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FLOW FESTIVAL / Vilhovuorenkatu 11 B 00500 HELSINKI, FINLAND / WWW.FLOWFESTIVAL.COM
Flow Festival

THE LEADING NORDIC CITY FESTIVAL

Flow, the truly urban boutique city festival has been organised in Helsinki annually since 2004. The festival was born out of the founders’ passion for culture. In 15 years, Flow Festival has grown from a small club event to the trailblazing European music and arts festival it is today.

While the scale and breadth of Flow has changed throughout the years - more artists, more people, more everything - the founders’ original vision still stands every year: to create a festival they genuinely want to attend themselves.

Flow Festival is a carefully curated, high-quality festival with an innovative and content driven program that is an inspired mixture of popular culture and experimental arts. With a broad music and arts program, hand-picked food and restaurant services, thoughtfully designed and decorated festival area and an extensive sustainability program Flow has put a new benchmark on the European festival scene.

In 2018, the three-day sold out festival drew a crowd of 84 000 visitors into the monumental former power plant area in the Suvilahti district of Helsinki.
FLOW FESTIVAL 2018 IN A NUTSHELL

Sold out

3 festival days

84 000 visits

28 000 capacity per day

52 000 unique visitors

10 stages

147 music acts

74 domestic acts

73 international acts

11 art projects

65 food stalls, cafes and bars

108 759 sold meals – of which

46% vegetarian or vegan
“One of the most important festivals in Europe”
— THE VILLAGE
“Big headliners, hidden ambient stages, curated art: Flow Festival has got it all.”
– NOTHING BUT HOPE AND PASSION
“A festival that is at the razor’s edge of worldwide music and culture.”
— CRACK MAGAZINE
Flow is a festival with a strong brand and identity. The most important and distinguishing aspects of the Flow brand are its program and services, the festival location and area, and the story behind the festival. Additional brand components include sustainability, year-round operations, the visual identity and marketing communication.

Helsinki-based design agency studio TSTO designed Flow Festival’s visual identity, pushing and playing with the typography. The Flow Festival brand and visual identity is protected since 2018 by an EU wide trademark registration.

In 2018 Flow Festival, clothing brand Makia and TSTO joined forces to create a rare, limited edition clothing collection for Flow Festival 2018. The Flow x Makia collection consisted of pieces with a modern urban feel and prints recognized from the festival’s visual identity. Yet again, the festival published Flow Magazine – a publication hailing from Helsinki – the city of loud music, free art, honest cuisine and obscure fashion – and the official bullhorn of Flow Festival. Flow Magazine was made by Double Happiness with selected established writers. The print run of the magazine was 12,000 copies.
Visitors

DIVERSE AND LOYAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Flow Festival is a people and customer driven festival and therefore visitor experience is emphasized in every aspect of the event. The Flow organization places careful attention on all actions affecting visitor experience, including marketing, social media communication, ticketing, festival area design, and the quality of services in the festival area. Flow Festival emphasizes equality and safety, thereby creating a festival with an open-minded community spirit where everyone has a great time. The average overall rating for the 2018 Flow Festival was 4.3 out of 5 in the visitor survey.

While demographically Flow’s audience is more heterogeneous than at most festivals, Flow’s inclusive and accepting spirit creates a sense of community among visitors. The sense of community is reflected above all in the atmosphere of the festival as well as the visitors’ social media postings.

Instead of being just a one-weekend event, Flow strives to offer its audience experiences year-round. Outside of the festival weekend, this is mainly achieved through active use of digital marketing and well-timed program announcements throughout the year.
“Among hundreds of European summer festivals, the Flow Festival of Helsinki is becoming more of a must-see event.”

– LES INROOKS
“Prevailing over the whole weekend was a great atmosphere”

– CLASH MUSIC
16% OF VISITORS ARE INTERNATIONAL VISITORS
Festival area & venues

A UNIQUE URBAN SETTING

Flow Festival is held at the monumental former power plant area of Suvilahti, adjacent to central Helsinki. The area is easily accessible by foot, bike or public transport. Flow Festival and Helsinki belong together. Flow is, essentially, a Helsinki-based festival for city dwellers. Helsinki and Suvilahti have played an important part in the development of Flow, and Flow has significantly affected the development of Helsinki’s offering and cultural prominence by creating and supporting a new kind of urban culture in the heart of Helsinki.

During Flow, the Suvilahti area is transformed into a one-of-a-kind 10ha festival area with impressive light design, furnishing and decorations. In order to create a unique urban festival atmosphere and the high quality visitor experience, careful attention is paid to each detail of the area. The festival area housed 10 different venues, including large outdoor stages, tent stages of various sizes as well as intimate indoor and outdoor venues. The Main Stage area holds a crowd of 25 000 people and the biggest tent Lapin Kulta Red Arena has a capacity of 15 000, while the smallest venues are suited for a few hundred people.
MAIN STAGE
Capacity 25 000
LAPIN KULTA RED ARENA
Capacity 15 000

© RIIKKA VAAHTERA

© JUSSI HELLSTEN
SEAT BLACK TENT
Capacity 6 000
BALLOON 360° STAGE
Capacity 2,500

“The area is transformed into a beautifully illuminated setting for music and visual arts”
– THE GUARDIAN

© KONSTA RYÖSÄ

© KONSTANTIN KONDRIKHOV
RESIDENT ADVISOR FRONT YARD
Capacity 3 500
“If you ever wanted to explore Helsinki, Flow Festival takes you to the heart of the city. This eco-conscious festival reuses an old power plant and turns it into the site of a three-day party with all the fixings including a killer soundtrack, incredible food and drink, and chilled-out vibe.”

— TRAVEL + LEISURE
THE OTHER SOUND @SUN EFFECTS VOIMALA
Capacity 1 200

© RIIKKA VAAHTERA

© SAMULI PENTTI
RED GARDEN
Capacity 1000
FINNKINO POP-UP CINEMA
Capacity 700
CHAMPAGNE BAR & LOUNGE
Capacity 400
WORLD-CLASS PROGRAM

The artist lineup is a carefully thought out and handpicked combination of big names in pop culture, interesting newcomers, indie artists, experimental artists, and international superstars. In 2018 Flow presented 147 music acts on 10 stages in its versatile program, balanced between international and local names as well as male artists and female, trans and non-binary performers.

Flow participates in the European Keychange initiative, which aims to improve women’s standing in the music industry. Among other things, Keychange participants commit to choosing an equal amount of male and female performers by 2022.

International names for the 2018 Flow included, among many others, Kendrick Lamar, Arctic Monkeys, Lykke Li, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Bonobo, Alma, Patti Smith, St. Vincent, Mura Masa, Fleet Foxes, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Grizzly Bear, Jorja Smith, Fever Ray and Brockhampton.

Flow Festival is internationally renowned also for its high-quality electronic music, which the audience got to enjoy at the Resident Advisor Front Yard and the Backyard, among other venues. Flow Festival’s compilation of experimental music, The Other Sound, also offered a high-quality program.
“Flow provides an annual lesson in how to programme a festival.”
— LOUD AND QUIET

ST. VINCENT © JULIA DRUMMOND

FEVER RAY © JULIA DRUMMOND
© Konstantin KondrUKhov

Charlotte Gainsbourg

© Konstantin KondrUKhov

Moses Sumney

© Konstantin KondrUKhov

147 Music Acts
85 Live Acts
62 DJ Acts

43% Female/Mixed Acts
57% Male Acts

50% Domestic Acts
50% International Acts

48% Female/Mixed Acts
52% Male Acts
“Flow hits it out of the park with its lineups each year.”
– THE HUFFINGTON POST
“Now in its fifteenth year, Flow brings world-class international acts to a Finnish audience fiercely loyal to homegrown talent. On the European festival circuit it stands out for its commitment to diversity: only one of the headline acts this year is white and male (Arctic Monkeys), while lower down the bill young, female artists and artists of colour abound.”

– INDEPENDENT
“The festivalgoers this year were treated to another installment in what's becoming Flow's customarily strong and diverse lineups.”
– STEREOGUM
Beyond music, Flow offers a warm embrace of visual and cross-disciplinary art, design and film screenings as well as a family program. Flow Festival’s art program features an impressive collection of works by a diverse group of artists ranging from street art to light installations. Flow is a genuine art festival with a soul, guided by artistic principles and maximizing visitor experience.

Among the featured artists in 2018 were Tiina Pyykkinen, the Young Finnish Artist of 2017, and Mark Bode, the famed cartoonist. Flow also presented a multitude of contemporary video and light art: the video installation by Sami Sänpäkkilä and Anna-Mari Nousiainen, as well as The Other Light exhibition, curated by the light art collective and production house Sun Effects.

The collaboration with Aalto University brought a diverse collection of art, architecture and design to the festival area. The on-site construction of the Aika-lava, a marvel made out of ply and wood by Aalto’s Architecture program provided a frame to a hyper-sensorial experience. Aalto students also presented a 100-meter long mural as well as video art all over the festival area. The festival pop-up cinema, Finnkino pop-up, provided a sneak peek of the coming autumn’s movie premieres.
"Behind the Balloon, the main festival area opens up with its countless fairy lights, street art, architectural installations and many more (regular-sized) balloons, all neatly tucked away in an old power station."

– THE SKINNY
"There’s a pop-up cinema projecting international and Finnish films and a diverse art program with installations, street and video art."

– OLAsh
SAMI SÄNPÄKKILÄ & ANNA-MARI NOUSIAINEN: THE ETERNAL SLEEP OF THE MAN
© SAMULI PENTTI

MARK BODE AT MAKE YOUR MARK GALLERY
© MIIA NÄRKKI

KEKE LEPPÄLÄ: FLOWRIDERS
© SAMULI PENTTI

LAURA LEHTINEN: TIME MACHINE
© RIIKKA VAATERA
SKATEPARK JUNGLE, LANDSCAPE ART BY SINI PARIKKI. PLANTS PROVIDED BY PUUTARHA TANVOSET © SAMULI PENTTI

MURAL BY DANIELA CARVALHO © MIIA NÄRKKI

PAINTINGS BY YASMIN MAY JAÅFAR & CHRISTIAN SJÖHOLM © MIIA NÄRKKI

AALTO UNIVERSITY: SNAPSHOT © KONSTANTIN KONDRIUKHOV
Eat & drink

THE BEST FOOD YOU’LL FIND AT ANY FESTIVAL

Food plays an essential role in the Flow program – the restaurants attending the festival are handpicked and there are more than 60 different restaurants, cafés and bars serving a variety of tastes to the audience. Organic, locally sourced, meat-free and environmentally friendly options are emphasized in the menus. Seasonal food and craft beer mix seamlessly with artisan drinks and the eloquent Lanson champagne bar.

Each year, a number of Helsinki’s most interesting restaurants are offering their signature styles and dishes for the benefit of Flow visitors. Flow’s wide selection has it all: Finnish wild food, traditional Ethiopian flavors, juicy burgers, nutritious smoothies, healthy street food or festival feasts from a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Flow guides and educates its food vendors in offering ecological menus. The caterers are provided with Sustainable Meal guidelines that are developed according to the principles of sustainable catering. Following these guidelines, caterers offer a special Sustainable Meal option on their menu.
RESTAURANTS

3 Kaverin Jäätelö
Addis Ethiopian Kitchen
Baba Foods
Bistro Sinne
Bun-2-Bun
Cargo
El Ceviche Güero
Fat Ramen
Good Life Coffee
Grön
Jungle Juice Bar
Kahvila Sävy
Kimchi & the Chicken Gang
Levant
Lie Mi
Mad Wok
The Meatles - by Gold&Green
Mo Café
Munchies by Matti Jämsen
Na’am Kitchen
Oatly

Önam
Paulig Coffee Bar
Paulig Coffee Van
Pizzarium
Pobre
Powau
Sandro
Shelter
Social Burgerjoint
Soft Republick
Soi Soi
Street Gastro
Suvilahti TBA
Thai Papaya
Thaiger
thetastydogs
Twisted Street Kitchen
UMAIJARI+Sushi
Soft Republick
Wicked Rabbit
“While the music is consistently good - it’s with its food that Flow really comes into its own, attracting some of the capital’s most avant-garde restaurateurs.”

– THE TELEGRAPH
“We’re at Helsinki Flow, which has successfully turned itself into a food event as well as a music festival.”
– MONOOLE

“The best food you’ll find at any festival in the world”
– RESIDENT ADVISOR
Sustainable Flow

Environmental responsibility and the social aspects of sustainability are at the core of Flow’s values and operations. Flow takes the environment and sustainable development into consideration in everything it does.

The event is powered by renewable energy. 100% of festival waste is hand-sorted and recycled. A high portion of the menus served at Flow is locally sourced, plant-based and environmentally friendly.

Flow is one of the world’s first carbon-neutral festivals, having offset its carbon footprint already since 2009 via certified energy projects and ventures. Flow promotes local businesses and public transport, as well as supports the protection of the Baltic Sea. Since 2012, Flow Festival has been using the EcoCompass environmental management system.

Flow is committed to promoting the principles of justice, equity and equality. Everyone is welcomed to the festival as they are, and we tolerate no form of discrimination. Flow expects the entire staff, as well as associates to adhere to the same values.
"With 84,000 people (an increase on previous years), it’s so clean and the fruits of a site-wide emphasis on sustainability are clear to see."

– CLASH MUSIC
The forward-thinking Flow Festival brand is associated with brand partnerships which are innovative and high in quality. The musical content and additional programming plus the uniquely decorated Suvilahti festival area offer remarkable grounds for new innovations and visibility for brand partners. Each of the partnerships at Flow Festival are individually tailored concepts, which remain on the agenda throughout the year.

Flow Festival’s partners for 2018 were the main partner Lapin Kulta, partners Aalto University, Bright Finland, Norwegian Reward, Oatly, OP, Paulig, Plan B, SEAT, Stopteltat and Sun Effects, media partners Basso, Clear Channel, Helsingin Sanomat and Resident Advisor, as well as Sustainable Flow partners: main partner Neste and partners HSY and Mall of Tripla.

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