimension (funding, ticketing and marketing tools);
7) institutional dimension and cultural policy (subsidies);
8) network dimension (partners and sponsors).

2. Conceptualizing Digital Arts Festivals

From the 1990s onwards, numerous festivals proliferated in medium and large cities all over Europe, characterized by the combination of multiple artistic disciplines framed in the fields of digital creativity, new media art, electronic music and other dissemination and creative practices related to the science-art-technology intersection. Two festivals that have inspired the rise of Digital Arts Festivals in Europe are Ars Electronica and Sónar. Today, Ars Electronica functions as a hub for global artists and creators, industry professionals and audiences interested in contemporary artistic practices and forms, innovation and creativity in relation to technology, electronic music and technological research applied to contemporary culture (see https://ars.electronica.art/about/en/history/; Baur 2020; Druckrey & Ars Electronica 1999; Hirsch 2019). On the other hand, since its founding in 1994, Sónar has been a key player in the process of legitimizing electronic music as an art form (Magaudda 2014; 2017) and a catalyst for innovation in the electronic music and digital culture fields globally (Colombo & Richards 2017).

After an initial phase of documentation and structured desk research around the European DAF scene, locating a list of more than 50 Digital Arts Festivals in Europe, analysing their texts, discourses and images carried out through their communication channels, and conducting a first round of interviews with 10 key actors – mainly directors – from a selection of 10 European DAFs, I now present the following definition framework:

- Digital Arts Festivals are a type of contemporary festival that has been on the rise since the 1990s, particularly in Europe. Unlike traditional festivals or carnivals, contemporary festivals derive specifically from the progressive fragmentation of culture and cultural pluralization, and thus offer an essential case study on identities and lifestyles, mobility flows, cosmopolitanism and artistic production as an expression of democratic debate (Bennett *et al.* 2014; Giorgi *et al.* 2011; Sassatelli 2008).

- At an identity level, although DAFs are also dynamic and situated cultural forms and experiences like other contemporary festival formats, DAFs mostly view themselves as *festivals*, clearly separate from biennials, symposia, conferences or fairs, placing the experiential, participatory, relational and festive value at the centre of their festivalscape.

- Themes, content and aesthetics are the main core differentiators from other post-traditional arts festivals: DAFs are characterized by activating debates and promoting current artistic forms and innovative cultural activities based on audio-visual formats, electronic music and other technology-based creative and dissemination practices, with a particularly strong focus on the science-art-technology intersection.

- At the level of formats and user experiences, a further important feature is their innovative search for new forms of exhibition and installation, based on new viewing, interaction, sharing, listening and dancing experiences for the public.

- At a structural and organizational level, although they are mostly recognized for their events, most DAFs are not mere weekend events but rather permanent organizational structures – albeit mostly small and without physical venues – active throughout the year. Most DAFs, largely because they are independent initiatives[5] and need to sell tickets and cultivate a successful relationship with the target community, sponsors, partners and stakeholders, carry out important communication and marketing campaigns, cultivating and activating texts, discourses, images and narratives throughout the year, mostly through their own channels: websites, newsletters and social networks.

- Finally, most DAFs can cultivate a great network and instrumental value: they serve as a catalyst and meeting point between the artist, the public, stakeholders and professionals in the fields related to digital creativity, electronic music, new media art and practices around the science-art-technology intersection. In this

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sense, in addition to promoting emerging artists and creating networks (Galuszka 2022), they can shape certain artistic or musical scenes (Bennett & Peterson 2004; Bennett & Rogers 2016; Straw 1991) or even serve as field-configuring events (Lampel & Meyer 2008; also Colombo 2017; Colombo & Richards 2017).

Festivals begin a process of dialogue and discursive interaction with the cultural and artistic fields in which they cohabit on the basis of their practices and institutional structures, that is, existing as social entities: as organizations. Digital Arts Festivals, like most post-traditional festivals, need funding, material and human resources, values, concepts and ideas. They need to build an identity and a brand that will lead them to be recognized as artistic festivals, differentiated from other cultural formats such as exhibitions, performances, parties, symposiums, fairs, and so on. Digital Arts Festivals, like most festivals today, start to become culturally and artistically – and therefore socially – visible and relevant, starting from their organizational and institutional structure (Santoro 2008). Most DAFs, largely because they are independent initiatives and need to sell tickets successfully, carry out important communication and marketing campaigns, cultivating and activating texts, discourses, images and narratives throughout the year, mostly through their own channels: websites, newsletters and social networks. On the other hand, DAFs, throughout the year, need to cultivate successful relationships with multiple key actors in the field, distributors, sponsors and partners, as well as public institutions. Therefore, the study of DAFs from an organizational and institutional approach and from a dynamic and relational perspective becomes fundamental.

3. A two-level analytical framework from the *festivalscape* notion

In this section, I introduce the key concepts and approaches that I am applying in my research and that I consider fundamental for the study and analysis of DAFs. Starting from the notion of *festivalscape*, I articulate a two-level approach:

1) the organizational dimension of DAFs, understood as permanent and active organizational structures throughout the year, cultivating a complex communicative apparatus and also interacting with other key cultural agents, sponsors, partners, public institutions and other entities in their own and nearby fields;

2) the situated dimension of DAFs, which I explain on the basis of the emerging notion of *event-vitrine*, understood as major temporary events within the calendar of a given festival.

3.1. The notion of *festivalscape*

We commonly interpret contemporary festivals as dynamic and temporary cultural forms, that is, from their situated and performative dimen-

sion, understood as events, configured on the basis of a set of specific aspects that we call festivalscape: the spatial layout, music, contents, aesthetics and user experiences, lighting, promotional material, staff, types of services offered (bars, food trucks, bookshops, infopoints), atmosphere in relation to other visitors, and so on. (Chen *et al.* 2019; Lee *et al.* 2008; Mason & Paggiaro 2012).

The term *festivalscape* has been used by the academic community in recent decades, especially in tourism, leisure and event management studies, in relation to the study of festivals as dynamic and temporal forms: as events. At its core, *scape*, understood as environment,[6] embodies a clear spatial dimension based on the stimuli – both practical and symbolic – emanating from the physical space where the event takes place (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). Another dimension inherent to the notion of *festivalscape* has been formulated on the basis of audience reception: that is, around the ways in which festival-goers perceive and experience the festival (Lee *et al.* 2008; also De Geus *et al.* 2016; Morgan 2008, Pegg & Patterson 2010). In this sense, we can say that the festivalscape is the set of strategies and tools that shape the identity and authenticity of a given festival. However, are the communicative practices and the organizational and institutional relationships that festivals engage in for their promotion and marketing not also part of the festivalscape?

3.2. Understanding DAFs as permanent organizational structures

Although we commonly relate contemporary arts festivals to the aesthetic, symbolic and discursive aspects of culture, they are also notable for their role as distributors of content or as facilitators for other industries or fields (Peterson 1973): that is, as cultural producers. If DAFs are not simply two-day-a-year showcase events, but rather organizations focused on cultural production, we cannot understand the festivalscape of a DAF only through the analysis of the set of factors that shape the temporary event. It is essential to frame the festivalscape in a broader context: integrating the communication practices and institutional relationships – with other actors in the sector, with public institutions, with sponsors and partners – which develop throughout the year. Therefore, it becomes fundamental to study DAFs and their festivalscapes, from an organizational and institutional approach and a dynamic and relational perspective (Ferdinand & Williams 2018).

The conceptual core of the production of culture perspective is based on the fact that, in order to sociologically understand a cultural or artistic object or experience, it is necessary to analyse the factors and context that make its production possible. In other words, we must study how cultural contents – understood as forms of expression (music, art, literature) and as a system of expressive symbols – are formed through the *milieux* in which they are created, manipulated, distributed, evaluated, transmitted and preserved (Peterson 1994).

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6. Other notions in use to determine the set of aspects that shape the atmosphere of a festival or event have included eventscape, festivalscape or servicescape (Mason & Paggiaro 2012).

The six-facet model of cultural production – technology, law and regulation, industry/sector structure, organizational structure, careers and market – is an analytical tool composed of six factors that, usually in combination and interdependently, constrain or facilitate the development of certain cultural products, aesthetics, practices or devices and can alter the aesthetic structure of a cultural expression (Peterson & Anand 2004). This approach offers a model for systematically organizing and analysing, through these six factors, the logic and dynamics of cultural production around a particular cultural or artistic object, with a focus on structural, organizational, institutional and economic aspects.

However, with a complementary use to the tools proposed by Peterson, a neo-institutionalist approach would help us to understand better how the multiple interrelations in an ecosystem of organizations, actors and institutions in a given field constrain or facilitate the configuration of a particular and specific organizational form: in this case, a Digital Arts Festival (Anand 2000). In this line, it is essential to anchor some key concepts and analytical approaches such as "organizational fields" (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Scott 1995) and "strategic action fields" (SAF) (Fligstein & McAdam 2012; Mulder *et al.* 2020; Wilderom & Venrooij 2019). Finally, I highlight the notion "field-configuring event" (FCE) (Lampel & Meyer 2008; Lange *et al.* 2014), which allows us to conceptualize and analyse organizational fields more empirically and pragmatically, through concrete case studies such as the Cairo International Book Fair (Shahar 2017) or the Sónar festival (Colombo & Richards 2017).

3.3. Understanding DAFs as *event-vitrine*

The emerging notion of the "event-vitrine" is an analytical category resulting from my field research during 2022, specifically arising with the case study of the ROBOT festival in Bologna, which I will explain below. Although we find one similar term in the field of event and festival studies – "showcase-festival" (Alhers 2021; Brzozowska & Galuszka 2023; Galuszka 2022; Everts *et al.* 2021; INES 2018; Inglis 2021) – we do not find any convincing justification for the term and its use has been, in recent years, rather vague and generic.

According to Galuszka (2022, 56), "a showcase festival can be defined as an event whose main objectives are the promotion of emerging artists and the creation of networks between musicians and music industry representatives. Therefore, apart from several short performances held in multiple venues, these events often host conferences and networking sessions for music industry professionals". This definition partly aligns with the definition I have developed in this article to conceptualize Digital Arts Festivals, but is it not still necessary to address the organizational and institutional dimension of DAFs? Despite largely being recognized as major events, do these organizations not develop multiple organizational, commercial and communicative relationships throughout the year in order to successfully develop such events? Are they not also recognized,

in the organizational ecosystem in which they cohabit, from the relationships and communication practices they develop throughout the year?

In my field research, I coded[7] the emerging category "event-vitrine":
"We are now focusing on the more urban and smaller dimension of the festival with a diffuse festival concept. We are moving towards a more regular activity, producing events and activities all year round. We used to work all year round and risk everything for one weekend. Now, however, we try to do something every month. ROBOT festival is the apex element, the event-vitrine, the most important event of the year. […] The idea is to be a diffuse festival not only because of the multiple venues, but to expand throughout the calendar, to make our work as cultural producers more visible. And if you look at it, this is something that many festivals are doing, starting with Sónar, which did it more than 10 years ago and on a global scale. But this is also happening in Europe and on a smaller scale, like Transmediale in Berlin, for example."

(R.M.1)

We cannot assume the notion of "showcase festivals" to categorise DAFs, understood only as events that take place on a weekend once a year. In response to this, the notion "event-vitrine" refers to the main event in the annual calendar of a given festival, serving to differentiate the main event from the other smaller activities and practices that DAFs hold and organise throughout the year, which usually require a smaller amount of effort and resources, and consequently generate less impact. While the notion of a showcase festival can work well in a generic way, it highlights the instrumental and networking value of many Digital Arts Festivals, especially if we think of the professional careers of young emerging artists, it is also a term that takes us away from understanding these organisations as something more than ephemeral one-weekend-a-year events. Thanks to their communicative, organisational and institutional practices cultivate throughout the year, DAFs make this instrumental and network value publicly visible during the celebration of their event-vitrines. The use of the term *vitrine* qualifies the relationship of the main event with other activities, practices and parallel events, "which are not in the cabinet, because they do not shine as brightly. But despite the fact that the festival is what serves as a springboard to position us as a brand and as a cultural producer organization in the field, thanks to the other activities we have a more solid and stable position in the territory, and we make our activity profitable. It's something we've been learning and discovering over the last few years. The festival goes by very quickly and is very frenetic, but the other things we do allow us to relate to the field and our public in a different way, and allow us to balance resources and risk throughout the year". (R.A.2.)

Conclusion

During my attendance at the 27th ISEA "Possibles" edition in Barcelona in June 2022, I heard multiple and blurred "categories", in panels and

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7. This category emerged in the first semi-structured in-depth interview with the management team of the ROBOT festival in Bologna.

institutional presentations, to refer to important festivals such as Ars Electronica or Sónar. In this article, I propose two contributions in this respect:

1) I present a defining framework for this type of festival, which I categorize as Digital Arts Festivals.

2) I present a theoretical framework and analytical approach grounded in my field research, based on a re-elaboration of the notion of *festivalscape* through two interrelated loci of action: the organizational dimension of DAFs understood as permanent organizational structures; and the situated and performative dimension of DAFs understood as "event-vitrines".

Although in recent decades, the notion of *festivalscape* has always been applied to the study of festivals as temporary events, it is essential to frame it in a broader context, integrating the communication practices and institutional relationships – with other actors in the sector, with public institutions, and with sponsors and partners – that take place throughout the year. Although the recent contributions on the notion of *showcase festivals* shed light on Digital Arts Festivals paradigm, I argue it is necessary to analyse in depth the organizational and institutional dimension of festivals, not only as temporary events but as active entities throughout the year.

I think that these two contributions, despite their being at a primary and introductory stage of research and therefore potentially limited, can help not only the academic community but also institutions, artists and key actors in the field to better understand the role of Digital Arts Festivals in our societies. This would lead to an understanding of DAFs not only as ephemeral events of very short duration but rather as organizations active throughout the year, especially in electronic music and digital arts fields and practices focused on the science-art-technology intersection.

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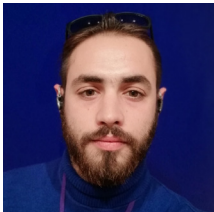
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Degree in Scenography from ESAD in Cordoba with a double Master in Art History and New Media from the University of Pisa (IT), I am currently pursuing my PhD in international co-tutelage between the University of Granada and the University of Padova. My PhD project is situated as a humanistic and sociological study of European Digital Arts Festivals, with special reference to the fields of electronic music and digital arts. Specifically, my doctoral dissertation aims to analyse the functioning of such festivals from a symbolic, aesthetic and organizational point of view, in order to extend the research question to the role that festivals, as a cultural format, play in the evolution of the field of electronic music and digital arts at a European level. Since 2020, I have combined my academic life with my professional activity as a cultural manager and artistic director specializing in arts festivals and cultural mediation in rural areas.