



european cultural foundation

In June 2008, the ECF will host in Amsterdam a huge international and intercultural 3-day video festival involving thousands of young people. The centre-piece of the ECF's 'Stranger' project, the festival will include video screenings, debates, masterclasses and workshops. The build-up to the festival will feature national video competitions and a website. And among Stranger's outcomes will be a European fund for audiovisual youth expression.

As the ECF's successful bid to the European Commission for support for Stranger stated: 'The young have an unbelievable amount of potential for positive social change – their fresh and honest take on things could help us all in learning to live with diversity.'

Don't
be a
STRANGER

“It's no wonder that truth is stranger than fiction. Fiction has to make sense.”

Stranger is dedicated to the self-expression and self-empowerment of young people in today's Europe, helping them to show and share their world. By placing individual visions in a large trans-national context, Stranger hopes to encourage a sense of European belonging among young people of very different cultural backgrounds.

The video work will be shown for its intrinsic merits and as a starting-point for debate. It is a debate that is badly needed in a MySpace-and-youtube world of ready communication but little analysis. Young people are everywhere demonstrating their mastery of new media: now is the time to talk about what is being expressed. At Stranger, the debate will be led by young people themselves.

For the individuals who take part, Stranger will be a platform and a learning-ground. Their creative skills and intercultural experience will be valued as part of a large and crucial European debate. For the organisations participating or looking on, Stranger will show new ways of working with young people, share skills and experience, and lead to new partnerships.

Stranger –

...international festival for thousands, video workshops, interactive website, DVD, travelling exhibition, Europe-wide debates, video competition...

Stranger is video, is young people, is Europe today.

Stranger is a project organised by the ECF and a network of public, non-governmental and commercial partners across Europe.

CONCEPT

- **Find and develop** new ways for intercultural dialogue across geographic and cultural borders using audiovisual means;
- **Showcase** the broad scope of voices of European youth on diversity issues;
- **Build** local capacities for youth and media work;
- **Set up a network** of cultural organisations working with media and youth around Europe
- **Break linguistic barriers** hence the European youth can make their dreams heard, show how they reflect on their lives and on society and how they view and explore their identity.
- **Build a sense of European belonging** starting from the young individual's personal dreams and concerns and linking them to a larger, trans-national context;
- **Raise awareness** on generational and cultural differences and similarities in what is considered important;
- **Demonstrate** the creative potential amongst the youth in Europe;
- **Refresh** notions of youth and active citizenship.

The whole project is based on the realities of young people and *their video works as a starting point for dialogue*. During the whole process the young people are the experts, teachers, media educators, professionals are there to listen and learn.

exploring ways of developing narratives, engaging with emotion, exploring, using symbolic images or messages and the surreal. The video creative process will centre on narrative and visual inventiveness. The workshops will be based on improvisation

- Videos, done by and with young people (user-generated content)
- Youth debates, using video as a starting point, across Europe and online
- International Youth festival
- Virtual communication (website)
- Non-formal education (trainings/workshops/educational material)
- Exhibitions (touring all over Europe)

IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

- **Increased capacities** of dozens of European NGOs, cultural institutions, media corporations, local governments and artistic collectives on how to work with youth;
- **New cross-border partnerships** including public-private collaborations;
- **Sharing and exchange of knowledge, experience and skills** between NGOs, broadcasters, researchers and experts.

IMPACT ON EUROPEAN LEVEL

- **Greater awareness of the diversity of values and norms** amongst European youth
- **Greater awareness** of the similarities and differences in the dreams and fears of European youth;
- **Tested methodologies** on how visual culture functions as a tool for intercultural dialogue;
- **Greater awareness** of the main actors in the field and identification of best practices.

OUTCOMES

- **Visual and personal testimonies** by thousands of young people on diversity issues, disseminated throughout Europe;
- **Educational material** on intercultural dialogue distributed across Europe in 20.000 DVD copies and online;
- **Online, free archive** of powerful videos made by young Europeans, accessible to tens of thousands of young people throughout Europe;
- **Policy recommendations** on how user-generated video can work as a tool for local and European policy development;
- **A European Network of cultural organisations** working with youth and media;
- **A European network of public broadcasters** using videos made by young people for their programming

The organisations behind the Stranger project are fully convinced that young people are ready to share their views on society, their home, if given the right platform. Young people are willing to work for a better Europe if the rest of Europe is willing to work with them and is ready to recognise the views of the young as valuable for the future of Europe.

The organisations behind Stranger believe that the young have an unbelievable amount of potential for positive social change - their fresh and honest take on things could help us all in learning to live with diversity. Stranger provides the stage and brings in the audience. Stranger feeds the voices of its young participants back to the society.

However, cultural diversity does not only bring positive learning and discoveries, it can also trigger prejudices, drum up support for populism and create fear and hostility, between people from different countries, or within nations. The Stranger project deals with today's Europe and its challenges in the only way, which works among young people: honestly, talking about things with their real names.