

**Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi
International Theatre Festival of Kerala (ITFOK) 2026**

Voices in the Silence

ENTRIES ARE NOW OPEN for the [International Theatre Festival of Kerala](#) (ITFOK) 2026.

[ITFOK was conceived and launched in 2008](#) by Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi with the intention of promoting theatre as a strong medium for social change, cultural exchange and artistic expression. Through the years ITFOK has consistently and courageously provided a public platform for diverse voices, particularly those addressing human struggles creatively and through the arts, and artists resisting inequality and oppressive forces.

Now in its 16th year, it has grown to be one of the most critically appreciated, respected and anticipated theatre festivals in South Asia and internationally.

The 8-day international theatre festival will take place in and around the [Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi in Thrissur](#) from 25th January to 1st February 2026, and through this edition of ITFOK we will explore the violence and the creative power within silences.

We invite artists, performers and visionaries to bring to ITFOK the work they feel **most compelled** to share, creations which they feel are **most critical** and which contribute directly to the **most urgent and truthful stories and issues** of our time, which **demand our attention**, which speak to us **in spite of silences imposed and practised**.

WHO CAN APPLY?

ITFOK 2026 is open to individual artists, groups, arts institutions from Kerala, India and the rest of the world. Professional, amateur, community and student artists will all find a place within ITFOK.

The festival showcases theatre productions primarily; however, it also holds space for all kinds of live performance – including stand-up comedy, folk art, circus, music, performance art, interdisciplinary projects and visual art that includes performative elements.

Applications carried in protest or play, in silence or song, by individual artists, groups or communities, in local and global languages are all deeply welcomed.

Please read the [GUIDELINES](#) below to better understand the vision, scope and shape of ITFOK 2026.

Please note that the selection and placement of artists and artwork will be in line with the curatorial vision of the festival.

FESTIVAL VISION

ITFOK 2026 will be **artistically riveting, locally rooted and radically inclusive**—a space where **urgent, truthful performance** meets **subversive inclusivity** and deep **community mobilisation**.

It will be **grounded in Kerala, international in reach**, and **driven by meaningful, timely artistic impact**. At its core, this festival recognises that the very **act of gathering**—across distance, difference and discipline—**is itself an act of resistance**.

ITFOK 2026 will spotlight **artists** who are creating some of the **most courageous** and **critically important work** of our time - **artists who refuse to be silenced**, art that cannot be **erased or ignored**. The Festival calls out to artists who are **pushing the boundaries of art and art form**, not only in the **work** they produce but in the **risks** they take, the **politics** they carry, in the ways they choose to live, gather, create and the silences they challenge or embrace.

The Festival will actively embrace **decentralisation**—in what it presents, whom it invites, where it takes place, to whom it speaks, and how it chooses to engage.

ITFOK 2026 believes that transformative, compelling art and artists emerge from a shared space of collective witness, honesty and creative courage.

ITFOK FESTIVAL 2026

ITFOK 2026 will encompass many kinds of performances across many different kinds of venues for as wide and varied an audience as possible. The festival will ensure that theatre and performance artists of all disciplines, communities and capacities are given maximum exposure to a cross section of audiences from within Kerala and beyond.

The **central festival location** is located within the [Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi campus \(provide google link?\)](#). This setting provides artists and audiences **traditional performance spaces** – proscenium arch, black box, platform – within controlled performance settings.

However, ITFOK 2026 will also carve out a **dedicated space for youth-centered, student-generated artists**, groups and productions. It will also absorb and highlight **decentralized performances within the community** such as pop-up art, street theatre, flash mobs etc.

So if you are an **ESTABLISHED THEATRE ARTIST** - pushing the boundaries of craft, form and artistic purpose through your art and politics; we are looking for compelling productions that are rigorous, refined, complex, expansive in vision, which seek to challenge and transform silences into explosive creative potential.

If you are a **YOUNG, UPCOMING ARTIST** - creating new and compelling work that experiments with language, space, technology or identity, which questions silences and silencing; we are reaching out to students, young theatre-makers from within Kerala, India and the world to bring us work that is raw, urgent and alive.

If you are a **NON TRADITIONAL or COMMUNITY ARTIST** - courageous enough to perform in the noise and the gaps of everyday spaces, if your work speaks to people where they already are, interrupting routine with surprise, laughter, provocation, or pause—we want you as part of ITFOK 2026.

CURATORIAL CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES

The festival will be curated with the following priorities in mind.

SILENCED PERFORMANCE

Exploring the critical need to challenge the **violence of imposed silences**, suppression and erasure while endorsing the deep resistance that grows within these very places, we encourage artists working in politically and socially oppressed communities – in war-affected areas, from queer, tribal, Dalit communities to apply.

SIDELINED PERFORMANCE

Focusing on reclaiming performance spaces and public imagination by artists and artforms that are **denied ease of access** to the same, we encourage performances and artists from specially abled, disabled, refugee, working-class, migrant, immigrant, folk and rural communities to apply.

RECLAIMING PERFORMANCE

Focusing on the onslaught of neoliberal and corporate **appropriation of culture, art and festivals**, we ask the question, how do theatre festivals reclaim and restore themselves as sites of true resistance, genuine decentralisation and collective meaning-making? We invite artists and groups who are fighting the instrumentalization and the whitewashing of art, in their artworks, in their politics, in their life choices, to apply.

FUTURE AND PAST PERFORMANCE

Prioritizing performances made for, with or about senior citizens and children, including intergenerational theatre-making, performances in care homes, schools, and community centres and play-based learning, we encourage **art and artwork from youth, children and senior citizens**. This festival hopes to connect meaningfully with the silences of the past and those of the future.

KERALA PERFORMANCE

Highlighting the people, the artists, the geography, the memory, history and ethos of Kerala, we encourage performances in **local languages** and those pursuing **local art practices** to apply.

FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

ITFOK 2026 – *Voices in Silence* IS NOW OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

We accept LOCAL, NATIONAL, and INTERNATIONAL applications from INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS, THEATRE COMPANIES, ARTS INSTITUTIONS, SCHOOLS, FOLK & COMMUNITY GROUPS.

While theatre remains the primary medium, proposals from dance, music, stand-up comedy, circus, performance art, digital installations, hybrid, and transdisciplinary formats are equally welcome.

Please read through our [CURATORIAL CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES](#) so you can align your submissions with one or more of these.

Please submit ONE application for the festival. (Please see note below)

Please note that any performances which have been rejected more than twice for previous ITFOK festivals, will not be considered for ITFOK 2026.

Please fill out the [APPLICATION FORM](#) and upload all required materials.

All submitted works will undergo a thoughtful selection process, guided by the curatorial vision of the festival.

SELECTED APPLICANTS will be contacted after the selection process is completed.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON SUBMISSIONS

ITFOK 2026 requires applicants to kindly reflect deeply on their body of work and select **one** creation that best aligns with the curatorial vision and priorities of the upcoming edition of the festival.

We understand that groups, institutions or individuals may have multiple significant works to share. However, to maintain clarity and fairness in the selection process, we request that **only one submission per applicant** be made.

Participation at the festival will be ensured through the selection of this single piece.

This process ensures that the application process remains focused, meaningful while allowing the curatorial panel to engage with each submission with the attention it deserves.

We thank you for honouring the spirit of the festival by submitting a single work that you feel speaks most powerfully to the ethos of ITFOK and the curatorial vision of the 2026 festival.

***Let us gather together in Kerala
with stories and storytellers
to see and to be seen
to witness together
the silences which need to be broken
and the world that can be reimagined.***

ITFOK 2026 awaits your most compelling artwork.

ITFOK 2026

**where artists, performers and visionaries will gather together
for a festival of witnessing the most compelling art
addressing the most crucial issues of our times
breaking the silence together**