

Pop-Kultur/2024

Press Release from 2nd September 2024

Sweating, singing, and celebrating: the anniversary edition of Pop-Kultur comes to a resounding end

- 10th festival edition successfully concluded
- Around 10,000 Pop-Kultur visitors on all three days
- A multifaceted festival with concerts, Commissioned Works, and talks



Black Sherif and his crowd © Yvonne Hartmann

From 28 to 30 August 2024, Pop-Kultur transformed Berlin's Kulturbrauerei into a bubbling cauldron of creative energy. For the tenth time, the festival brought together international and local music scenes, impressing around 10,000 visitors over three days with over 100 events.

On Friday evening, the Maschinenhaus and Kesselhaus were rattling as **Rich Aucoin** from Canada invited everyone to hop on his meme-loaded pop rollercoaster, and the amazingly confident 22-year-old **Black Sherif** got the crowd moving with his rhymes. The artist from Ghana was part of the »Focus on Africa« programme where Pop-Kultur showcased the diverse musical landscape of the African continent in Berlin. Further acclaimed African pop stars such as **Yemi Alade**, **Blinky Bill**, and **Lady Donli** met fans old and new – whether joined by a full band and energetic dancers, or simply solo backed by beats.

»The atmosphere at this year's Pop-Kultur Festival was magical,« says Festival Director and Managing Director of Musicboard Berlin **Marie von der Heydt**. *»It was stunning to see how artists and audiences alike were partying, singing, and dancing together. This energy, this physical togetherness and exchange - that's what Pop-Kultur is all about.«*

In its anniversary edition, Pop-Kultur has remained true to its core values that have carried the festival since it started in 2015 - focussing on the artists, inclusion, diversity, and intercultural exchange, unfolding over three days in the live programme, as well as in the »Pop-Kultur Nachwuchs« programme with its 150 talents from all over the world, plus the Goethe Talents and the Musicboard Co-Creation Residencies.

»From the Commissioned Works, talks, and readings to the performances and workshops, Pop-Kultur takes its goal of diversity seriously beyond offering numerous concerts, not only aiming for proper representation, but more important, prompting intercultural exchange - based on the unique, diverse creativity within Berlin's music and cultural scene,« says Berlin Senator for Culture **Joe Chialo** about the festival, which also took a look back on the past ten years in its special anniversary programme.

Ten years full of musical discoveries and long-lasting connections, ten years of artist-centred productions, and ten years full of democratic and discursive moments. The potential of institutions and events like Pop-Kultur to promote democracy was also emphasised by **Katja Lucker**, founder of the festival and Managing Director of Initiative Musik, in her retrospective with **Jens Balzer**, offering anecdotes and reflections.

This year, »Pop-Kultur Diskurs« hosted talks such as »What Do You Meme By?« with social media luminaries **Sveamaus** and **Galerie Arschgeweih**, »Testcard - Rechtspop« on the presence of the radical right in pop culture, and »Festivals, Events und DisCo« about infrastructures for the disabled community - each providing in-depth exchange and valuable insights on current social issues. As always since the first edition of Pop-Kultur, cultural participation has been an important concern: the festival site is meant to be a safe and sensitive environment.



Impressions from this year's Çaystube: Olympia Bukkakis on the left and bangerfabrique on the right © Caterina Gili

The Çaystube in the Kulturbrauerei courtyard, open to the public free of charge, likewise epitomised this understanding of togetherness: led by master of ceremonies **Olympia Bukkakis**, artists and audiences went wild to the queer joie de vivre, heavy hip-hop beats, and the (im)perfection of singing karaoke over three hot summer days – sometimes with the addition of a refreshing water sprinkler. One of many highlights was the DJ set and concert by feminist hip-hop collective **bangerfabrique**, who got the Çaystube crowd dancing in a frenzy.

Curated with stylistic confidence by the programme team of **Yeşim Duman**, **Christian Morin**, and **Pamela Owusu-Brenyah**, the further programme in the Kulturbrauerei's indoor venues offered unforgettable moments that were enhanced by the line-up's versatility: Palestinian singer **Bashar Murad** performed with electropop icon **Peaches** as a surprise guest. **Gaye Su Akyol** donned a glittering disco ball outfit, encouraging the audience to sing along. The crowd was eagerly bouncing to **Kabeaushé**'s avant-garde electro sound, while **A Certain Ratio** got the dancefloor moving with post-punk funk, even after 47 years of the band's history. And **Ivo Dimchev** spiralled with glee to operatic pop heights.

Fans of edgier sounds were also taken care of. **Sextile** delivered hardcore dance music with touches of gabber, **Plattenbau** presented their gloomy take on new wave in the fittingly foggy Frannz, and Berlin newcomer **Fee Aviv** impressed the crowd with her refined, rich, dark pop sound.

Otis Mensah, **Pari Eskandari**, **Melanie Jame Wolf**, 21 downbeat's pop opera »WOZZECK«, and the interactive dance battle »MY CIRCLE« were among the 15 Commissioned Works – exclusive productions under the direction of **Pamela Schlewinski** that premiered here, distinguishing Pop-Kultur as a production festival – captivating audiences with powerful and very personal performances. **Christin Nichols**, meanwhile, contributed an ironic side-swipe at the ruthlessness of the industry in the form of musical sketch miniatures.

With the experimental, unpredictable character of its Commissioned Works, Pop-Kultur also created memories that will resonate long after the festival's tenth anniversary.

Next year, the 11th edition of Pop-Kultur will take place in the last week of August.

Pop-Kultur is funded by the Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion of the State of Berlin with funds from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the programme »Strengthening the Potential for Innovation in Culture II (INP II)«, Pop-Kultur Commissioned Works & Pop-Kultur Inter:national are funded by Initiative Musik gemeinnützige Projektgesellschaft mbH with project funds from the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. The »Goethe Talents« programme is funded by the Goethe-Institut. The exchange project »Tokyo-Berlin« as part of the 30th anniversary of the city partnership is sponsored by the Senate Chancellery – Governing Mayor of Berlin and the Goethe-Institut Tokyo.



Press Contacts Marie Ketzscher Ines Weißbach **E-Mail** press@pop-kultur.berlin
Website <https://www.pop-kultur.berlin> **Press Area** www.pop-kultur.berlin/press/