THE JUNCTION 10 YEARS

FEST
DXB

PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK

X FEST - 10 MINUTE SHORT THEATRE FESTIVAL



CORE INFORMATION FOR CREATORS

10

WHAT X FEST IS

X Fest DXB is a ten-minute theatre festival. This is Season 2.

In 2026, we launched the first edition at The Junction. Over six weekends, more than 60 original plays went up, including a full week performed in languages other than English. It all ended at the Gala Finals, where 11 plays competed for one title. The first season showed what we had believed for a long time: this city is full of stories, and full of people ready to tell them.

Season 2 runs from 24 April to 30 May 2027. The format stays the same, with some improvements based on what we learned last year. Every play gets ten minutes, not a second more. Judges and the audience score together, and the strongest work earns its place in the Finals.

X Fest matters to the UAE's cultural scene for a few reasons. It grows a base of homegrown writers who create work here, about life here. It gives new talent a real stage and a real audience, often for the first time. It makes space for experimental work that might never get a full-length run. It brings short-form theatre, the shortest form of the craft, to the stage at scale. And it helps put the UAE on the map as a place where original theatre is made, not just watched.

Ten minutes is short, but the standard is high. Come prepared and commit fully. Respect the clock, your team, and everyone else sharing this stage.

GAUTAM GOENKA
Festival Director
gautam@thejunctiondubai.com



FESTIVAL GOALS

X FEST DXB IS GUIDED BY THREE CORE OBJECTIVES:

01 To nurture **local talent** by creating space for emerging and established artists to present their work.

02 To maintain **transparency** in scoring, ensuring fairness, clarity and trust in the evaluation process.

03 To encourage **original content** developed within the UAE theatre community.



KEY DATES
X FEST 2027

APPLICATIONS CLOSE

15 FEBRUARY 2027

AUDITIONS

FEBRUARY 2027 (TBA)

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FORM DUE

10 APRIL 2027

FESTIVAL OPENS

24 APRIL 2027

FINALS

28-30 MAY 2027





X FEST 2027 MAIN FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

SATURDAY	24 APRIL	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	25 ARPIL	7:30 PM

WEEK 2

SATURDAY	01 MAY	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	02 MAY	7:30 PM

WEEK 3 – UNTRANSLATED

SATURDAY	08 MAY	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	09 MAY	7:30 PM

WEEK 4

SATURDAY	15 MAY	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	16 MAY	7:30 PM

WEEK 5

SATURDAY	22 MAY	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	23 MAY	7:30 PM

WEEK 6 – FINALS WEEK

FRIDAY	28 MAY	7:30 PM
SATURDAY	29 MAY	7:30 PM
SUNDAY	30 MAY	7:30 PM

XFEST DXB

THE JUNCTION

X FEST YOUTH

X FEST 2027 YOUTH FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

YOUTH WEEK 1

SUNDAY 09 MAY 2:00 PM

YOUTH WEEK 2

SUNDAY 16 MAY 2:00 PM

YOUTH FINALS

SUNDAY 23 MAY 2:00 PM



FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

X Fest DXB 2027 is divided into Heats and Finals.

A total of 60 plays will participate in the Main Festival. Each play performs twice during its assigned week: Saturday and Sunday at 7:30 PM. Performing on both nights is mandatory.

HEATS

- Results are announced every Sunday night after the performances.
- Scores from Saturday and Sunday are combined.
- The top two plays each week, based on total jury scores and audience votes, advance to the Finals.
- Week 3 is an **Untranslated Week.** All plays must be performed in a language other than English.

FINALS

- Across three shows (28–30 May 2027).
- ·All ten qualifying plays from the Heats will perform in the Finals.
- One Wildcard entry will be selected by the festival team, bringing the total to 11 plays.
- Jury scoring occurs on Friday and Saturday only.
- Audience voting occurs across all three nights.
- Awards are announced after the final performance on 30 May 2027.

FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

ELIGIBILITY: NEW WORK ONLY

- A script is not eligible for X Fest DXB 2027 if it has been publicly performed in Dubai in the two years before the festival opens (since 24 April 2025). This applies to any production of the script, in any language, version or adaptation, by any company, including festivals, competitions and school productions.
- Scripts performed at any previous edition of X Fest DXB are also not eligible.
- Directors confirm eligibility at registration. A play found to be ineligible will be disqualified at any stage, including after it has performed, and forfeits all scores and awards.

COMMITMENT AND SCHEDULING

- By confirming participation, every director, cast and crew member commits to all festival dates: the technical rehearsal, both heat performances, and all three Finals dates (28–30 May 2027) in case the play qualifies.
- Participants are responsible for managing their own schedules so there are no foreseen or unforeseen clashes. X Fest DXB will not reschedule plays to accommodate clashes. A production that withdraws or misses an assigned date after confirmation forfeits its slot.

FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

PERFORMANCE, DURATION AND TIMING RULES

X Fest DXB is a strict 10-minute theatre festival.

- Timing starts when the stage lights come up or when any onstage action begins. Pre-show audio and changeovers are not counted unless they are part of the performance.
- Plays are timed each night they perform.

TIMING PROCEDURE

A play will be timed each time it is performed. Timing will be kept by the festival team. The timer starts when the stage lights come up or when any action begins, whichever happens first.

OVER-TIME PENALTIES

- At 11th minute: 5 points are deducted from final score
- At 12th minute: 10 additional points are deducted from final score
- At 13th minute: play is DISQUALIFIED

These penalties apply each night of the performance where the criteria are met.

CONTENT GUIDELINES

THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT PERMITTED:

1. **Swearing or strong language (in any language)**
2. **Insulting religious beliefs or faiths**
3. **Graphic adult content or inappropriate costumes**

NOT SURE?

If you are unsure whether your play's content is against the rules, please contact the festival team to have it checked.

Plays that violate the content rules may be disqualified or have points deducted at the discretion of the Festival Director.



UNTRANSLATED WEEK

In **Week 3** at X Fest, the stage belongs to those voices: languages that carry home, memory, and the rhythms of life. Ten minutes is all it takes to let them sing.



YOUTH FESTIVAL

- The Youth Festival is open to participants under 18.
- Young people fill every role: writing, directing, acting and production. Adults may not direct.
- All Main Festival rules apply in full, including eligibility, commitment, timing, content and scoring.

For Youth productions, the Commitment and Scheduling rule covers the technical rehearsal, the assigned Youth Week and the Youth Finals on 23 May 2027.



SCORING SYSTEM AND TRANSPARENCY

Advancement at X Fest DXB is determined by a combined scoring system designed to be clear, balanced and transparent.

The Jury Score
Each night there will be a panel of jury members who come from diverse artistic backgrounds. These are carefully selected to avoid any current festival participants and any members with conflicts of interest in the festival.

The Jury Score will make up 60% of a play's total score. Each jury member will award points to plays across 3 main criteria.

Each play's total score consists of:

- Jury Score – 60%
- Audience Pulse Score – 40%

SCORE SHARING

- Final weekly scores (jury 60% + audience 40% making total of 100%) are shared with play focal points.
- Any penalty deductions are clearly reflected.
- In case of a tie, the Festival Director will act as a tie-breaker, and teams will be informed.

JURY SCORE — 60%

Each jury member scores plays across three categories:

- **Story / Writing (20%)** – clarity, structure, originality, engagement
- **Direction / Vision (20%)** – interpretation, rhythm, staging, visual choices
- **Acting / Ensemble (20%)** – performance quality, chemistry, believability

X FACTOR BONUS
UP TO 5 ADDIONAL POINTS

Awarded for bold risks and inventive creativity.

POINTS	EXPLANATION
5	"WOW. BRAVE"
3-4	FRESH AND/ OR BOLD
1-2	MILD EXPERIMENTATION
0	PLAYED SAFE

AUDIENCE PULSE SCORE – 40%

Audiences are key to the success of X Fest.

They have a strong say in what they liked and would like to see more of.

Audience members vote digitally for their top three plays. Points are awarded based on placement.

PLACED	POINTS
1st	5 POINTS
2nd	3 POINTS
3rd	1 POINT
Outside Top 3	0 POINTS

All votes are collected via QR codes. Clear instructions will be shared closer to the show.



STAY IN THE LOOP

Most of our updates and important information for X Fest will be shared via email.

Having a working email account that you check regularly is essential for a smooth festival experience.

To make sure you don't miss anything, we recommend adding these addresses to your SAFE SENDER list:

xfestdxb@gmail.com
For any questions about your play or production, reach out to the Festival Director.

info@thejunctiondubai.com
For tickets, event logistics, or inquiries related to the venue, contact The Junction team.

Keeping these emails safe ensures you stay informed every step of the way.

A WhatsApp group will be created for all directors during the festival shows. All day to day instructions and updates will be anounced on the group.

OBTAINING WRITERS AND SCRIPT RIGHTS

All directors must ensure they have explicit permission to stage the script they submit to X Fest DXB.

This includes:

- **Written consent from the writer**
- **Agreement on festival performance rights**
- **Clear understanding of whether adaptations are allowed**

X Fest DXB does not mediate script ownership disputes. Responsibility for obtaining and confirming rights lies solely with the production team.

Submitting a play confirms that all permissions have been secured.



CASTING AND COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Contact details shared through X Fest DXB is strictly for festival-related communication. This information may only be used to coordinate casting and participation for the submitted production. Any use of these details outside the scope of X Fest DXB may result in removal from the festival.

Casting decisions are managed independently by each production. Directors are expected to select performers based on the needs of the play and its creative approach. While discussion with the writer may be welcomed, the responsibility for final casting choices rests with the directing team. Once confirmed, directors communicate directly with their cast.

AUDITIONS

Auditions for actors will take place at The Junction (February exact dates TBA).



PARTICIPATION LIMITS

- Actors: Maximum of 2 plays
- Directors: Maximum of 2 playS
- Writers: Maximum of 4 plays

Writer slots are confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis.

GETTING STAGE-READY

- Each production arranges its own rehearsals independently.
- X Fest DXB does not provide rehearsal spaces.
- Most 10-minute plays typically need 10–15 hours of rehearsal, depending on the cast size and complexity of the performance.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A Technical Requirements Form will be shared ahead of the festival and must be submitted by **10 April 2027.**

TEAMS MUST SPECIFY:

- Lighting and sound cues
- Props, set items, and costumes

**Minimal technical design is strongly encouraged to ensure smooth show flow.

TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

- Conducted on **Saturday morning** of performance week
- Each play is allocated **30 minutes**
- Exact timings are shared closer to show dates

STAGE AND SET CONSIDERATIONS

Given the fast-paced nature of the festival:

- **Keep sets minimal**
- **Limit furniture and props**
- **Avoid complex technical cue sequences**

This ensures seamless transitions and a strong overall audience experience.

RUNNING ORDER

Running order is determined by the festival team, considering technical and pacing needs. Requests may be submitted but cannot be guaranteed.



TICKETING

- One production member may observe from the tech booth
- Seating and voting require a purchased ticket

BROCHURE INFORMATION

As soon as your cast is confirmed, forward the brochure information to xfestdxb@gmail.com in the following format:

- Name of Play
- Name of Theatre Group (if applicable)
- Writer (home country)
- Director
- Cast – Actor Name (Character Name)
- Synopsis – one or two short sentences about the play



POSTER AND PROMOTION

Participants are encouraged to design posters.
There is an award for Best Poster.

Posters must include:

- Performance week, date, time, location
- X Fest and The Junction logos
- Ticket partner logo
- Social media tags for X Fest DXB & The Junction

All logos and tags mentioned above will be provided by the X Fest team.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What kind of scripts are allowed at X Fest DXB 2027?
X Fest DXB welcomes both original scripts and adaptations. However, written permission from the writer is mandatory in all cases, whether the script is performed as written or adapted. While adaptations are permitted, X Fest DXB actively encourages the creation and presentation of original work. All scripts must meet the Eligibility: New Work Only criteria.

2) How many plays will be performed at X Fest DXB 2027?
A maximum of **60 plays** will participate in the Main Festival.

3) How does a play qualify for the Finals of X Fest DXB 2027?
X Fest DXB follows a direct qualification format. Across the five festival weeks, the top two plays from each week, based on combined jury scores and audience votes, will qualify directly for the Finals.

In addition, one Wildcard play will be selected for the Finals by the festival team, bringing the total number of finalist plays to eleven.

4) Is there a semi-finals round at X Fest DXB?
No. X Fest DXB does not have a semi-finals stage. Plays progress directly from the weekly heats to the Finals.

5) How does the scoring system work?
Each play's final score is calculated using a transparent, weighted system:

- **Jury Score: 60%**
- **Audience Pulse Score: 40%**

This structure ensures a balanced evaluation that reflects both artistic assessment and audience response.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

6) Will the judges' scores be shared with participants?
Yes! To maintain transparency, final scores will be shared with the play's focal point via email at the end of each week.
The names of the judges will also be included when scores are communicated.

7) Who is responsible for script rights and permissions?
All performers and production teams are solely responsible for obtaining the necessary rights and permissions from the writer.
Submission of a play to X Fest DXB will be treated as confirmation that all required permissions have been secured by the director or submitting party.

8) How are performance dates assigned?
Performance dates are scheduled by the X Fest DXB team to ensure a balanced and well-paced festival lineup. While teams may share date preferences in advance, final scheduling decisions rest with the festival, and allocations cannot be guaranteed. Once a play is scheduled, the assigned dates are considered confirmed.

9) What support does X Fest DXB offer to participating productions?
X Fest DXB manages all core festival operations, including the venue, ticketing, front-of-house services, publicity and marketing, stage management, technical coordination, and the overall lighting design for the event. A limited inventory of standard furniture and set items will also be available for use.

10) What are participating teams responsible for?
Each production is responsible for its creative execution, including costumes, props, and any production-specific items required for the play. Participants are also expected to commit their time and collaboration throughout the festival process.

ONLINE PLATFORMS

Link to Registration Form:
https://tinyurl.com/XFest2027SignUp

X Fest Dubai Instagram:
@XFestDXB
https://www.instagram.com/xfestdxb/

The Junction Instagram:
@JunctionDubai
https://www.instagram.com/junctiondubai/





BROCHURE DESIGNED BY HUNGER HOUSE STUDIOS - 2027
UPDATED BY DUGULAN MEDIA - 2027