

CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR
THE CITY OF BERGEN

2015 ————— 2025

The cultural city of Bergen
– at the forefront internationally

A LIFE IS MOULDED BY countless experiences. Among the experiences that define us as personalities are the strange, magical and durable experiences that happen when we encounter a work of art. To ask what art means to us is therefore the same as asking what *experiences* in the deepest sense mean to us. How we define ourselves depends on what *experiences* we have encountered. Therefore the experience of ourself also depends on what we experience (or are allowed to experience) outside ourself. And since we live our lives in one place, within a certain period of time, then the access to experiences in these places, within this period of time, will be so decisive – for each and every one of us. Bergen is that kind of place. The years ahead of us are such a period of time. New art experiences will (always) require innovative art. Innovative art will (always) require innovative art policies. For me, cultural policy means securing, developing and expanding the city of Bergen as a polyphonic and – not least – (always) newly-tuned place of experience.

Tore Vagn Lid

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FOREWORD BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS FOR THE CITY OF BERGEN —

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BERGEN'S CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR 2015 — 2025 builds on a positive development where the city is seen as a laboratory for experimentation, known for its boldness and being open to new impulses.

Bergen is a melting pot for arts and culture, where history and the present blend in a mixture of nuances and variations, and where the focus is both broad and narrow. Bergen is a city of culture that produces cultural content of the highest quality. The producers are represented in all spheres, including voluntary cultural circles, public and private cultural institutions and the independent arts. They contribute to a vital and broad cultural life that provides attractivity, a good reputation and good experiences for the local population and visitors alike. There is still potential for growth among the city's many talented individuals in all art genres and forms of artistic expression. All of this forms the basis for a robust and viable culture policy that enables Bergen to set the agenda both nationally and internationally.

In other words, Bergen has all it takes to be at the forefront as a city for arts and culture. The City Council has therefore altered the vision in the cultural strategy for Bergen for 2015 — 2025 to *"The cultural city of Bergen – at the forefront internationally"*.

The Municipal Plan's chapter on social affairs lays out the primary guidelines for Bergen's development in all areas of society. The cultural strategy is based on many of the guidelines highlighted in the social affairs chapter. This shows the potential that the arts and culture policy represents for the city.

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As Commissioner for Cultural Affairs, I intend to use this cultural strategy document to create a vision for the future that can help us make important choices, unite the city's strengths and be a driving force for a clear and forward-looking arts and culture policy. The Cultural Strategy 2015 — 2025 outlines Bergen's long-term course and will be a primary reference document for further work in all areas of arts and culture.

I would like to thank all those involved in preparing this general strategic document, including individuals and institutions from the city's cultural sphere and the city's cultural affairs office.

The cultural strategy aims to strengthen all artistic and cultural communities within the areas it focuses on while at the same time giving added value for urban society and the public. As a city of culture, Bergen will be at the forefront of culture internationally and at the same time deeply rooted locally.



Helge Stormoen

COMMISSIONER FOR CULTURE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, SPORTS AND CHURCH AFFAIRS

THE STRATEGIC DOCUMENT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE FOR 2003 — 2013

has been an excellent tool and functioned as a “guiding star” for policy making and in the development of plans for the various areas of arts and culture. The nine areas of focus in the strategy have been operationalised through specific action plans.

In the making of a cultural strategy for the next 10 years, many players from all areas of arts and culture have participated in conferences, dialogue meetings and workshops. It has been a good and fruitful process, in which the challenges and opportunities for the next 10 years were discussed and illustrated through lectures, exchange of ideas, and debate.

A common thread in the various contributions is that all of the city’s arts and culture communities highlight many of the same challenges and opportunities. These are related to the city’s development and growth, to communication and competence in a wider context, and are also concerned with the city’s distinctive character and identity. The cultural strategy is therefore divided into five primary areas of focus that are regarded as relevant for all players within arts and culture. Within these areas of focus, the cultural city’s assets and challenges are illuminated, and strategic actions that will contribute towards strengthening the city’s arts and culture community are formulated based on this.

A LONG-TERM AND OFFENSIVE perspective on arts and culture has functioned as a guideline in terms of political priorities and planning, and created a predictable and reliable arts and culture policy:

- — The city’s artistic and cultural life has had a strong and dynamic development in line with the strategy’s vision.
- — The strategy’s guidelines regarding arts and culture as a driving factor in general sector development, has created new alliances and increased awareness of the significance of culture in Bergen.
- — The significance of arts and culture as a driving force in urban society development has given the city a stronger image, identity and reputation on a national and international level.

In 2014, Bergen stands out as a diverse and innovative cultural city, which in an international context is often described as Norway’s most interesting city for contemporary art. Feedback from artistic and cultural environments, articles in the media, and response from the public show that Bergen’s reputation as a city for arts and culture has improved significantly during the last 10 years.

SOME RESULTS —————

- — 15 comprehensive plans/programmes for various policy fields and target groups, including the art plan for 2008-2017 (with a turnover in 2013), the amateur culture plan, the plan for archives, libraries and museums, the youth programmes Signatur I & II, the plan for cultural arenas for 2008-2016 (with a turnover in 2013), the international exchange programme, a plan for people with impairments, a film report, and the graffiti plan.
- — Financial assistance for the upgrading and establishment of 17 culture centres/rehearsal and production facilities/museums, including USE,

Griegshallen, Cornerteateret, Østre, Literaturhuset, Fana Kulturhus, Kunsthallen, Bergen Kjøtt, Øvingsbingene, Bergen Senter for Elektronisk Kunst (BEK), and Sandviksbodene/Museum Vest.

- — Between twenty and thirty new artist-run galleries and shared art studios have been established with support from the municipal authority.
- — Increase in available project funding within all fields of arts and culture, as well as grants for professional artists and cultural workers.
- — Strong focus on art in public spaces such as schools, cultural centres and nursing homes. This art and all previous gifts and purchases by the City of Bergen have been systematically reviewed and registered.
- — A substantial increase in state subsidies to artists and companies in Bergen from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the Norwegian Cultural Fund, the Norwegian Film Institute and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (via the Office for Contemporary Art Norway/OCA and others).
- — Expansion of library space, consolidation of museums and the establishment of independent arts foundations. New buildings or new premises, creation of a central archive/document centre, digitising projects and web dissemination established by Bergen City Archives.
- — Focus on freedom of expression and democracy, e.g. by making Bergen an ICORN city of refuge for persecuted writers.
- — The city has initiated and contributed towards the establishment of six network organisations: Visp, Proscen, Amatørkulturrådet, Media Region Bergen, Spillmakerlauget and Design Region Bergen.
- — The Western Norway Film Centre received a substantial boost in funding that included municipal funds for screenplay development, talent searches, industry development schemes and production.

- — Establishment of three new municipal-owned limited companies; Fuzz, Buzz and Bergen Assembly.
- — Bergen Assembly – a new, major contemporary visual arts triennial that was first held in 2013.
- — Several new festivals for all target groups within various genres: Ung 09, -11 and -13, EKKO, Borealis, BIMF, Performance Art Bergen, Perfect Sounds Forever, Beyond the Gates and Mini- Midi- Maxi.
- — Opportunities to experience and take part in arts and culture have increased significantly for children and young people, and many institutions within the arts offer specific activities aimed at this group, e.g. Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen International Festival, S12, Litteraturhuset, Stiftelsen 3,14, the Bergen public library, Bergenfest and Bergen International Film Festival.
- — Several cross-sectorial projects and collaborations have been developed such as Arts, Culture and Mental Health, the Cultural Walking Stick programme and artwork for the Bergen Light Rail. Among such projects are also contributions to urban development projects such as Ny Energi around the Damsgård Sound with the new Ny-Krohnborg and Cornerteateret culture centres.
- — New premises and a new organisational structure for Bergen International Culture Centre/BIKS, establishment of Stiftelsen Fargespill (Kaleidoscope Foundation) after four years as a municipal enterprise and coordination of the Bergen Culture School and the Children's Cultural Centre.
- — Norsk Publikumsutvikling (Norwegian Audience Development) was established with a two-year operational grant from the municipal authority.

OUR VISION FOR THE CULTURAL CITY OF BERGEN 2015 — 2025

The cultural city of Bergen – at the forefront internationally

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POSITIONING THE CITY WITH

- — A world-class and well-renowned arts and culture scene
- — A knowledge-based, innovative and enterprising cultural landscape
- — A diversity of cultural experiences of the highest quality – for everyone
- — A high level of knowledge of arts and culture among the local population
- — A development strategy for the city in which arts and culture is central

OUR VALUES

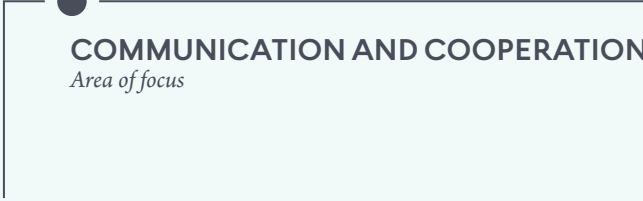
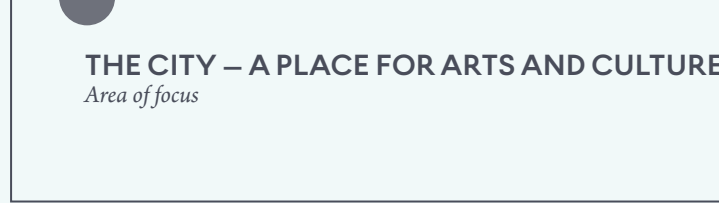
- — Exploratory and driven by opportunity
- — Brave and enterprising
- — Safeguarding traditions and community-building
- — Open, inclusive and focused on users

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OUR STRATEGIES

- — Ensure quality and uniqueness in the production and presentation of arts and culture
- — Raise the level of competence in the artistic and cultural communities and among the public
- — Be a driving force in developing cultural knowledge in children and young people and emphasise aesthetic subjects in all stages of education
- — Strengthen and secure communication externally and internally
- — Further develop a culture of cooperation and networking
- — Arrange for adequate and appropriate cultural infrastructures in urban planning
- — Strengthen the cultural city's international position and appeal

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2015 ————— 2025





THE CULTURAL CITY OF BERGEN has experienced strong growth in many areas in the past 10 years. In line with the growth in population, there are also whirlwind developments in several areas of society, including the cultural sector. Arts and culture (and players in these fields) are characterised by constant change. This gives both positive growth to the city's variety of cultural activities and challenges with regards to public funding and resources, including flexible and favourable framework conditions.

Bergen has a number of competent and professional artists and companies, not least within the field of independent arts. Bergen is also home to many prominent institutions with long traditions, a vital subculture of cultural entrepreneurs and many resourceful individuals and organisations. The city has a long history of entrepreneurship, and cultural entrepreneurs stimulate economic growth within the creative industries. Film, design and music industries have experienced good growth in recent years and have many success stories to show for it. There is still a potential for growth among the city's many talented individuals within all art genres and forms of cultural expression. All this forms the basis for a robust and viable cultural policy, which gives Bergen the opportunity to set the agenda both nationally and internationally.

The city is thus large enough to have what it takes to be at the forefront as a city for arts and culture. There are long traditions of pulling together and

for various cultural disciplines to cooperate across specialist fields. This enables the development of complete value chains that provide a basis for further growth. It will be important to identify and support the driving forces that will contribute to the desired development of Bergen as a city for arts and culture with a quality and uniqueness in production and services. This includes factors such as political framework conditions, sources of finance, use of technology and knowledge of market trends that can affect growth within arts and culture in a wider sense.

Bergen also has a rich and diverse academic environment. The Bergen Academy of Art and Design, the University of Bergen, the University College of Bergen and the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, city museums and state/local archives – all of which have relevant environments for everything from source-based dissemination, communication and free innovation to the education of artists and cultural workers. These institutions increase the city's potential for growth. Bergen can also point to many examples of participant-driven knowledge development. Several of the most well-functioning trade organisations and initiatives in Norway came to be because the city acted as patron and contractual partner. Some of these organisations have grown to become national resources, while others have clear national ambitions.

Good audience figures reflect that arts and culture is an important part of the inhabitants' and city's identity, along with an audience concerned with quality, diversity and availability. In 2011, Bergen founded Norsk Publikumsutvikling (Norwegian Audience Development) with the intention of collecting knowledge about audiences in order to increase the cultural players' awareness and competence about who their audiences are and how to reach out to new target groups. This is important in a time when the cultural sector is influenced by and acts as a driving force for the digital transformation that characterises the times we live in. Internet globalises and increases the competition for the audience's attention. The market for arts and culture is becoming more complex. The average age of the population is on the rise and audiences are becoming more specialized as the niche markets are growing. As Norway becomes increasingly more international, new opportunities arise inside and outside the country's borders.

Bergen is not only growing in population, but also in size. Future planning must take into account the development of a vibrant city centre and thriving neighbourhoods. It is therefore important to highlight the cultural community's needs related to locations and co-locations, maintaining existing buildings and creating new spaces, as well as the population's radius of action in relation to availability, and wants and needs for own activities and experiences.

HOW TO CREATE GROWTH AND MEET THE NEEDS OF A GROWING CULTURAL CITY

- — Provide a range of instruments that meets future needs for flexibility and functionality within arts and culture.
- — Develop a knowledge-based culture policy built on experience, research and information about cultural changes and the possibilities that may be available in the future.
- — Carry out regular surveys and studies to chart the needs of the arts and culture community and the framework conditions that affect the players.
- — Help develop talent and build robust creative enterprises through a wide range of financial and practical measures.
- — Encourage arts and culture communities to participate actively in city planning. Use dialogue and interaction to mobilise and share knowledge and ideas and provide creative input on specific projects and planning processes.
- — Help increase knowledge and participate in methodical work in order to reach out to a wider audience.

THE CITY – A PLACE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Area of focus

A GOOD URBAN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY for Bergen must emphasise the importance of arts and culture in urban development. Downtown Bergen has a reputation for being vibrant, traditional, dynamic and experimental. Bergen is a compact city characterised by and known for its large public spaces, venerable cultural institutions and important cultural heritage monuments. New and unique exhibition spaces have appeared while cultural institutions continue to spread to developing areas like Skostredet and Marineholmen, offering new cultural arenas for locals and visitors alike. Interaction between such arenas is beneficial for the community. A good synergy between various organizations within industry, culture, aesthetics and design strengthens qualitative urban development. The cultural corridors that traverse the city add beauty to the urban landscape and to the developing areas surrounding the city centre.

Bergen has a long tradition of developing excellent urban spaces that stimulate urban life, social interaction and participation. In the next phase of development the design and implementation of new urban spaces can be an attraction in itself; the blue stone sculpture (Den blå steinen) is a good example of this. There are many opportunities for enjoying and utilising city spaces for short visits or prolonged use, including the spaces that are designed for inhabitant/spectator activities and creative forms of street expression that invite participation. The city's inhabitants become more appreciative of their own city when they utilise urban spaces. Art in public spaces adds to the quality and diversity of urban spaces and forges a collective identity among Bergen's inhabitants.

Bergen also has some areas downtown that are ripe for change. There is great potential for innovation and creativity here of the highest aesthetic quality. These areas have been earmarked for artistic practices and cultural activities. The city will facilitate access to unused areas and buildings for temporary artistic and cultural projects. Urban spaces that are appealing and accessible can bring more life to the streets and generate economic development in these areas.

Bergen's distinctive cultural corridors provide a good setting for art institutions and producers of culture. These institutions and individuals can draw attention to these areas and make them more attractive while making artistic and cultural experiences more accessible to a wider audience. The cultural corridors stimulate interaction that will continue to develop and strengthen the production and presentation of arts and culture.

Social and cultural meeting places will be crucial in developing the individual identity of these locations as work progresses to consolidate the neighbourhoods along the Bergen Light Rail. The reuse of existing buildings, co-location and the construction of new buildings bring cultural arenas into existence. An expanding city centre will create new opportunities for many people, among them artists and other cultural participants. The development of creative and culturally enriched neighbourhoods and plazas will improve the odds for success in new urban environments, making them more attractive places to live by supporting activities that function as fertile soil for more activity. By securing the distinct and unique identity of the city and its neighbourhoods, these areas become more attractive to investors, contractors, entrepreneurs, innovators and visitors.

Bergen's artistic and cultural communities are willing to share their knowledge, resources and experience. Cooperation of this kind can bring people and institutions together, produce offshoot enterprises and stimulate co-location or co-use. Physical clusters are a springboard for the development and growth of small and medium-sized cultural enterprises and for stimulating participation in national and international collaborations.

Bergen is a historic city with many listed buildings. These conservation areas are home to museums, collections, galleries and similar enterprises. Bergen is also a city made of wood; several conservation areas are home to wooden structures that define the cityscape of this historical city. Maintaining these buildings requires great effort in terms of rehabilitation and maintenance, while keeping their infrastructures up-to-date.

STRATEGIES FOR FUTURE COMMITMENT TO INFRASTRUCTURE ———

- — Emphasize the importance of arts and culture in all urban development strategies and urban planning.
- — Introduce a cultural manifesto that enables geographic free zones for spontaneous activities and temporary events or enterprises. The city should experiment with artistic expressions in ways that can unsettle, surprise and encourage innovation.
- — Strengthen and continue to develop the city's main cultural corridors.
- — Prepare an area zoning strategy that ensures good infrastructure for cultural activities and keeps up with the city's population growth and makes these areas attractive places to live.
- — Prepare an overview of the need for and opportunities for the co-location of physical clusters within different specialist fields.
- — Create functional and suitable cultural zones through rehabilitation and maintenance of older buildings.
- — Utilise city property better in terms of arts and culture initiatives.
- — Support financial collaborations between private entities and city, county and state agencies for the development and restoration of cultural buildings.



DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AS STRENGTH

Area of focus

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THE CITY WILL CONTINUE to support and develop the unique characteristics of the cultural city. Bergen is a melting pot of arts and culture where history and the present time blend in a diversity of nuances and variations. Edvard Grieg, Ole Bull, KODE's collections and the Hanseatic Museum are examples of Bergen's rich cultural heritage, while BIT Teatergarasjen, Carte Blanche, Bergen Art Hall and Bergen Assembly are examples of cultural enterprises that make Bergen an international hub of contemporary art. Bergen as a city of arts and culture has been a meeting point for Nordic creativity with a strong cultural identity capable of initiating and carrying out its own objectives. What makes Bergen's approach to cultural policies so unique is that the arts' own growth and development sets the premise for policy making. The city has a distinct culture for debate as well; the cultural calendar is filled with discursive activities such as debates, seminars and lectures. The diversity in artistic and cultural landscapes and the willingness to take risks and commit to new projects and new forms of expression, has brought Bergen the national and international acclamation it deserves. A tolerance for street art and graffiti on the walls of urban spaces sets Bergen aside from other cities. The city's culture policy is built on well-established fields of competence, good production facilities, targeted grant schemes and distinctive performance arenas.

Bergen is characterised by a wide range of multifaceted and vital cultural activities. Many art projects that take form in Bergen are artist-initiated endeavours, and many of the fora for artistic expression are under the control of the artists themselves. This is made possible through well-functioning and predictable grant schemes and a good environment for dialogue between cultural participants and the city government. Bergen is and should be a creative city; one with ample room for brave ideas, high ambitions and distinctive projects. Content production of the highest quality within all disciplines has always been a hallmark of the city. This is a cornerstone of Bergen's competence communities, which are willing to challenge established institutions and have a say in which subjects

are placed on the agenda. Bergen makes room for creative, innovative and highly-skilled achievers whose contribution to arts and culture are dynamic. The city's professional environments are effective in recruiting from younger unknown and unestablished environments. Cooperation and dialogue between large and small participants and cooperation across disciplines helps democratise the city's hierarchical culture scene.

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Bergen is home to many ambitious artists and cultural participants who are active internationally. As a second city with a strong international cultural profile, Bergen plays an important role as a counterweight to the capital's leading position. Bergen's cultural institutions and artists are proud of their local heritage and of Bergen's distinctive identity. They bring this pride with them when they participate in major and minor cultural events around the world and in cultural events at home in Norway and in Bergen.

STRATEGIES FOR FURTHER

DEVELOPING THE CITY'S DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY

- — Strengthen Bergen's profile as a creative city where uniqueness, quality and innovation are part of the production process.
- — Think internationally and be at the forefront of arts and culture by strengthening a competent and resourceful arts community.
- — Promote innovative art and culture as a part of the city's identity and self-image.
- — Promote open debate and conflict of opinion, and help prominent voices be heard.
- — Help realise ambitious culture policy goals through comprehensive measures and instruments.
- — Be the voice of Bergen's cultural life and confront national decision-makers and agencies who have control over culture budgets, grants and funds.

COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION

Area of focus

THE WORLD IS BECOMING more complex, more complicated and increasingly borderless. That is why communication in a broad sense has become an essential tool which must be used to full effect. Arts and culture are by nature communicative fields that contribute to greater understanding, solidarity and tolerance. At the same time, the arts should question, provoke and offer new perspectives that may inspire innovation and renewal. This is important in many areas of society, which is why the cultural perspective should be a natural part of all city development processes. A strengthened and open dialogue between different policy areas, such as culture, urban development and health care, will be of profit to society in general.

Good communication between the city and the arts and culture communities is a cornerstone of the city's arts and culture policy. It is important to continue to support this communication; city objectives and strategies should be clear and be stated openly. Simplifying application processes, case processing and control functions can make the daily life of producers simpler and more predictable and thus stimulate production. It should also be easier

to find, understand and apply for grants, course offerings, services, available buildings/premises, professional networks and other city resources.

As a cultural city, Bergen should promote freedom of expression and speech, ensuring that different voices get excellent physical and digital platforms on which to communicate their opinions. Diversity in expression should include all segments of the population regardless of ethnic, social or cultural background. Cultural institutions should play an important role in supporting freedom of speech and offering platforms for exercising that freedom, with increased focus on attracting new user groups.

Developments in digital technology and digital communication have both simplified and complicated different ways of communicating with the audience. While distribution and retrieval of information is made easier by the internet, it is becoming increasingly more difficult to stand out among the multitude of possibilities and extreme amount of information that are now available. Gaining knowledge about digital communication and finding better ways to use digital media will be a key question to address in the coming decade. Grants for web-based profiling and for marketing artistic and cultural offerings, as well as prioritising the city's own web presence, will make it easier for the public to stay informed on what is available. This will increase audience participation and attract new audience groups.

Digital communication must not be seen as the sole means of communicating with users. Of equal importance is allowing and helping the city's inhabitants to use their skills and talents to contribute to the digital community. The potential resources, knowledge and effort of the inhabitants can be harvested to produce many benefits for society through crowdsourcing and other measures.

Developments in digital technology and digital communication have brought on an explosion of arts and culture on the web and has shown us where, what and how arts and culture can be experienced. While the positive aspects of technology have exposed a wide range of excellent possibilities for activities or enterprises aimed at audiences – and stimulated the international exchange of arts and culture – the internet can also be a threat

to a cultural operator's income and to intellectual property rights. It is therefore important to secure the artists' rights in the event of commercial exploitation of intellectual property in digital media.

Despite most people communicating effortlessly and extensively via digital media, physical meeting places are still very important. Audiences continue to demand more unique and physical experiences that they can share with others. Suitable and central production facilities and arenas for presentation are crucial for good communication and exchange of experience between those that produce art and those who work in cultural environments. Professional networks and member organizations that collaborate on offering courses and professional gatherings will also help strengthen communication and sharing of knowledge across disciplines and generations.

Bergen is aware of its role as a hub and central point for arts and culture in Hordaland county and Western Norway, and this role ought to be strengthened. Good communication with county municipalities and other municipalities is a key point here.

The slogan for the city's international arts plan is 'Bergen to the world'. In an international context, Bergen will still be profiled as a cultural city where the arts and culture scene is known for being innovative and daring, and its unique characteristics, while still being aware of its historical and traditional roots. This should also be a characteristic of all information that Bergen presents in a national and international context.

STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN AND STIMULATE COMMUNICATION

- — Ensure good communication between the city and artists, cultural operators and cultural institutions which will be characterised by openness, flexibility, simplified application procedures and reporting routines and making information more accessible.
- — Help develop good methods for communication between cultural participants and their audiences, both digital and analogue.
- — Strengthen communication across artistic disciplines by establishing good platforms and meeting places, interdisciplinary courses and training, and strengthening network organizations.
- — Stimulate dialogue and openness across the various city agencies in all policy areas. Protect and bolster artist resources and cultural perspectives and ensure that these are put to good use by all areas of society.
- — Continue to develop good relations with Hordaland county and Western Norway.
- — Build a comprehensive profile that promotes Bergen as an attractive and international cultural city and a leader in innovation in all areas.
- — Help people get the chance to express themselves and have their voice heard through arts and culture in both physical and digital arenas.



COMPETENCE – THE FOUNDATION OF A CULTURAL CITY

Area of focus

A DIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, libraries, archives, art institutions, museums, network organizations and a community of highly-skilled artists is the foundation of the cultural city of Bergen and an invaluable source of resources for cultural development. Institutions are an important source of employment within arts and culture. They are also an important source of knowledge and competence for the presentation of historical and contemporary arts and culture. Practicing and creative artists are a vital part of city life and a key element in professional cultural fields. Professional networks and organizations also play an important role in competence development, education and representation within all creative fields and disciplines. The concentration of working artists and culture professionals in cohesive networks helps strengthen creative and cultural disciplines and professional environments. Interesting and topical discussions and debates in these environments provide fertile soil for innovation.

Bergen is known for its dedication to the exchange of knowledge among amateurs and professionals, across policy areas, between institutions and

disciplines and across generations. Professionalism in the city's artistic and cultural fields is strengthened by collaboration and cooperation between institutions, agencies and cultural operators that help us utilise resources in the best way possible.

To build competence, develop talent and create interest among future arts practitioners and audiences, it is crucial to start early and think long-term. Bergen Culture School, libraries and the local cultural life are the foundation for cultural competence in children and young people. Society needs good educators that can teach and disseminate arts and culture to children and young people. Having educators with strong professional expertise should be a priority in all schools, as well as in the Culture School and in voluntary arts organisations. Maintaining the highest quality of teaching and dissemination of arts and culture generates interest and enthusiasm for these subjects while securing future recruitment to higher education within the arts. Children and young people with a particular interest and talent for arts and culture should be given the opportunity to develop their interests and talents. This requires close cooperation between different fields of competence both within and outside the city's borders.

Bergen has excellent institutions of higher education in the fields of arts and culture that are an invaluable resource to the growing influential arts communities within the city limits. Bergen has attracted internationally recognised teachers in the field of arts education, which has resulted in the quantitative and qualitative growth of the student bodies. A number of new professional study programmes have developed within arts education that addresses the needs and wants of the professional arts communities.

Artists and cultural workers who complete an arts education meet more expectations and more requirements than in the past. Running one's own business requires complex skills and knowledge about entrepreneurship and business operations. In many cases, knowledge of international infrastructures and distribution is essential. Network organizations are important contributors to competence development, which includes training artists in how to market themselves and their work and informing members about their rights and how to manage finances.

Bergen has a multifaceted and rich culture for voluntary participation in the arts that constitutes an important arena for growth, learning and experience among all age groups. The knowledge, competence and efforts of volunteers are important contributions to the city's cultural breadth and diversity. Volunteers and volunteer organizations are also very important arenas for recruitment to professional education within arts and culture, which also helps create knowledgeable and interested audiences. The work being done to stimulate and support volunteer efforts in the cultural sector must be strengthened and developed because it is in the best interest of Bergen as a city for arts and culture.

Bergen's varied and growing arts and culture scene provides great opportunities for more participation by the general public. Visibility, accessibility and active dissemination are important elements in reaching new audience groups and creating wider affiliation to culture. Libraries, platforms for debate and arenas for cultural activities and the media are important elements of conveying information about cultural activities, while the quality of presentation depends on the level of professionalism among the employees and representatives of these institutions. Greater knowledge and awareness about audiences is also a critical factor in reaching a wider audience and attracting new user groups.

The city's artists and cultural producers possess knowledge and skills that can benefit all areas of society. A better appreciation and utilising of artistic competence could contribute towards the development of innovative products and services, the planning and development of urban spaces and residential environments, as well as new thinking in presentation, communication and incorporation. Such competence can also be used as a chief resource for alternative and innovative activities.

A high level of competence in the arts and culture sector makes a city a more attractive place to live and can attract national institutions and state agencies to Bergen. Bergen should be Norway's strongest culture and competence community outside Oslo and should challenge the capital city when it comes to research and education, critical thinking and debate, as well as in the production and presentation of arts and culture.

STRATEGIES FOR SKILLS ENHANCEMENT

AND COMPETENCE BUILDING

- — Facilitate children and young people's participation in cultural life and artistic activities.
- — Commit to knowledge-based presentation of arts and culture by public institutions, through teaching in schools, and working to make arts and culture an important part of the education system.
- — Build bridges between training/education and talent development, higher education and professional arts and culture fields.
- — Strengthen support for museums, archives and libraries as socially relevant cultural arenas and a place for knowledge management.
- — Raise the level of competence among artists and cultural operators regarding entrepreneurship and business operations.
- — Help develop the cultural competence of the city's inhabitants.
- — Increase the use of artistic expertise in other areas of society and commercial sectors.
- — Help develop innovative projects that could become a basis for government investments and funding.

THE CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR BERGEN 2015 — 2025 is the main framework for the city's culture policy. The strategy document should be followed up by a series of action plans that provide specific proposals on initiatives and measures that have the strategies outlined in this document as their starting point. In line with good administrative practice, a professional expert group should be set up to provide expertise, insight and guidelines that are in the best interest of the city. Bergen has high ambitions where culture policies are concerned. These policies should influence and include many different professional groups and public agencies. Efforts should be made to infuse an element of culture into all areas of society, but culture should also be a force used in solving the many challenges faced by the city. This document therefore presupposes future active cooperation between different disciplines and public offices within the city of Bergen.

YOU NEED NOT TRAVEL to the end of the world to discover enchantment, the magical, the dramatic – or something that captures everyone's imagination. This can be found in our own backyard, in the city that surrounds us.

Bergen's rainy streets, quays, squares and buildings whisper their stories. If you take the time to listen, lift the veil a little, or if you are curious enough to lift your gaze, you will receive your reward. You will not only discover the city's history, you may also discover stories about who you are, what gives you a foothold and belonging, whether you were born a Bergenser or became one over time. Cultural history is all about continuity; it is the tale of your place in history. Through it you will find the key to both past and future.

Marianne L. Nielsen

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Commissioner for culture, business development, sports and church affairs

CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR 2015 — 2025

Bergen City Council Resolution

On 24 June 2015 the City Council of Bergen unanimously adopted the following resolution:

1. — The City Council accepts the cultural strategy for the period 2015 — 2025 as it is presented in the current document.
2. — The City Council requests that the cultural strategy forms the basis for the city's plans and initiatives within arts and culture in the given period.

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