

The background is a complex, abstract composition. It features several long, thin, pink and white ribbons or tubes that are twisted and draped across the frame. Interspersed among these are large, dark green, glossy leaves. On the right side, there is a vertical, metallic-looking structure with a grid-like pattern, possibly a ladder or a scaffolding element. The overall lighting is soft, creating a sense of depth and texture in the various materials.

Relationships

Documentation of Performance Festival in Visby 2025

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Introduction

It took place within the framework of the 45th International Congress of the Cities of the New Hanseatic League in Visby, Sweden. The festival was held from June 5th to 8th, 2025, across several public venues and received an excellent response. Twenty-six performances were presented by thirteen artists and performer groups.

Artists in alphabetical order by the city they represented

- ◆ Barbara Lorenz Höfer and Susan Donath, Buxtehude, Germany
- ◆ ARTSCENICO PERFORMING ARTS: Regine Anacker, Matthias Hecht, Berthold Meyer, Roman D. Metzner, Chino Monagas and Cynthia Scholz, Dortmund, Germany
- ◆ Kamila Chomicz, Gdansk, Poland
- ◆ PROJEKT 55: Michael Butterweck (artist name: f.m. Laisetreter) Harm Wesselink (artist name: Harm Harmsen) Christian Sander (artist name: van Quasten), Lippstadt, Germany
- ◆ INTER-BE-ING: Qazal Tabandeh, Ninon Gloger, Bérengère Le Boulair, Lübeck, Germany
- ◆ Simone Fezer, Lüneburg, Germany. Assisted by Unn Dahlman, Visby, Sweden
- ◆ TUN&LASSEN: Jennifer Döring and Philine Herrlein, Neuss, Germany
- ◆ BILLENEEVE, Pärnu, Estonia
- ◆ COMPAGNIE LAPADOU WITH DUO SAVERIO: Mira Schubert and Nils Klawon; Duo Saverio: Christine and Jens-Peter Dossin, Salzwedel, Germany
- ◆ eMOTIONS: Ryszard Baloń, Maciej Piaszczyński and Waldek Jaszczak, Stargard, Poland
- ◆ Peter Conrad Beyer, Stralsund, Germany
- ◆ Emelie Ivert and Erika Coleman, Visby, Sweden
- ◆ THE THREE POLAR ANIMALS: Kristina Frank, Helene Berg and Ylva Törnlund, Visby, Sweden



Dear Reader,

HANSEartWORKS is an international exhibition project from the Union of Cities THE HANSA. Thank you, Visby, for organizing this year's exhibition, which became a successful performance festival with the theme Relationships, as part of the International Hanseatic Days in Visby, June 5–8, 2025.

HANSEartWORKS is designed as a representative group exhibition and has been an integral part of every International Hanseatic Day since 2007. The project aims to create a forum for contemporary art from member cities of the world's largest voluntary city network. The result is a unique artistic project that builds a link between large and small Hanseatic cities.

The themes of HANSEartWORKS focus on the historical and contemporary Hanseatic League and its associated values and community of values. The motto of this year's exhibition, Relationships, reflects this fundamental idea. The 33 participating artists from 12 Hanseatic cities approached the theme with a wide range of expressions and presented their performances in the public spaces of Visby.

On behalf of the Union of Cities THE HANSA and the HANSEartWORKS working group, I would like to thank all the artists who took part in the project. In addition to the production of the performance festival itself, an important part of HANSEartWORKS is that artists meet, exchange experiences, and engage in thought-provoking discussions and conversations on site. We hope that these connections between the artists will continue in the future.

I would like to sincerely thank the entire HANSEartWORKS team and especially the wonderful curatorial project management in Visby, led by Armin Scholler and Angelica Blomhage, with the support of Viveka Rabenius, for the excellent planning and execution of the performance festival.

This documentation of this year's artistic production continues the eighteen-year development of HANSEartWORK, and we look forward to the next occasion!

Stefan Johansson

Chairman of the HANSEartWORKS Working Group



The Concept and Presentation of the Performance Festival Relationships

HANSEartWORKS presentations of art have often taken the form of exhibitions featuring physical artworks. For the 2025 edition in Visby, however, we allowed the event to take on an intangible form — a performance festival. For this festival, we invited artists and performers from Hanseatic cities to interpret the theme relationships — a concept that is naturally linked to performance as an art form based on connection and interaction between artist and audience.

The theme of relationships, which is fundamental to our very existence, also resonates with the history of the Hanseatic League, where networks and relationships formed the foundation for trade and exchange between cities. The relevance and importance of strong relationships and collaborations cannot be overstated in light of today's global challenges such as armed conflicts and the climate crisis.

By placing performances in the very heart of Visby, we made art accessible to people where they lived, worked, or simply passed by. Through these performances, Gotlanders were surprised in their everyday routines, while participants of the Hanseatic Days were offered engaging cultural experiences. One of the ambitions behind the festival was to integrate *HANSEartWORKS* into the broader Hanseatic Days 2025 program, ensuring that art was not perceived as something separate from the rest of the celebration.

With the help of a diverse group of artists and performers, the festival presented a wide range of works with differing perspectives, expressions, and temperaments. Already in the opening parade, all eyes turned to the performance group *Polardjuren*, dressed in striking white costumes as they confidently marched through the crowd representing Visby. Our relationship with animals and nature reappeared as a theme in the work of *Artscenico Performing Arts* from Dortmund, who guided audiences on an eventful discovery walk led by two fictional birdwatchers in Almedalen. There, visitors also encountered artist and biologist Kamila Chomicz with her work dedicated to pollinators. Her installation, placed beside an apple tree, invited the audience to learn about her research, engage in conversation, or participate in embroidery.

Unexpected encounters emerged when the duo *Projekt 55* from Lippstadt — wearing speed cameras as heads — surprised delegates attending the Economic Forum at Wisby Strand, carrying the playful yet pointed message: slow down. Encounters between people were also in focus at Stora Torget, where the duo *Tun und Lassen* used acrobatics to portray the evolution of a relationship and captivated a curious audience. Spectators of all ages were drawn to another playful take on relationships when *Compagnie Lapadou* performed their clown-led theatrical piece.

Billeneeve from Pärnu made a striking entrance, surrounded by a sparkling pink cloud and wearing a long dress in the courtyard of Gotlands Museum. Moments later, she could be seen dancing along Strandgatan, expressing herself with a powerful, agitated voice that both fascinated and unsettled the viewers.

Simone Fezer, dressed in character, also used her own body as artistic material, exemplifying relational art by inviting passersby to sculpt the clay costume surrounding her. For her performance, she was joined by Gotland-based dancer Unn Dahlman. The interactive element was also central to the musical performance *Inter-being*, which, through dialogue with the audience, explored the complexities of non-verbal communication in human relationships.

The festival also featured more conceptual works such as *Cups and Wands* by Emelie Ivert and Erika Coleman — a bubbling sound piece reflecting on changing relationships. The text performance *Responsibility* by Barbara Lorenz Höfer and Susan Donath, featuring the chalked word “Responsibility,” highlighted the importance of accountability in relationships, both personal and societal.

At Konst och Form Gotland, an accompanying exhibition presented works better suited to an indoor setting, including Peter Conrad Beyer's video *Bäh* and Ryszard Balon's multimedia installation *eMotions*. Each participating artist or collective was also represented through a presentation text and a symbolic object, forming a complementary exhibition that tied together the festival's many expressions.

Angelica Blomhage och Armin Scholler
Curators and Project Management



Photo: Angelica Blomhage



Buxtehude, Germany

ANSVAR – RESPONSIBILITY – VERANTWORTUNG

Barbara Lorenz Höfer and Susan Donath

Barbara Lorenz Höfer and Susan Donath was working artistically with the three words *Ansvar* – *Responsibility* – *Verantwortung* (Swedish, English, German). In this context, the word *Ansvar* was a keyword on the subject of relationships. They were responsible for themselves and for other people. The way they saw or lived this responsibility determined their relationships. In a performance, Barbara Lorenz Höfer and Susan Donath wrote the three words with chalk in a large format in public space.



Dortmund, Germany

ARTSCENICO PERFORMING ARTS

Regine Anacker, Matthias Hecht, Berthold Meyer, Roman D. Metzner, Chino Monagas, Cynthia Scholz, and local people on Gotland acting as members of the speaking choir/performers.

Sound of Silence – Creatures is a theatrical station course. From scene to scene. Guided by two 'bird watchers', they took the audience on an excursion on the border between dream and reality. They seemed to be on a quest, searching for... yeah, for what? Their identity? The lost time? Themselves? Whatever they were looking for, they found moments of poetry in encounters with the unexpected, in music, texts, sounds, as well as in the silence surrounding them.





Gdansk, Poland

THANKS TO POLLINATORS

Kamila Chomicz

The installation explored the human–nature relationship, highlighting wild pollinators' role. At its center, a table, symbolizing community and dialogue, was draped in a white cloth embroidered with insect-pollinated plants. Participants enriched the artwork by adding stitches, reviving traditional handcrafts and fostering a deeper connection to nature. Accompanying photographs of wild bees emphasized the importance of biodiversity, making the piece both a work of art and a call to protect fragile ecosystems.



Lippstadt, Germany

FLASHED - WAS SPEEDING

Projekt 55

The Projekt 55 invited the audience to take a break and to reflect in a captivating and entertaining manner. In that fast-paced time, a shared break was the opportunity to arrive back in the here and now. The performance elegantly combined lightness with the seriousness of life. This happened playfully and had a lasting effect, also against loneliness and solitude.

Michael Butterweck (artist name: f.m. Laisetreter)

Harm Wesselink (artist name: Harm Harmsen)

Christian Sander (artist name: van Quasten)



Photo: Angelica Blomhage

Lübeck, Germany

INTER-BE-ING

Qazal Tabandeh, Ninon Gloger, Bérengère Le Boulair

Inter-be-ing was a performance group that explored the interconnectedness of human identities. It examined the complex non-verbal exchanges in human relationships and provided room for a deeper mutual connection. To allow the audience to take part in the composition, the musicians and the participants sat face to face. While maintaining eye contact, music emerged as a moment-composition in real time, inspired by the interpersonal exchange. The improvisations included various interventions, sounds, electronic elements, texts, and more within the context of contemporary experimental music.





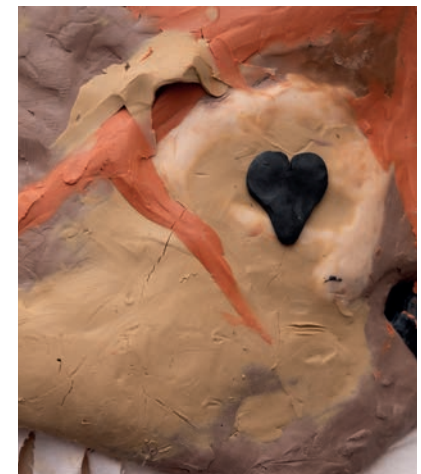
Lüneburg, Germany

TANGIBLE—A PERFORMANCE (BITTE BERÜHREN!)

Simone Fezer and Unn Dahlman, Visby, Sweden

Two hybrid figures moulded from clay, shapeless and unfinished, covered in reflecting mirror fragments, moved through the crowd, dazzling and awkward. The figures exposed themselves, made themselves vulnerable, and explored transitions and boundaries. They invited people to consciously touch them or be touched, leaving traces with hands pressed into the soft mass or with simple tools. How close did we get and what did we communicate when we did? What role did shyness or even disgust play? How did we build a relationship, how malleable were we, what did we allow ourselves, and how personal did we become?

It invited curiosity and creativity, playfully encouraging us to overcome our fear of the unknown, the new, and the possibly strange, and to enter into dialogue.





Neuss, Germany

DANGEROUS GUESTS – A DUET

TUN&LASSEN (Jennifer Döring and Philine Herrlein)

What happens when public space is no longer a place of polite indifference? TUN&LASSEN's *Dangerous Guests – A Duet* disrupted routines, sparking unexpected encounters through movement, tension, and play. In playful, subtle, and bold ways, they used their bodies to explore possibilities of contact, negotiation, and friction. Among themselves and in relation to their surroundings, they tested trust and unpredictability. What did it take to throw each other off balance? They were uncertain. They created uncertainty. Who endangered whom, and what was truly at risk? The audience met the *Dangerous Guests* and took time to pause and observe public space.



Pärnu, Estonia

IT'S NICE TO BE SENSITIVE. A GIFT AND A PAIN AT THE SAME TIME

Billeneeve

The central motif of *Billeneeve*'s performance was dance: through an intense dance journey and pompous costumes, the artist dissected relationships and their impact on a person. In addition to the physical, the artist added a verbal component, letting herself be taken over by the dance while at the same time shouting out the text created for the performance.





Salzwedel, Germany

(N)IRGENDWO ALLEIN

Compagnie Lapadou together with
Duo Saverio, Salzwedel

Compagnie Lapadou presented the theatre production *(N)Irgendwo Allein*, accompanied by music from Duo Saverio. What does closeness mean and what feels too close? Or too distant? How does loneliness feel? Why me? And why here? The play dealt with the well-known and universally human subject of closeness and distance in a light-hearted and humorous way. It was performed without spoken language and was suitable for people of all ages.

Compagnie Lapadou: Mira Schubert and Nils Klawon
Duo Saverio: Christine and Jens-Peter Dossin





Stargard, Poland

eMOTIONS

Ryszard Baloń, Maciej Piaszczyński, Waldek Jaszczak

Ryszard Baloń's artistic world revolved around printmaking, primarily in small formats. These intimate miniatures were a space of infinite possibility, where subtle associations gave rise to multi-layered interpretations. To expand perception and amplify emotion, these works were set in motion through AI, breaking free, if only for a moment, from the stillness of traditional graphics to reflect the ever-changing rhythm of the modern world.

The spark to animate his art came from Maciej Piaszczyński, a journalist and cultural visionary, while the AI technology was brought to life by Waldemar Jaszczak, a photographer and IT artist. The multimedia performance born from their collaboration was charged with creative energy, dissolving boundaries between observer and creator. Interwoven with interactivity and ambiguity, it invited the audience to step beyond passive viewing, becoming part of the work itself and shaping new meanings with every encounter.



Stralsund, Germany

BÄH

Peter Conrad Beyer

The performing artist Peter Conrad Beyer demonstrated his own outrage in a two-channel video installation (2023). He repeated it until the viewer perhaps turned away from the endless cycle of outrage and also became outraged, protested, and got involved. We did not find out what the artist was outraged about. The viewer was asked to fill in this gap: What was I outraged about? The international dictatorship of the financial markets, which endangered peace and democracy? Xenophobia? Environmental destruction? The power of the media? Himself?



Visby, Sweden

CUPS AND WANDS

Emelie Ivert & Erika Coleman

The performance *Cups and Wands* shed light upon the unifying force of changeability that always played a part in all kinds of relationships. A steel vessel, water from the Baltic Sea, and clay from Gotland came together as solid became fluid, fluid took shape, and was reshaped. Some energy was converted into other forms, spread out, reflected, and absorbed. Here, material and ritual together formed sound waves which in turn could transform into individual perception, acquire beat and rhythm, and become like notes in a melody.



Visby, Sweden

MELT

The three polar animals: Kristina Frank, Helene Berg and Ylva Törnlund

Three polar animals reconstructed their lost habitat, the iceberg. On the street and in the gallery space, a landscape emerged from the memories they had preserved. *MELT* was a performance, installation, film, projection, and sound piece. *MELT* was part of the opening of the HANSEartWORKS Performance Festival.



Photos: Angelica Blomhage





Kulturum – a creative hub for the artists and display for Artist's Book "Connecting Values"

The premises of Kulturum in Visby served as a central meeting place for this year's HANSEartWORKS artists. Here, the opening ceremony was held, and in the showroom and exhibition hall, participating artists presented props from their works – in some cases the entire artwork – or complementary exhibition pieces.

During the festival, talks, mingling events and meetings were arranged at Kulturum with the aim of strengthening the ties between the local art scene and the visiting artists and participants from the various Hanseatic cities.

At Kulturum, the Artist's Book "Connecting Values" was also presented, a long-term artistic project within HANSEartWORKS that reflects the values uniting the Hanseatic cities, past, present and future.

In 2020, the Union of Cities THE HANSA adopted the so-called Brilon Declaration, affirming the shared values of the historical and contemporary Hanseatic network and encouraging continued cultural exchange. The Artist's Book Connecting Values is part of this exchange.

Since 2021, one artist from each year's HANSEartWORKS exhibition has been invited to explore these values artistically and create a contribution to the book. The artwork is presented in connection with that year's exhibition, and when the book project is completed and all pages are filled, in over 200 years, the book will be donated to the European Hanseatic Museum in Lübeck.

Visby's contribution to the book has been created by participating artists Emelie Ivert and Erika Coleman, whose work is included in the book. They have also written a message to future readers: *"This year's art exhibition took the form of a performance festival with the theme Relationships. We artists explored boundaries and intimacy, loneliness and dependence, communication and touch, and how relationships are constantly changing in the digital age."*

The performances highlighted the often invisible but crucial bonds that surround us and showed how relationships can transcend time, language and space, a lifeblood in both large and small. The print on the right is an assemblage of drawings where different types of relationships, beings and environments meet. Thank you for this year — let's continue to nurture the relationships between our cities.

*Kind regards,
Erika Coleman and Emelie Ivert
Visby in September 2025*







HANSEartWORKS in Visby 2025

PROJECTMANAGER & CURATOR: Armin Scholler, Gotlands Museum

PROJECT SUPPORT & CURATOR: Angelica Blomhage, Gotlands Museum

PROJECT INTERN: Viveca Rabenius

GRAPHIC LAYOUT: Ninni Gahnström, Gotlands Museum

PROJECT OWNER: Stefan Johansson, Gotlands Museum

PROJECT CLIENT: Jenny Lennhammar, Region Gotland

FINANCIER: Region Gotland

PHOTOGRAPHY: Karl Melander, unless otherwise specified

