

Editor's Note

This year's theme is *Sensing Euphoric and Dysphoric Atmospheres*. Often used to describe a feeling of happiness and well-being, 'euphoria' is an ancient Greek noun derived from the roots *eu* (which means 'well') and *phero* (the word for 'to bear'). We experience euphoria when we feel well-being, exhilaration, or intense happiness. In contrast to euphoria, dysphoria can refer to feeling severely unhappy, and is derived from the roots *dys* (meaning sorrow, unhappiness, or misery) and *phero*. Both terms are used in fields such as medicine and healthcare, and gender studies. While euphoria is commonly associated with drug addiction, the term is also used in other contexts. For example, according to a study entitled the 'Religious Brain Project', led by neuroradiologist Jeff Anderson, professor of radiology at the University of Utah School of Medicine, believing in God stimulates the same reward regions of the brain as drug use. The development of brain imaging technology has enabled deeper research in this area. One key component of the field of neuro-theology is understanding how religion and the brain are intertwined. According to scientific studies and experiments involving brain imaging, it indicates that responses to spiritual experiences and belief in God, endorphins and dopamine are released in the brain, activating a reward system. Dopamine release during religious practice is similar to dopamine release during drug use, suggesting that religious behaviour may become addictive. It is believed by some researchers that the link between religion and the brain's dopamine release is a result of evolutionary adaptation that inspires humans to seek reward by believing in God. But there are also those who claim that it is due to the pleasure-seeking tendency of the brain. It is not surprising that cultural experiences evoke a variety of emotions. Whether religious or ritualistic, gatherings, ceremonies, nighttime events, carnivals, competitions featured at some fairs and festivals, alongside other practices, inspire exuberant feelings of love.

Atmospheres

Atmospheres are an integral part of festive, celebratory, and ritual culture. People generally like to travel to places where they feel the warmth of home and which foster a

sense of belonging and connection: spaces where each moment is an opportunity to create unique and meaningful memories. *Ichigo Ichie* (*Ichigo ichi-e*) is a Japanese term with many translations and interpretations. One translation is 'one lifetime, one encounter' but it can also mean 'in this moment, an opportunity'. The cultural meanings and practices of *Ichigo Ichie* are about treasured and unrepeatable moments. The origin of the term (*Ichigo ichi-e*) is attributed to tea ceremonies, which are considered unique and special. Regardless of how many tea ceremonies are held, each one has its own meaning, atmosphere, experience, and pleasure. As a result, each festival, celebration, ritual, ceremony, or gathering takes on its own unique character. Festivals, celebrations etc. are ephemeral and embodied in a single encounter that is not repeatable. Each time we engage with them it is not exactly the same, and each time there may be something special about them. As such, it is worthwhile to appreciate the uniqueness of the spaces, places, and atmospheres at a festival, celebration, ritual, ceremony, or gathering etc. Additionally, depending on the circumstances, atmospheres can evoke euphoric or dysphoric feelings that can last a lifetime.

Caribbean Festival of the Arts

As I reflect on *Ichigo Ichie*, I am reminded of the unique moments participants and attendees may have experienced at this year's Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA) in Barbados. CARIFESTA is a decades-old festival of Caribbean arts uniting Caribbean and South American countries that was first held in Guyana in 1972. For many, CARIFESTA demonstrates both the similar and distinctive methods, processes, aesthetics, tastes, and styles of Caribbean culture. The festival includes a variety of art forms, including dance, theatre, literature, fashion, crafts, the culinary arts, and visual arts. It also brings together intangible (non-physical) artistic expression. This year Barbados hosted CARIFESTA for the third time, from 22 to 31 August. It had first done so in 1981 and then did so again in 2017.¹ Generally speaking, festivals such as CARIFESTA are considered to be a vital way of preserving cultural heritage. They are vibrant and significant expressions of culture, history, and the spirit of the community at large, providing attendees with many treasured experiences and moments. Sadly, on 28 October, a few months after the celebration of creativity and excellence in the arts (particularly performance arts) and crafts at CARIFESTA in Barbados, Jamaica suffered a devastating disaster, in the form of Hurricane Melissa. It seems that some areas were more impacted than others. In light of this, it is imperative that the same community atmosphere and love that



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¹ You can view photos of CARIFESTA XV Barbados 2025 at <https://www.facebook.com/carifesta/photos>

was shared during CARIFESTA prevail. The tenets of CARIFESTA, which I consider to symbolise the survival, resistance, and resilience of the Caribbean and of South America, need to be remembered now more than ever. CARIFESTA is a reminder not only of cultural heritage and traditions, but also of what binds and unites people: their shared experience, and their solidarity with each other.

Volume Four

This is the first volume of the journal to explore how food plays a role in events, gatherings, celebrations, and ceremonies. In response to the ongoing call for papers on 'food fests, feasts, and gatherings', this volume explores how people integrate ideas about food into festival culture, including history, heritage, tradition, and creativity, as well as social and political factors. In a discussion with Esther Ollé Cobos, a food photographer, we explore her passion for food and storytelling. We also discover how she tells stories through recipes, alternating between making her favourite dishes, writing recipes, and photographing them. Cobos explains her thoughts on how food and stories can preserve and shape culture, including her views on how food stories, culture, and photography are evolving. The volume also contains a conversation with Trinidadian storyteller and multimedia artist Rubadiri Victor, who works in eight different mediums to convey emotive ideas and narratives. In the conversation he discusses compelling and memorable storytelling, his journey into storytelling, the role of sensory atmospheres in storytelling, and more. Discussing his extensive work in storytelling and the arts, Victor provides a peek at how he himself navigates different sensory atmospheres. In an interview with Dr Gabe Onah, who serves as chairman of Carnival Calabar in Nigeria, we delve into his experience of the carnival and we explore this atmospheric carnival. Onah has spent many years working in tourism, carnivals, and cultural initiatives, and in researching creative economies. His views shine a light on a 20-year-old Nigerian carnival that is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. Also included in this volume is an article based on Dr Mandy Curtis' insightful presentation given at our symposium in 2024. Dr Curtis developed the presentation into an article together with Dr Adam Jones. The article focuses on the euphoria associated with glimmering light during light festivals. Our call for papers (sensing euphoric and dysphoric atmospheres) drew many exciting responses. Author Dr Kirt Henry reflects on Thanksgiving Tables, a custom practised by followers of the Revival religion that originated during the early 1860s in Jamaica. A symposium presentation by Kerry-Ann Abdool-Ramjattan led to an article examining the Hosay

Massacre of 1884 in Trinidad, and the suppression of cultural expression. Shadab Zaveri addresses the role digital culture plays in food, in particular consumption, presentation, and digital trends. Rebekah Brammer analyses Tasmania's Winter Festivals, with a focus on Tasmania's food festivals, Gothic tourism, and more. Dr Sophie Parkes-Nield reflects on creating a fictional dole and calendar custom using components from English calendar customs, namely procession and traditional song and dance. In part one of a two-part interview series with our events review author, Rhonda Allen shares her experiences of sensing euphoria and dysphoria in carnival culture, and judging carnival costumes. We learn about her carnival beginnings and her involvement in carnivals and other events. Shaun Rambaran and Catherine Sforza's article brings to the fore the Keylemanjahro School of Arts and Culture located in Trinidad and Tobago and its fierce leader Glenn 'Dragon' de Souza (now passed) and the people that worked alongside him. In-house photographer Joaquin Barata draws our attention to a practice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that combines entertainment, spiritual rituals, and traditional Voodoo beliefs. Barata brilliantly captures lives of the people, interwoven with ritual, performance, traditions, community cohesiveness, and religious and cultural expression. Bringing their expertise to the table, our Trinidad and Tobago-based in-house photographers Catherine Sforza and Shaun Rambaran have compiled a beautifully illustrated collection of Trinidad carnival that includes panorama, masquerades, revellers, and more.

Thanks and appreciation

Having the pleasure of working with authors who have chosen to publish with us is an honour, and I look forward to our continued collaboration and partnership. Additionally, I am eager to meet new authors and learn about what fascinates them in this cultural space. Yet another year of submissions from all over the world has again demonstrated the diversity of topics in the field. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go out to our associate editor, who continues to inspire me with her positive energy and keen eye. Our in-house photographers show their passion and expertise for photography in their work. In addition to consistently bringing new insights to the fore, they capture them perfectly. A huge thank you to this volume's contributors, collaborators, editors, volunteers, and supporters: they are this journal's—and the network's—most invaluable resource.



Above images © Dr Kim Johnson, Suriname, CARIFESTA 2013





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Orange Festival, Ghana



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St. Thomas, Virgin Islands



©Tiago Celestino
Rio Vermelho Beach, Salvador, Brazil

Above images
A showcase of the cultures of the
participating countries at CARIFESTA

Announcements

Call for Book Reviews

We invite book reviews (700 - 1,200 words) on work on the following topics, but not limited to: Carnivals (business, entrepreneurship, combined arts, performance), Caribbean Festivals, Celebrations, Community Festivals, Festival Cities, Festival/Celebration, Night Life, Festivals and Fiestas in South America, Gatherings (crowds, fans, activities), Medieval Festivals, Celebrations and Events, Music Festivals, Religious Events, Ritual Culture, Pan and Panyards. We also invite reports (5,000 words), review essays (should focus on 3–5 books on a similar topic or theme), analysis of festival events, and interviews (between 800 and 1,200 words).

Find out more at:
festivalculture.co.uk/call-for-reviews

Call for Proofreader/Copy Editor

As part of this role, you will need excellent English language skills, exceptional attention to detail, and time management skills. This role may also be of interest to a student, retiree, or independent scholar.

Main Responsibilities:

- Working alongside the editor-in-chief Assist in copy editing articles using inter-, multi-, trans- and cross-disciplinary approaches
- Strong communication (oral and written) and interpersonal skills
- Exceptional English
- The proofreading of articles will involve identifying spelling and grammatical errors, punctuation errors, and more comprehensive copyediting aimed at improving clarity, readability, consistency, and accuracy. Assisting the author in making better decisions for their article by providing options wherever possible.

Find out more at:
festivalculture.co.uk/opportunity

Call for Papers *Caribbean Culture*

Deadline for submissions: *Ongoing*
We are committed to developing an understanding of how festive, ritual, celebratory, etc culture impacts aspects of Caribbean life, and vice versa.

Find out more at:
festivalculture.co.uk/caribbean-culture

Call for Papers *Journal and Symposium*

We welcome ongoing submissions for inclusion in our journal and next year's symposium (ISFC 2026). **Food fests, feasts, and gatherings** address the role of food in events, gatherings, celebrations, and ceremonies. Exploring how people incorporate ideas about food into festival culture, including history, heritage, tradition, creativity, and social and political factors.

In addition, it examines festivals in which food is not the main focus, yet contributes significantly to the atmosphere, memory, and tradition. It also looks at people's fascination with taste. In addition to examining these notions, we will also examine trends in food consumption and production.

We are also interested in contributions that examine food experiences through travel and the relationship between street food and food at festivals. We also encourage submissions that focus on policies, preparation, and organising festival food. Practitioners are welcome to submit articles on their specific areas of interest in festival culture.

Find out more at:
festivalculture.co.uk/food-fest

Author Bios

Dr Mandy Curtis

Mandy Curtis has more than twenty years' experience in the arts and cultural sector. She produces a range of festivals and events aimed at community engagement and reflecting on diversity in all its forms. She is interested in events in public spaces and how barriers to all art forms can be reduced, as well as in how events can be more sustainable. Since 2009, Dr Curtis has studied and taught Human Geography at the University of Brighton, including global issues management and international field study trips. Her PhD, which she completed in 2016, focused on student identities in higher education. Her educational background includes a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Institute of Education) and a BA(Hons) in Art History and Archaeology [Asia and Africa].

Dr Adam Jones

In addition to his academic studies, his research interests focus on leisure mobility and consumer behaviour change in relation to the global environmental crisis. He has also developed an innovative method of diary data collection called the email-diary. Dr Jones is a Principal Lecturer in Strategy and Marketing within the School of Business and Law at the University of Brighton. In 2020 he was awarded his PhD from the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton. He has a wealth of commercial knowledge gained from working at a senior strategic level in a FTSE 250 company.

Dr Kirt O. Henry

Kirt O. Henry, PhD, is a Jamaican-born scholar-practitioner of Revivalism. His scholarly interest lies at the intersection of dress, spirituality, and performance within African-Caribbean religions. He heads the African Caribbean Institute of Jamaica/Jamaica Memory Bank. He has served as Adjunct Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona, teaching courses on African Religious Retentions, Caribbean Fashion, and Material Culture. He has also been awarded the Governor-General's Achievement Award and the Prime Minister's National Youth Award for his contributions to culture. He has presented at international conferences in the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and North America, sharing and engaging experts on various aspects of Jamaica's cultural identity.

'Sensing Euphoric and Dysphoric Atmospheres', *Journal of Festival Culture Inquiry and Analysis*, 4.1, (2025), 1-458



Image © Catherine Sforza

Kerry-Ann Abdool

Mrs Kerry-Ann Abdool is currently in her final year of pursuing a PhD in Literature in English at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine. Her research explores Indo-Trinidadian literature and focuses specifically on the understudied Trinidadian novelist Ismith Khan. Her methodology is based on both an archival and a textual approach. She is also a full-time English teacher at Fatima College. She is a member of the Muharram Massacre Committee as well as the non-governmental organisation Friends of Mr Biswas. She has participated in the South Asian Conference, the Lines of Life Symposium, Carifesta, the International Symposium on Festival Culture, the West Indian Literature Conference, and the Annual Conference for the Society for Caribbean Studies.

Shadab Zaveri

Shadab Zaveri is the Co-Coodinator at the Department of Strategic Communication and Journalism at Sophia College for Women (Empowered Autonomous), Mumbai, India. She runs the media department and also teaches as a full-time faculty member there. Zaveri has completed a BA and MA in English. Her MA dissertation topic was 'A Theorization of Sartrean Existentialism' applied to popular culture. Her areas of interest are Popular Culture, Literary Theories, and Digital Humanities. Shadab has completed multiple courses in media studies and niche areas such as the correlation between football and fandoms. She hopes to apply for her PhD in Digital Humanities soon. In her spare time, she can be found reading with a cup of coffee or screaming at the TV while watching English football.

Rebekah Brammer

Rebekah Brammer is a professional member of the Australian Academy of Cinema Television Arts and the Australian Film Critics Association. To date, she has published over 25 articles across a range of film and television texts and topics. She has contributed a chapter to *Contemporary Asian Popular Culture Vol. 1: Squid Game, Utopias, and Dystopias* (2025), and has upcoming chapters in collections on Barbie. Rebekah is completing a PhD by publication, with research based on screen texts produced and set in Tasmania, focusing on the intersectionality of landscape and genre.

Dr Sophie Parkes-Nield

Sophie Parkes-Nield is a postdoctoral researcher on the AHRC-funded National Folklore Survey for England project (nationalfolkloresurvey.co.uk) at Sheffield Hallam University. She completed her practice-based PhD in 2024 at the same university where she is also an Associate Lecturer in Creative Writing. She also teaches at Leeds Arts University. Website: sophieparkes.co.uk.

Rhonda Allen

Rhonda Allen is a PhD student at the University of Sheffield's School of Architecture and Landscape, researching the materiality, spatiality, and adaptability of parish churches in the Diocese of Sheffield through a WROCAH-funded collaborative project with the Church of England. Currently, she works as a Research Associate on prostate cancer awareness among ethnic minority and low-income communities and previously, she examined diabetes prevalence in Black and South Asian communities and heritage. As the Primary Investigator for "Stories We Carry," she curated a photographic exhibition that explored food histories, showcased at Sheffield Cathedral. She facilitates on the CDH program, empowering communities across health, education, and housing sectors. Beyond academia, Rhonda serves as a Trustee for Utopia Theatre, Director of the Skills Lab, and currently Head Carnival Costume Judge for the Notting Hill, Preston, and Nottingham Carnivals, as well as the EMCAAN King, Queen, and Junior competitions. She also facilitates costume judging workshops. She has authored three academic articles on Caribbean and UK carnival culture for the Journal of Festival Culture Inquiry and Analysis. These articles draw on visits locally and in Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, she co-coordinates and chairs sessions for Festival Culture Research and Education's international symposiums, hosting discussions on carnival design, costume making, and judging legacy.



Image © Catherine Sforza

Call for Papers: Adopt, Adapt, Abandon International Symposium on Festival Culture 2026



festivalculture.co.uk/isfc2026

The seventh annual symposium will examine how we adopt, adapt, and abandon festive, celebratory, and ritual cultures. Among the questions to be addressed are: Who adopts the practices and values of another culture and how does it happen? How much of the original culture remains and how much of the newly adopted culture is maintained? How and/or why do people choose another culture as their own? And what aspects of the adopted culture are they learning? Under what conditions do people adapt to culture? And how are behaviours, attitudes and practices adapted to align with both the 'home' culture and adapted cultures? Do some people adapt to cultures better than others, and why? What might be the reasons for abandoning a culture? Are there any feelings or emotions that might lead to abandonment of a culture? Can family and/or peer pressure lead to abandonment?

As we have done for themes covered by previous symposiums, we will also consider shared values, practices, customs, heritage, traditions, continuity, temporality, uniqueness, and differentiation within festive and celebratory cultures. The intention is to examine how culture is adopted, adapted, and abandoned, and how emotions and experiences are shared and/or autonomously experienced. Additionally, we will consider the degree to which adopted and adapted cultures can be transformed generationally. Camaraderie and the familial heritage associated with cultures also need to be taken into account.

Proposals may also address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Aesthetics
- Art, craft, and practice
- Ambivalence
- Carnivals (including diasporic carnivals)
- Celebration and leisure
- Competition, adjudication, and legacy
- Costumes
- Creative industries
- Culture and politics
- Cultural values and beliefs
- Dance and performance
- Embodiment
- Events
- Festivals
- Food culture
- Gatherings
- Learning and teaching
- (formal, non-formal and informal)
- Medieval culture (including historical re-enactment)
- Memory and nostalgia
- Music and sound
- Night festivals
- Religious culture
- (including faith, ideology, rites, and customs)
- Rituals
- Resistance, resilience, and activism
- Space and place
- Sporting celebrations
- Temporality and liminality
- Tradition and heritage
- Tourism
- Youth culture

Registration for ISFC 2026 is now open, including the submission of abstract proposals. Abstracts of up to 250 words (only abstracts/papers that have not been previously presented and published will be considered) and biographies of no more than 100 words (in Word.doc format) should be submitted by 20th February 2026. Completed presentation deadline: 1st May 2026.

Please note we are also running a special segment on 'food fest, feasts, and gatherings' and you can submit an abstract proposal for both.

The date of the symposium is yet to be determined.