



PHOTO BY MOTHER TONGUES

# MOTHER TONGUES FESTIVAL

Mother Tongues Festival is the largest festival celebrating linguistic diversity through the arts in Ireland. The festival is run by Mother Tongues, a social enterprise working to promote multilingualism and intercultural dialogue in Ireland. Its mission is to showcase the country's rich artistic and cultural tapestry and connect people through the power of language. The festival takes place over five days in February, featuring workshops, panel discussions, exhibitions, dance, music, art, live performance, film, and storytelling across more than 15 languages. Mother Tongues Festival highlights international artists now residing in Ireland and engages audiences through their respective mother tongues.

The Mother Tongues Festival aims to welcome communities to develop, enjoy and share culture and creativity; to nurture the next generation of artists; to continue to come together through creativity; and finally, to provide some joy to help people overcome feelings of isolation and loss, and make immigrant families feel at home in Ireland.

The founders of the Mother Tongues Festival, Francesca La Morgia and Elena Cristofanon, describe the festival's purpose as both societal and artistic:

***“From an artistic point of view, we want to explore ways to make art through the use of multiple languages and involve local communities more and more in the making of art and in telling their own stories. From a social point of view, we want to challenge the “monolingual mindset” and show everyone in society that multilingualism is an asset for individuals and our communities.”***

## **TOLERANCE: ARTS AND MULTICULTURALISM**

The Mother Tongues Festival is committed to creating a safer, more understanding, and more open society through art. As a festival with roots in intercultural dialogue and multilingualism, it is naturally positioned to confront various social issues through its programmes, such as racism and xenophobia. It is fair to say that Mother Tongues Festival is a novel festival that, as La Morgia and Cristofanon describe it:

***“Mother Tongues is the only one of its kind in that it offers the opportunity to be immersed in many different languages through creative experiences. We feel that there is a need for our society to become aware of multilingualism and to be open to diversity. We also know that many families lack opportunities to experience their mother tongue outside their immediate family, so our festival offers them an opportunity to enjoy their mother tongue, make new connections, and experience all this through creative encounters.”***

– Elena Cristofanon and Francesca La Morgia, founders, Mother Tongues Festival





To engage its diverse and growing audience, Mother Tongues Festival collaborates with other community groups when planning the festival, especially ensuring that marginalised communities are involved in organisation and planning. Best practices in inclusivity and accessibility are sought when putting the festival programme together, including making the event affordable for people of lower economic backgrounds.

The festival fosters a cultural understanding between attendees by bringing different groups together for a transcultural creative experience. This redefines the concept of the 'other' while avoiding the emergence of one dominant or default culture. By bringing people together with different backgrounds but often similar life experiences, the festival creates an atmosphere where people are seen, welcomed, and understood. This helps develop a sense of community around the festival that is now carried yearly.

**Name:** *Mother Tongues Festival*

**City & country:** *Dublin, Ireland*

**Capacity:** *1,000*

**Site:** *Different venues in Tallaght, Dublin*

**Camping:** *No*

**Number of days:** *5*

**Established in:** *2018*

