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CREATIVE LAB

Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

May 7–10, 2026

Our Creative Lab gathers selected national and international experts from the inclusive cultural sector with cultural practitioners from the performing arts in Germany.

DATE: Thursday, 7 May 2026, 2:00 pm
until Sunday, 10 May 2026, 1:00 pm

LOCATION: Akademie der Kulturellen Bildung
(Academy of Cultural Education), 42857 Remscheid

TARGET GROUP: Art and culture professionals of all disciplines, from venues and the independent scene.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: max. 25 – 30 participants

SPEAKERS:

- Jo Verrent, Director of Unlimited
- Eyk Kauly, Performer, Deaf Coach,
  Artistic Director of the German Deaf Theatre (D)
- Dr. Kate Marsh, dancer, lecturer and researcher (UK)
- Laura Guthrie, Artist Development Manager,
  and Hana Pascal Keegan, director, writer and actress;
  Graeae Theatre Company (UK)

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Cover photo: ©The Garden by GRAEAE – photo: Praca Maua

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

ARTISTIC PRACTICE SHAPED BY DISABLED EXPERIENCE

In the Creative Lab 2026, we address the questions: How do lived experiences of disability shape artistic practice? And what potential lies in disabled leadership?

To investigate this, we have invited several international figures from the worlds of dance and theatre: Introducing the topic will be Jo Verrent, director of the disabled-led arts organisation Unlimited (UK), and Eyk Kauly (Germany), actor, performer, Deaf coach and artistic director of the German Deaf Theatre. Afterwards, you can choose between two workshops: either a two-day theatre workshop with Laura Guthrie and Hana Pascal Keegan from the internationally acclaimed disabled-led theatre company GRAEAE (UK) or a two-day dance workshop with disabled dancer, lecturer and researcher Dr. Kate Marsh (UK), who has over 20 years of expertise.

The Academy of Cultural Education in Remscheid, located in the middle of nature, has very beautiful, spacious, barrier-free event rooms in which your collective creativity can fully unfold from a wide variety of perspectives in exchange with international speakers and colleagues. .

ACCOMMODATION: Single or double room with shower, full board

LANGUAGE: The Creative Lab takes place in easily understandable German and English spoken language and German sign language.

Simultaneous interpreting of the entire Creative Lab, see 'Accessibility'.

ACCESSIBILITY: All meeting rooms are accessible.
The academy has a limited number of single and double rooms with varying degrees of accessibility – please be sure to specify your exact accessibility needs when registering.

A resting room is available.

Assistance dogs are welcome.

We will provide the following assistance if needed, please be sure to indicate your requirements when registering:

- Professional simultaneous interpretation English spoken language – German spoken language; *Continuously from Thursday to Sunday, NOT for the workshop with Dr. Kate Marsh (there will only be peer-to-peer interpreting)*
- Professional simultaneous interpretation German / English spoken language – German sign language (DGS); *Continuously from Thursday to Sunday, NOT for the workshop with GRAEAE*
- Peer to peer audio description
- Work assistance or mobility assistance on site
- Shuttle service between railway station and academy

COSTS (including accommodation and full board)
according to self-assessment

Category 1: 210 € + advance booking (e.g. students, freelance artists)

Category 2: 250 € + advance booking
(e.g. employees of independent ensembles)

Category 3: 290 € + advance booking
(e.g. employees of large cultural institutions)

If you participate with your own assistant, their participation is free of charge.

To **REGISTER**, please follow this link

For **QUESTIONS** and further information please contact:
Theresa Heußen (she/her)
E-mail: beratung@un-label.eu, Phone: +49 221 5501544

WEBSITE Access Maker - Innovationshub

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY
Seminar times: 3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

Taking power: Creating conditions for disabled-led artistic practice to thrive Keynote by Jo Verrent, Unlimited

In her keynote speech, Jo Verrent explores the question of how disabled-led art can flourish. What structures enable disabled artists to realise works of varying scales and sizes in terms of space, cast size and ambitions? What can cultural organisations do to ensure that all disabled artists can equally engage, and how can they avoid prioritising some over others? And how can the cultural sector ensure that disabled artists can manage their work consistently, creatively and coherently – from conception to presentation? What structures does disabled leadership need to function smoothly and regularly?

Beyond inclusion: Deaf perspectives, power dynamics and theatre practice Keynote by Eyk Kauly

In his keynote speech, Eyk Kauly sharpens our understanding of rules, awareness and better exchange between hearing and Deaf cultural professionals.

How do we bring Deaf and hearing colleagues together in institutions and cultural productions and promote both networking and mutual insights into different artistic working methods? Eyks expertise as a Deaf coach, actor and performer in independent productions and at various theatres, allows his keynote to particularly focus on collaboration in theatre and on inclusive rehearsal and communication processes in mixed teams.

Eyk draws on his own work experience in production workflows as well as his extensive artistic and practical experience with aesthetic forms of expression – including sign language poetry, visual vernacular, visual signing and the use of visual media.

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY
Seminar times: 9:30 am - 12:45 pm / 3 pm – 6:15 pm

9:30 – 10:00 am
Starting the day with Laura and Hana
Physical intro with Laura Guthrie and Hana Pascal Keegan, GRAEAE

10:00 am – 5:15 pm, including lunch break from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Two parallel workshops by Dr. Kate Marsh as well as Laura Guthrie and Hana Pascal Keegan from Graeae Theatre Company
To ensure intensive work in small groups, the two-day workshops will be offered parallelly – participants decide which workshop they would like to attend when registering.

Interpreting:
Workshop with Kate Marsh: In spoken English.
With professional simultaneous interpreting from spoken English to German sign language. Peer-to-peer interpreting service from spoken English to spoken German available.

GRAEAE workshop: In spoken English.
With professional simultaneous interpreting from spoken English to spoken German.

PROGRAMME

> FRIDAY

Being in the messiness – cultivating space for exploration and playful experimentation
Workshop with Dr. Kate Marsh

Designed for disabled and non-disabled people in the broad arts sector, these practice-led sessions will use choreographic and creative tasks to delve into our individual artistic inquiry. With a strong emphasis on responding to our own interests and needs we will create space, through practice, to share our ideas and to try out ways of working collaboratively. We will celebrate how being together in all our sameness and differences nurtures an exciting and safe environment to be in our practice away from a pressure to 'produce' or to cement our ideas. Staying with questions and experimentation, we will allow ourselves to try things and to embrace 'mess'.

Drawing mainly from improvisation as a way in, we will explore group and individual tasks allowing ourselves to move and be moved by others. Individual access will sit at the heart of these sessions, based on a principle that often our needs are not 'fixed', that they may shift from minute to minute, day to day. We will make space for everyone to access the practice from exactly where they are in each moment of the workshop.

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

PROGRAMME

> FRIDAY

Theatrical exploration of disabled-led work
Workshop with Laura Guthrie and Hana Pascal Keegan, Graeae Theatre Company

Underpinned by the Aesthetics of Access we will make theatrical discoveries around how disabled-led work informs the outcomes of theatre making. This will be approached through working with existing play text and work developed through the sessions.

The process will include discussion as well as practical exploration, working as an ensemble, in small group and in pairs.

We will be looking at what difference it makes aesthetically and creatively when we place disabled characters and disabled creatives at the centre of mainstream work. In the end, on Sunday, there will be a sharing of the discoveries made in our sessions and the opportunity to create a call to action to our audience.

PROGRAMME

> FRIDAY

5:30 pm – 6:15 pm
Re-imagining leadership through radical access and practices of care – exploring new models for the inclusive dance sector
Input by Dr. Kate Marsh

I want to be with you. If you can't go, then I don't want to go. If we are traveling together, sharing political space together, building political family together, then I want to be with you. I want us to be together. Mia Mingus 2010

This discussion-based session invites questions and provocations from all present and draws on Kate's long-term exploration of leadership in the dance and disability field. Proposing a re-thinking of how leadership is understood. How can we begin to understand that leadership is part of the practices we are already doing rather than something we are constantly reaching for or waiting to arrive at. What if leadership is not a 'job' or a position, but is embedded in our dancing, making, creating and within our communities and how we come together?

Kate will propose that disabled artists do not need to change themselves to lead, that they do not need to 'fit into' a prescribed idea of what a leader in dance is, but that there is a vast and rich knowledge of bodies, choreography and pedagogy that already exists in disabled artists and that this knowledge has the potential to bring about new ways of working and practicing in the arts.

There will be time given to explore ideas of radical access, 'inclusion' beyond participation and into autonomous artistic practice that is made better when we understand access as a fluid phenomenon, acknowledging 'access clashes' and how we might navigate them so that everybody/mind is accounted for.

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY
Seminar times: 9:30 am – 12:45 pm / 3:00 pm – 6:15 pm

9:30 – 10:00 am
Starting the day with Kate
Physical intro with Dr. Kate Marsh

10:00 am – 5:15 pm, including lunch break from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Being in the messiness – cultivating space for exploration and playful experimentation
Dr. Kate Marsh, *Part 2 of the workshop. Announcement see Friday*

Theatrical exploration of disabled-led work
Laura Guthrie and Hana Pascal Keegan, Graeae Theatre Company
Part 2 of the workshop. Announcement see Friday

5:30 pm – 6:15 pm
Hiring 'emerging' Disabled artists isn't radical
Input by Laura Guthrie, GRAEAE

Do you think your organisation treats Deaf and disabled artists equally?

Do you consider yourself an organisation that treats Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists equal to non disabled artists? Are you welcoming and ambitious providing pathways for disabled artists to progress beyond the status of emerging?

Based on the last 6 years of managing Graeae's Artist Development programme Laura Guthrie will open a discussion on how the UK and German sectors' outdated structures and traditions make this nearly impossible and what we can do to change this.

PROGRAMME

SUNDAY
Seminar time: 9:30 am – 1:00 pm

Presentation of the results from the workshops
Participants of the workshops present their respective work results and main findings in a plenary session.

Question & Answers
The concluding part of the creative lab offers plenty of space for questions from the participants and further joint transfer of the findings to participants' own work.

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REFERENT*INNEN

UNLIMITED – JO VERRENT (she/her)

Unlimited is an arts charity based in the UK that commissions disabled artists, commissioning exceptional work to challenge and change the world.

Unlimited works through 5 strands of activity: COMMISSION, DEVELOP, SUPPORT, CONNECT and CHANGE.
» Unlimited COMMISSIONS disabled artists in order to make CHANGE.
» Unlimited SUPPORTS and DEVELOPS disabled artists and CONNECTS them with the sector.
» Unlimited SUPPORTS and DEVELOPS the sector and CONNECTS them with disabled artists.

Unlimited receives funding from Arts Council England (Unlimited is in their National Portfolio), Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland, British Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and others.

Jo Verrent works in arts and culture at strategic levels with national agencies, embedding the belief that diversity adds texture and turning policy into real action.
Her arts history includes creating award-winning video installations (with Luke Pell) and Sync (with Sarah Pickthall), a transformational program examining the interplay between disability and leadership in the cultural sector. Jo has won both Cosmopolitan's Woman of Achievement and a trophy for jam.
She sits on the Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy Oversight Committee, Arts Council England's National Council and is a Clore fellow.



REFERENT*INNEN

EYK KAULY (he/him)

Eyk Kauly works as an outside eye, Deaf coach, performer, actor, artist and theatre educator.

He is Deaf and fluent in German Sign Language (DGS), German Lip-Reading Support (LBG) and International Sign Language (IS).

After graduating from high school, Eyk worked on various projects as an actor, performer and sign language artist. Together with Susanne Tod, Eyk coached the inclusive youth club at the Ernst Deutsch Theater in Hamburg. He currently works as a Deaf coach at the Cologne Opera, among other things. Eyk Kauly has been directing the German Deaf Theatre since 2023.

Eyk has appeared on stage in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (director: Michaela Caspar) and 'Die taube Zeitmaschine' (production: Possible World) at the Ballhaus Ost Berlin, and at the German Deaf Theatre in the productions 'Servant of Two Masters' (director: Zoe Xanthopolou) and 'Die Hauptsache' (director: Jeffrey Döring). He has also taken on roles in various productions, e.g. at the Munich Kammerspiele ('Tristan (and Isolde)', directed by Nele Jahnke), the Staatstheater Hannover ('Die Wut, die uns vereint' by Finegan Kruckemeyer, directed by Wera Mahne) and at the Kaserne Basel, Switzerland ('Screening invisibilities', directed by Zino Wey). At the Schauspiel Leipzig, he plays several characters in the play 'Altbau in zentraler Lage. Eine Schaueroper'.

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience



REFERENT*INNEN

GRAEAE – LAURA GUTHRIE (she/her)
and HANA PASCAL KEEGAN (she/her)

For over 45 years, Graeae has cultivated and championed the best in Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent talent, locally, nationally and internationally.

Graeae is passionate about igniting artistic curiosity, championing accessibility and providing a platform for new generations of artists through the creation of trail-blazing theatre. It is also a human rights company, founded on the need to tackle social injustice, discrimination and exclusion.

Graeae's work has been seen in stadiums, theatres, schools, at festivals and streamed online. Recent productions include, Bad Lads, Romeo and Juliet, award winning Self-Raising, High Times and Dirty Monsters, UK Theatre Award winner The Paradis Files, Kerbs, Olivier Award nominated 10 Nights and two seasons of the digital new work programme Crips without Constraints. Other work includes the hit Ian Dury musical Reasons to be Cheerful and outdoor spectacles The Iron Man and This Is Not For You. In addition to productions, Graeae also runs an extensive programme of training, learning, and creative professional development programmes. Since 1997, Graeae has been run by Jenny Sealey OBE, who also co-directed the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

Artistic Director and Joint CEO: Jenny Sealey OBE.
Executive Director and Joint CEO: Kevin Walsh.

REFERENT*INNEN

Laura Guthrie is a disabled artist with 34 years' experience in theatre. She is the Artist Development Manager for Graeae Theatre Co, Co-Director of Meander Theatre Co, worked as an Agent For Change with Ramps On The Moon and for 20 years as Associate Artist with Bamboozle Theatre and 8 years with Carousel in Brighton as a creative facilitator and dance performer. Trained in Theatre Design Laura has devised, directed and designed theatre alongside Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent creatives throughout her career. She is focussed on creating accessible structures for theatre making whoever she works alongside. Laura directed Sheffield Crucibles Launchpad 2023 show, Communitree & 2024 show Total Ripple Effect. Regularly working as an Access Consultant & Disability Equality trainer past clients include, Nottingham Playhouse, Birmingham Rep, Shanghai Childrens Arts Theatre, Bamboozle, Level Centre, Bold Text, Egg Box, Carbon, Ditto, Grizzly Bear, Major Labia, Orange Tree and New Perspectives Theatre companies.

Hana Pascal Keegan, originally from the British Virgin Islands, is a director, writer and actor drawn to plays that capture rich interpersonal dynamics and the thrills of the body.
Hana most recently created and directed Beyond Her Years at The Almeida which innovatively interwove four iconic plays: Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler and The Lady from the Sea, Clare Barron's Dance Nation, and Ifeyinwa Frederick's The Hoes.
Her assistant/associate directing credits include: The Secret Garden (Open Air Regents Park); All My Sons (The Old Vic, NT Live), All Of Us (The National); Macbeth (Chichester Festival); Jellyfish (The Bush/National) and Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me (The Kiln).
In addition to working with a range of contemporary classics and disability new plays, Hana has also worked in virtual and mixed reality production at The National's Immersive Storytelling Studio.
Hana trained with Graeae, The Young Vic and The Eugene O'Neill Center in the USA. She regularly runs access and inclusion workshops, directs for NYT and teaches devising for Theatre Academy London.

CREATIVE LAB
Artistic practice shaped by disabled experience

REFERENT*INNEN

DR. KATE MARSH (she/her)

Dr. Kate Marsh is a disabled dance artist-researcher and Assistant Professor at Coventry University's Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE). With over 20 years of experience in performance, teaching, and scholarship, her work explores Disability, perceptions of the body and leadership in dance. Marsh's research often sits at the intersection of creative practice and technology, including projects on AI-driven co-design for prosthetics and digital interventions in disability and dance. She is committed to amplifying disabled voices in the arts, challenging traditional notions of leadership, and advancing inclusive, innovative approaches to dance research and practice.

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