

The Magdalena Project

international network of women in contemporary performance



Guidelines for Events

organised under the umbrella name of the Magdalena Project

The Magdalena Project was established in 1987 following the first International Festival of Women in Contemporary Theatre held in Cardiff in 1986. These guidelines are based on over 30 years of experience of organising Magdalena events around the world and are designed to pass on the best practice that has been collectively accrued. A positive experience gained at one of our events can change lives and this is as much about the practicalities of the event as about the content of the programme.

It is a pleasure and an honour when someone is inspired to propose mounting a Magdalena Project in their own country. The central aim of the Magdalena Project has always been to take up more 'space' with women's performance work, and we believe this is done by taking the responsibility for creating and managing opportunities for women practitioners to gather, to overcome their isolation, to show and share their work within an environment that allows that work to be uncompromisingly and properly presented.

In respect of this history and legacy, and the work achieved by so many women, we have created guidelines for those wishing to organise a Magdalena event. The intention is not to tell you what to do; it is to share with you what has worked in the past. Learning from past experience will help to ensure that future events build on this experience. We want women attending a Magdalena Project event to expect a high quality event that is well planned and managed. A good experience is as much about the quality of the food as about the quality of the performances.

For more information about these guidelines, please email magdalena@themagdalenaproject.org

Key things to put in place for a successful event

- **Advisor**

All new events proposed need to have an advisor. An advisor is someone from the core Magdalena group, or someone agreed by the core group. The advisor will provide support to the event organisers, as their time allows, from the beginning to the end of the event. This support should, where possible, involve at least two visits before the event to:

 - meet the organising team and potential funders
 - view proposed sites for the event
 - advise and collaborate on all programming
- **Opening and Closing rounds**

Magdalena events typically begin and end with a "round": this is a gathering of all artists, participants, organisers, volunteers and helpers, where everyone has the opportunity to briefly introduce themselves (in large gatherings this may be no more than their name and country) and say something about their hopes, expectations and experiences of the event. The round is important in encouraging equal communication and participation.

A Magdalena Event will involve women from different countries sharing and showing their work through performance, teaching and work presentations.

The shape of an event can take many different forms. It can be small or big - a day long event, three days, three weeks. A Magdalena Project event needs a clear set of foundation principles upon which the event is based. These founding principles need to include:

- a clear artistic aim and vision
- a strong personal motivation and reason for doing the event
- an aim that is realistic, achievable and can be well organised.

Artistic Programming

For an event to take the Magdalena name we need to ensure that high levels of quality are maintained and that work presented has integrity, rigor and a level of professional credibility. The event needs to seek to address issues faced by the community in which the event organisers are working as well as seeking to move into new areas. Each subsequent event is building on those that have already happened and needs to address or respond to the emergent issues. The advisor identified to work with the event can advise on how to approach and answer this point in each individual case.

Those of us with a long history with the Magdalena Project are very willing to support and contribute to new events but only on the understanding that we encounter an artistic challenge. This might mean meeting or collaborating with strong artists and work that may be new to the Magdalena context, or it might be an invitation to address a specific political, aesthetic or intellectual enquiry. Again the person identified to work with you can advise you on this.

Practical Issues

- **Funding**

The event organiser takes full responsibility for all the financing and budgeting for the event. Each cultural community has a distinct funding system and the event organiser is the person who will best understand the particularities and possibilities in her own region.

- **Invited artists**

Contributing guest artists usually expect:

- All costs of food and accommodation during the event to be paid for by the event organisers;
- all travel costs to and from the event to be covered by the event organisers or an organisation in their own country (e.g. British Council for an artist coming from the U.K.);
- a fee or honorarium for each of their contributions to the event (see notes below for a minimum guideline¹). The event organiser will come to an individual agreement with each contributing artist but it is recommended that all artists leading work receive the same financial recognition for their contribution. There could be a structure where distinctions in financial remuneration might be appropriate, and if so any such distinctions need to be very clearly considered and communicated;
- free access to all parts of the event;
- to be present throughout the event rather than just 'appear' for their bit; Magdalena is a meeting ground as well as a presentation platform.

¹ As a minimum guide only: \$200/200Euros for each 4 hour workshop session; \$500/500Euros for a performance; \$100/100Euros for a presentation/talk/lecture.

- **Event Locations**

The event organiser needs to carefully consider where the event is held. All locations should ideally be within 10 minutes walking distance of each other. If not, public or other transport needs to be available and consideration made for any mobility needs. All spaces should have adequate ventilation, air conditioning, heating appropriate to the prevailing weather conditions.

- **Event Centre:** An event needs a centre – a place where the contributors and participants can meet in comfortable, social surroundings; where audiences and artists can get together when the work is not in session; where information and ideas can be informally exchanged. This might be a bar or the event restaurant, a club or a specially dedicated space.
- **Performance Venues and Technical Management of Venues:** A Magdalena event provides clean, adequate performance spaces, professionally maintained and equipped with the technical resources and management expertise to ensure that all performances programmed have their technical requirements and get in times fully met. This is an area which should not be compromised. Experience has taught us that engaging enthusiastic but inexperienced technical management and production people who, in the final stages, are unable to cope with the demands made, inevitably compromises and undermines the work of the artists and the aims of the event. All technical resources for the programme need to be identified and budgeted for well in advance of the event. A production manager needs to be appointed as well as technical assistants in each venue.
- **Workshop Venues:** clean wooden floored, empty spaces with, as a guide, minimum dimensions of 10x6 meters for a workshop of 15 participants. Ideally there would also be changing rooms and facilities for making tea/coffee and access to drinking water in the breaks.
- **Forums, debates, round tables, lectures, presentations, talks:** comfortable, audible spaces with full technical equipment as required: microphones, data/video play and projection facilities and someone available with the technical abilities to run all equipment.

- **Food**

We have learned that a successful festival is one that offers good healthy, well presented food. Often meal times are when lasting conversations begin and contacts and friendships are established. Meals might be the only times within a busy festival programme when participants can interact and so the more attention and care given to the environment and the food where these informal exchanges happen, the greater the ripple effect of the festival.

- **Accommodation**

Single (where possible) or shared rooms that are clean, quiet and well maintained. Participants tell us that they don't like nylon sheets and plastic mattresses.

- **Online events**

If your event is taking place, it is important to consider how the Magdalena ethos can be maintained in the online environment. For example, what opportunities for informal network are possible when participants are not meeting physically to share meals? And what are the necessary technical conditions to best present the work? You can contact magnetics@themagdalena.org for assistance from the Magdalena web team.

Publicity and Marketing

The event organiser is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the Magdalena Project in all publicity and marketing materials. We try to ensure that materials (posters, leaflets, programmes, websites etc) are designed to a high professional standard. Working with professional agencies and individuals on press and publicity is recommended. Information can be found on www.themagdalenaproject.org where the project's aims and objectives, chronology and future plans are articulated; we would suggest that the wording used on the website be maintained.

Publicity material and opening and closing events should always acknowledge the financial and in kind support of those who have supported the event. It will always be your event but without the support of your sponsors, supporters and your participants it won't be a success; always make sure you say thank you to all of them.

- **Magdalena website and email list**

All Magdalena events must be promoted to the Magdalena network. This is done by posting your event on the Magdalena website. It will then be included in the monthly email newsletters, and will be featured on the home page of the website.

- Create an account at <http://www.themagdalenaproject.org/user/register>
- Contact magnetics@themagdalenaproject.org if you need help.
- You may be asked to write a short article about your event for the email newsletter.

- **Social media**

If you are creating social media profiles for your event, look for other Magdalena social media profiles as you can connect to them and spread your information to the network through these channels.

Documentation

We encourage you to document as much of your event as your resources allow. This is important for you in funding and organising future events, and for the archives of the Magdalena Project.

All Magdalena events are archived on the website (<http://www.themagdalenaproject.org/en/content/archive>) with links to the event website if there is one and any video or other documentation.

Contacts

General festival enquiries: magdalena@themagdalenaproject.org

Website and email newsletter: magnetics@themagdalenaproject.org