catalyst

Summer
Short
Courses
2026

Monday 22 June
→ Friday 17 July

///

Institute for Creative Arts
and Technology

Funkhaus, Nalepastr. 18, 12459 Berlin
catalyst-berlin.com

Make space for creativity this summer in Berlin

Build skills, confidence and momentum on our range of Summer short courses. Our intensive short courses are led by industry experts and prioritise hands-on learning. That means you'll learn by making, experimenting, receiving feedback and iterating. You'll be practicing real-world creative skills while connecting with an international community of artists, at our iconic riverside campus in Europe's creative capital.

We provide five specialities in our Schools for Film & Visual Media and Acting that cater to a range of skill levels. On a campus bustling with activity, you will also meet students exploring one of eleven specialist subjects within our School for Music & Sound and School for Creative Human Development. Everyone is here for the same reason, arriving ready to learn new skills and meet like-minded makers. Creative industries don't operate in isolation, and neither will you while studying here.

The courses

Screen Acting   **Level: Beginner**
Learn the fundamentals of performing, bringing characters and ideas to life for camera.

Unreal Engine & Environment Design   **Level: Beginner**
Learn environment design for games and animation. Build and present your own cinematic or interactive environment.

Screenwriting   **Level: Beginner**
Translate your ideas into compelling scripts for film. You'll develop a toolkit for making, developing and pitching your scripts.

Filmmaking   **Level: Beginner**
Get the full picture of filmmaking, learning fundamentals of pitching, storytelling, on-set, pre-production, working with actors, and post-production.

Documentary Photography   **Level: Beginner**
Develop your skills in street photography, visual storytelling and editing. You'll produce your own series, printed zine and exhibit your work.

Psychology of Creativity   **Level: Beginner**
Dive deep into creativity's developmental roots and its impact on wellbeing and communities.

We also offer short courses in Music & Sound, as well as Bachelor and Master programmes. If you didn't see what you were looking for, **please check this directory.**

Why Study at Catalyst?

Professional-grade campus and equipment

Study at a 3,000m² riverside campus with black box film studio, post-production suites with industry-standard software, comprehensive filmmaking kits, 8K cinema, photography equipment, and 30+ music studios for musical collaborations. Equipment is bookable from week one, so your downtime is spent diving deeper into your practice.

Our tutors are practicing artists

Your tutors bring industry knowledge to the workshops they run. They're working professionals active in film, cgi, TV, acting and art industries. They're navigating the same industry challenges you'll face and they're bringing a passion for passing on knowledge. Who better to learn from?

Real interdisciplinary collaboration

Interdisciplinary is at the heart of what we do. Filmmakers work with sound designers and musicians who score their films. Actors apply their new skills in productions. Photographers capture the scenes their peers create. Game designers, sound designers and screenwriters can collaborate on the same worldbuilding exercise. Your peers aren't just your classmates – there's a whole school of likeminded creative souls sharing this space with you!

Learn more than the tools

All the programmes go beyond using hardware and software. You'll learn how to evaluate what serves your creative vision at any moment. Which tool is serving your aims? Should you shoot on film or digital? When do practical miniatures create something a render can't? When do AI tools speed your pipeline versus limit your voice? Practicing this critical approach will keep you flexible to change throughout your career, not just during these four weeks.

Test your audience

Screen your films at public showcases. Exhibit your photography at the Funkhaus. Present your Unreal environments. Sharpen your pitching skills. Your work can reach real audiences while you're making it. Some students have developed their films for festival submission upon completing the course. Learning to push your projects beyond yourself is an integral part of being an artist in the 21st century, and we'll help you find that launch pad.

*Photos taken last summer by students for our _disposable camera project_*

Clubs, galleries & street culture
Berlin offers unparalleled creative infrastructure. The city offers a dizzying array of art galleries, including foundations presenting the work of Germany's most influential artists, historic galleries exhibiting the work of international masters and contemporary galleries with multi-media experiences. Art floods its way into the club scene too, with temples of techno occasionally doubling up as exhibition spaces.

You can visit a range of experimental galleries for inspiration or just walk the streets and soak in the graffiti. Corner shops have been known to transform into temporary dance floors. Berlin is an endless inspiration, actively shaping us through its relentless energy.
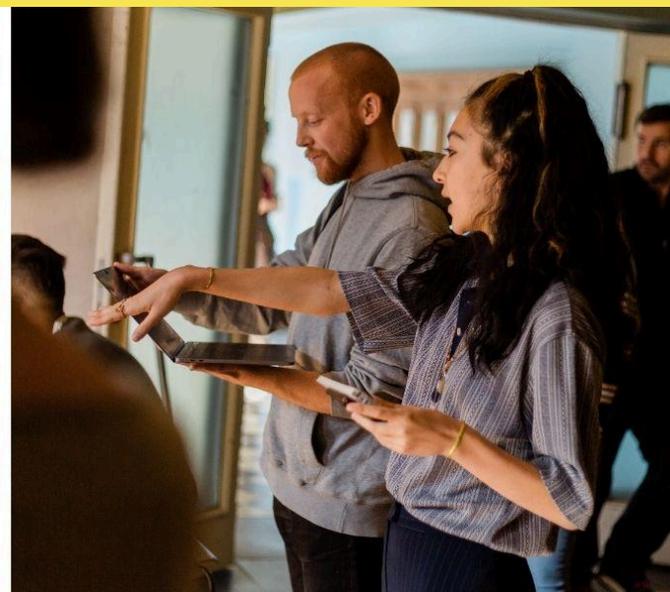
A global creative community
Your cohort includes motivated creatives from every part of the world, but your network doesn't end there. Build relationships with artists during workshops, and carry that excitement out into our international city – exploring Berlin's neighbourhoods together and finding out what makes Berlin special.

You'll study during Berlin's most vibrant season
Chilling riverside at the campus. Late-night editing sessions in professional suites. Practicing lines before going on set. Watching films at open-air cinemas. Weekend explorations of Kreuzberg and Neukölln. Summer festivals fill parks. Discovering Berlin's international food scene. Swimming in lakes just outside the city. Shooting in locations you couldn't access anywhere else.

After an intense month of creation, we celebrate with a showcase and closing party. Expect screenings, exhibitions, performances, installations, dancing. You'll leave with fresh output, new skills, an international network and lasting memories.

/// Screen Acting

You're someone who makes things, and you're curious about bringing characters to life on screen. This intensive course teaches the fundamentals of acting for camera through regular training and practice. You'll develop your senses and instincts, learn to read emotions and situations, understand and replicate actions, analyse scenes and characters, and perform under pressure. All with a clear goal: preparing for a screen test under professional conditions. Four weeks of observation, performance and discovery await.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You're curious about acting and want to explore it without committing to years of training
✓ You want to understand what happens in front of the camera and build confidence performing
✓ You're ready to work on scenes and monologues with supportive peers
✓ You want practical screen acting experience leading to a professional screen test
✓ You're considering acting as a career and want to take first steps

Course Schedule

Week 1	Introduction to acting fundamentals, basic scene analysis, understanding actions and objectives, camera awareness basics.
Week 2	Acting technique development, working with two-person scenes, voice work fundamentals, movement and body consciousness, building relationships with scene partners.
Week 3	Monologue work begins, camera technique (eyelines, shot sizes, on-set etiquette), vocal character development, physical character work.
Week 4	Screen test preparation, monologue presentations to industry panel, receiving professional feedback, final showcase with audience.

Course Outcomes

★ Understand script analysis including actions, objectives, beats and tactics to create believable characters
★ Apply camera-specific techniques including eyelines, shot sizes and on-set etiquette
★ Develop vocal and physical character work using rhythm, pitch, tone and movement
★ Give and receive constructive feedback to optimise learning and support scene partners
★ Perform confidently in screen test conditions with professional panel feedback

/// Unreal Engine & Environment Design

You're a creative soul drawn to building immersive digital worlds. This hands-on course explores the creative and technical fundamentals of environment design using Unreal Engine, the industry-standard tool behind today's most compelling games, animations and virtual experiences. From your first idea to a fully realised interactive or cinematic world, you'll learn how to conceptualise, build and present compelling 3D environments that tell stories and evoke emotion. Each week brings practical projects, peer feedback and real-time workflows mirroring industry practice.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You're fascinated by game environments and virtual worlds
✓ You want to learn Unreal Engine from the ground up in a supportive environment
✓ You're ready to create a complete 3D environment you can show in your portfolio
✓ You want to understand real-time 3D workflows for games, animation or virtual production
✓ You're considering environment artist or level designer career paths

Course Schedule

Week 1	Introduction to Unreal Engine, environment design fundamentals, conceptualising your environment, storytelling through worldbuilding, developing and pitching your concept.
Week 2	Working with assets and materials, lighting fundamentals, building your environment, applying composition and scale, creating atmosphere.
Week 3	Advanced lighting techniques, using Sequencer for cinematic presentations, optimising scenes for real-time performance, refining your environment based on feedback.
Week 4	Final environment development, professional presentation preparation, creating portfolio-ready work, critique and feedback sessions.

Course Outcomes

★ Design and build 3D environments in Unreal Engine applying storytelling principles
★ Work effectively with assets, materials and lighting to create atmosphere and emotion
★ Use Sequencer to create cinematic presentations and apply composition techniques
★ Optimise scenes for real-time performance while maintaining visual quality
★ Present work professionally for portfolio or showreel, positioned for environment artist roles

/// Screenwriting

You're a writer with stories to tell, and you want to translate them into compelling scripts for film. This practical course gives you the opportunity to develop your own screenplay material under professional supervision. Over four weeks, you'll work through the screenwriting development process using your own ideas: from initial concept to pitch paper to treatment to first script pages. You'll learn story structures, develop compelling scenes, hone editing skills, and gain confidence to pitch and market yourself as a screenwriter.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You have stories you want to tell and ideas for films

✓ You want to learn screenplay structure and craft under professional guidance

✓ You're ready to write your first script pages and develop them with feedback

✓ You want to understand the German film industry and market yourself as a writer

✓ You're considering screenwriting as a career and want practical experience

Course Schedule

Week 1	Screenwriter's Toolbox – what is the story? Screenwriting fundamentals. The writing workflow from idea to first drafts.
Week 2	Genre – diving into key genres (drama, crime, horror, romantic comedy, comedy). Understanding genre conventions and expectations.
Week 3	Writing Week – collaborative writing in brainstorm rooms and writers' rooms. Writing your first draft. Peer feedback sessions. The rewriting process: editing and refining your script.
Week 4	Presentation, Table Read & the Industry – pitching your script to an audience. Table read of finished scripts with actors. Marketing yourself as a screenwriter: building a personal brand. Networking strategies. Industry insights.

Course Outcomes

★ Understand and apply screenplay development processes and story structures
★ Write compelling, well-crafted scenes with understanding of different story formats
★ Develop editing and rewriting skills, recognising your own writing workflow
★ Confidently pitch your ideas and effectively market yourself as a screenwriter
★ Understand the current marketplace in Germany and take next steps towards a career

/// Filmmaking

You're someone who makes things, and film is your medium. This course welcomes complete beginners and those with some experience who want to practice working collaboratively and completing projects efficiently. Built on the principle that learning by doing is the best way to learn, you'll work in teams throughout the programme. Tutors guide and support rather than provide one-on-one instruction; the collaborative group dynamic is where real learning happens. You'll complete multiple short films in just four weeks.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You want to make films and need hands-on experience across all roles

✓ You're ready to work collaboratively in teams on fast-paced projects

✓ You learn best by doing rather than studying theory

✓ You want to complete finished short films for your portfolio in four weeks

✓ You're ready to direct, shoot, edit and crew on multiple projects simultaneously

Course Schedule

Week 1	Introduction to gear and basic skills. Create your first 1-minute film. Pitch your script for the main film (shooting in Week 3). Basics of directing actors. Form groups of 5 for collaborative work.
Week 2	Finalising main script. Setting crew groups for the main film. Learning filmmaking skills: camera, directing, directing actors, producing. Your main film should be up to 5 minutes—make it simple but make each frame count.
Week 3	Shooting the films. Set visits. Production workshops. Each successful pitch means you direct your own film while crewing on others' projects as editor, sound recordist/editor, producer or actor.
Week 4	Finalising your film. Sound and editing workshops. Opportunities to collaborate with Acting, Sound Design and Electronic Music students. Final screenings.

Course Outcomes

★ Develop fundamental filmmaking skills across directing, cinematography, sound and editing
★ Work collaboratively in defined roles while understanding how roles blur in productions
★ Practice self-organisation: finding locations, actors, creating schedules
★ Overcome creative challenges through problem-solving and complete finished short films
★ Give and receive constructive feedback to optimise collaborative creative work

/// Documentary Photography

You're a creative soul who sees stories everywhere, and Berlin is your canvas. This action-packed course immerses you in street and documentary photography with the city as your classroom. You'll develop technical and storytelling skills while capturing Berlin's vibrant energy, diverse communities and hidden corners. This is learning by doing: walking the streets, engaging with people, creating authentic photographic stories. You'll leave with a completed photo series, a printed zine and exhibition experience.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You're drawn to photography and want to develop your visual storytelling skills
✓ You want to explore Berlin through your camera and capture authentic stories
✓ You're ready to engage with people and places to create documentary work
✓ You want to produce a finished photo series, printed zine and public exhibition
✓ You learn best by spending time on the streets shooting rather than in classrooms

Course Schedule

Week 1	Street photography fundamentals, exploring Berlin's neighbourhoods, camera technique and composition, ethical considerations in documentary work, beginning your photo series.
Week 2	Developing your narrative, visual storytelling techniques, working with light in urban environments, deepening your photo series, engaging with subjects.
Week 3	Editing and sequencing your work, creating a coherent visual narrative, producing your printed zine, refining based on feedback.
Week 4	Final zine production, preparing your exhibition, group showcase at the Funkhaus, presenting your work publicly.

Course Outcomes

★ Develop skills in street photography, documentary storytelling and visual editing
★ Engage ethically with subjects and work with available light in urban environments
★ Create compelling narratives through images with coherent sequencing
★ Produce finished work: both a printed zine and public exhibition
★ Present work publicly with confidence to continue documentary practice

/// Psychology of Creativity

You're a creative practitioner, coach, or someone deeply curious about creativity itself. This course explores evidence-based psychological theories of creativity through direct application rather than traditional lectures. You'll engage with topics hands-on, applying insights to your own creative practice. Through experiential activities, collaborative exercises and personal reflection, you'll discover how creativity develops across a lifespan, impacts wellbeing, and shapes communities.

This course is right for you if:

✓ You're a creative practitioner curious about the psychology behind your process

✓ You're a coach wanting evidence-based frameworks for supporting creative clients

✓ You want to understand flow, play and how creativity develops across lifespans

✓ You prefer experiential learning over traditional lectures

✓ You're ready to apply psychological insights directly to your creative practice

Course Schedule

The course alternates between workshop days (learning new topics, engaging activities, planning applications) and application days (creating in your own style, trying out new approaches). Topics include:

Weeks 1-2	Developmental psychology of creativity, systems thinking about creative processes, flow and play in creative work, lifespan development perspectives.
Weeks 3-4	Neuroscience of creativity, embodied creative practices, social psychology of collaboration, creating psychologically safe spaces, applying mindfulness to creative work.

Course Outcomes

★ Use systems thinking to consider multiple developmental factors in your creative process
★ Harness flow and play in creative work while building skills confidence
★ Create and collaborate with more self-care, compassion and psychological safety
★ Implement neuro-aware and embodied practices in your creative processes
★ Articulate and foster the most meaningful elements of your own creative process

Entry Requirements and How to Apply

Entry Requirements: Age

We don't have an upper age limit, but we do have a minimum age: 18. To join us you must be 18 years old by the first day of your study programme.

Entry Requirements: Language

All our courses are taught in English and applicants must demonstrate a level equal to IELTS 6. We do not ask for official exam results, but we will assess the standard of English in your application and support materials. We do not require German language skills.

Entry Requirements: Education

No education requirement – only relevant experience for the intermediate and advanced courses.

Admissions Timeline

Summer Short Course applications are normally processed within 2 weeks.

Application Deadlines

Early Bird deadline: 31 March 2026 (€150 discount & guaranteed spot)

Final deadline: 29 May 2026 (subject to availability)

Early-bird Discount

Enrol in a Summer Short Course before the end of 31 March 2026 and receive a discount of €150 off the tuition fee.

Multi-Course Discount

Enrol in both a Summer Short Course and a degree course with us within two years, and receive a discount of €500 off the total tuition fee.

Application Form

The Summer Short Course application form is just one page. You must submit your personal and contact details, as well as a short statement of motivation (250-300 words). If you're applying for one of our intermediate or advanced level summer courses, be sure to tell us about your previous experience with the subject and related software, if relevant.

Don't wait to create.
See you this summer!

Catalyst – Institute for Creative Arts and Technology
Nalepastrasse 18
12459 Berlin