

# Supporting Teatre Akadèmia in disseminating performing arts and cultural initiatives in Barcelona

Beneficiary: Associació Civil Teatre Akadèmia

Location: Spain, Europe

Grant Cycle: 2023 - 2024

Type of Grant: one-year program support,

Delegació a Catalunya,

Arts & Culture Website: teatrekademia.cat

The Teatre Akadèmia, a landmark cultural initiative launched in 2007 by the visionary Elsa Peretti, has been at the forefront of Barcelona's theatrical scene since it opened. Supported since 2015 by the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation - Delegació a Catalunya, this project was Elsa Peretti's dream realised: a haven in Barcelona for artists to freely express themselves as "artisans of art" while reflecting societal shifts.

Initially managed by Eix49 SL under the artistic direction of Mercè Managuerra, the Teatre Akadèmia was a dynamic hub for a variety of activities including training courses, exhibitions, theatrical workshops, children's shows, and performances by diverse external companies. A major overhaul in 2010 transitioned it into a permanent theatre, which opened with a celebrated rendition of Sophocles' 'Electra' in Catalan in 2012. The Associació Civil Teatre Akadèmia was established in December 2015, taking over management and artistic direction with the support of the **Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation - Delegació a Catalunya**. The 2017-2018 season marked a significant turning point for Teatre Akadèmia, with Guido Torlonia stepping in as the new artistic director, leading a new team of young professionals in the entertainment industry.

At the behest of Elsa Peretti from the beginning of the 2020/21 season, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the Teatre Akadèmia embarked on a further phase of change: a structural and technological renewal of its premises. This commitment represented a shift towards a new, more innovative artistic line, with the goal of creating a digitally innovative and bold theatre that brings us closer to new technologies, experimentation, and above all, a more interactive way of experiencing theatre. This total overhaul of the infrastructure and technical equipment, refined and completed during the 2021/22 season, also impacted the selection of programming and,

consequently, the artistic vision of the theatre. The project was entrusted to architect Jean-Pierre Carniaux, with sculptor Pere Casanovas designing a semicircular platform that enhances the stage space and allows for an increased capacity of up to a hundred seats. The renovation plan not only increased the number of seats but also created a space where new multimedia technical equipment enabled artists and companies to present innovative proposals on stage. This conceptual rebirth has positioned Teatre Akadèmia as a key theatrical and artistic reference in Barcelona, a space for blending images, sounds, light, action, narrative, and performance in a postmodern approach to stage dramaturgy.

"Talking to Moreno Bernardi I discovered how far technology has come in the performing arts. Technically now we have means that we didn't have before and are absolutely extraordinary. This has led me to question the concept of image in theatre in the middle of the digital age. It is not about wanting to teach things as they are, but rather about evoking and provoking them, so that it is the spectators themselves who start playing with their own imagination. I have asked my foundation to support this project. Not only in the economic aspect, but also with an active studio aimed at creating new horizons that make the Teatre Akadèmia a novelty that makes sense for the city of Barcelona."

Elsa Peretti

El Punt Avui, November 2020

Today, the Teatre Akadèmia stands as a centre of theatrical production and staging that epitomises new creativity and advocates for the innovative role of digital technologies in the performing arts. The harmonious relationship between its architectural concept and the technological tools employed facilitates an exchange between multiple realities, prompting a reflection on the role of society in the digital age. In its artistic programming, the theatre's team selects projects that align with its vision, ready to showcase the most original and challenging works for audience enjoyment, where viewers can find universal content reflective of our times. Teatre Akadèmia also fosters complementary artistic projects, aiming to promote new technologies applied to the performing arts and investigate their inclusive and diverse relationship with words, body, gesture, music, and movement.

Besides hosting performances that aim to stimulate the imagination of children, youth, and adults and to draw them closer to theatre, the space is also a training ground for professional actors, with lessons offered by international instructors. Each session becomes a meeting place for reflection and debate, where interaction and differing opinions help to enrich and strengthen the program.

“What is theatre, if not  
to experience continuously?”

Elsa Peretti