Shipka Fest'25 Program

Friday, September 5

National Academy of Arts, Academy Gallery, 1 Shipka Street

- **16:00** Doors Open

- **18:00** Festival Opening with the Exhibition The Beginning//Le Debut. Strengthening the Torrents and Afforestation. Felix Vozhli, Petar Mandjoukov" by Alexander Ivanov
    - The exhibition tells the story of Félix Vogéli, a French forestry engineer who introduced modern erosion control and reforestation in Bulgaria in the early 1900s, alongside his collaboration with Bulgarian forester Petar Mandzhukov. The exhibition presents rare documents, letters, memoirs, and photos.

NDK, A4 Hall Singles

- Music Program
    - **21:00 – 22:00** – Abagar Quartet
        - Abagar Quartet brings the beauty of Bulgarian folklore to life, tracing roots to the ancient Thracians and Orpheus. With their voices and rich cultural heritage, they connect audiences worldwide through music.
    - **22:15 – 23:30** – Kemindjiji
        - The band combines traditional melodies with contemporary sounds, keeping the spirit of the folk alive while adding their own creative touch. Featuring authentic songs from Pirin, Rhodope, and Thracian regions, as well as other Balkan traditions.

Saturday, September 6

NHA, Academy Gallery, 1 Shipka Street

- **10:30** – Film screening: *"Life is a Parable"*
- **12:00** – Audio-visual exhibition: *"Chinari"* by Linda Barbara Carl Vatsulka
    - Through images, words, and sounds, the exhibition reveals the hidden beauty of trees and their stories, often overlooked in daily life. The work blends music, electronic sound, lyrical texts, voice, and photography, aiming to awaken wonder, empathy, and connection with the natural world.

Lecture program

- **13:00** Changes in the water cycle, causes of changes in rains, drought and torrents, climate warming, as well as the main solutions to these problems and practices for the restoration of water resources - rivers, lakes and streams**. Veselin Spasov**
    - Veselin Spasov has dedicated his life to studying and sharing knowledge about soil, forests, and ecosystems, with a focus on sustainable practices such as No-Till farming. He is the author of *"What is No-Till and What Are Its Benefits"*, founder of the "No-Till Bulgaria" community, and in 2025 became chairman of the newly created Association for Sustainable Agriculture. At Shipka Fest '25, he will give a lecture on changes in the water cycle, climate challenges, and practical solutions for restoring rivers, lakes, and streams.
- **14:00** Natural disasters in the Shipka Mountains 2014,2024. Civic participation in the protection and restoration of the forest. **Svetoslav Todorov**
    - Svetoslav Todorov, forest engineer and curator at the Natural History Museum in Cherni Osam, has long worked on forest conservation and sustainable forestry initiatives. At Shipka Fest '25, he will present research on major natural disasters in the Shipka Mountain — from the snow and wind damage of 2014 to the devastating hailstorm of 2024 — and the role of citizens in restoring the forest. These forests, first planted by French forester Félix Vogéli in the early 1900s, remain an emblematic example of afforestation on the Balkan Mountains' southern slopes.
- **14:45** Soil Microbiome: The Role of Soil in Erosion Control. Regenerative Agriculture **Petya Ivanova**
    - Petya Ivanova explores the soil microbiome and how regenerative farming can restore ecosystem health
- **16:00** Relationship between soil microbiome and body microbiome. The health of the planet and the health of people. **Nadezhda Maksimova**
    - Nadezhda Maksimova is an herbalist, writer, and researcher living in the Balkan Mountains, where she grows over 3 acres of medicinal plants. Author of several books on herbs, gardening, and health. She empowers people to connect with plants through courses, consultations, and her unique herbal formulas, often supporting those with chronic and autoimmune conditions. At

Shipka Fest ‘25, she will give a lecture on the connection between the soil microbiome and the human microbiome, exploring how planetary and personal health are intertwined — and how herbs can act as mediators.

- **17:30** Communication from the heart – a craft for every day with Non-Violent Communication (NSC) **Nikola Dimov, "Semicolon"**
    - The participants will be introduced to the practice of NVC – the art of speaking and listening with empathy and understanding, through examples, exercises, and shared experience.

NDK, A4 Hall Singles

Music program

- **20:30 – 21:45** – 3 M Orchestra
    - Experience a unique fusion of jazz, ethno, ambient, electronic, and sacred music with Three Men Orchestra
- **22:00 – 23:30** – Bulgar Klezmer Band
    - Bulgaria’s first klezmer group, formed in 2022. Bringing together international musicians passionate about Ashkenazi Jewish music, the band combines virtuosity, Balkan energy, and heartfelt emotion to make you laugh, feel, and dance.

SUPER 8 CINEMA CLUB, 42 Dunav St.

- **20:30** – Screening of family 8 mm films from the 70s and 80s (analog projection)
    - Discover Bulgaria’s hidden home-film heritage with Kinoclub Super 8, showcasing amateur 8mm and 16mm films from the 1960s–1980s. These personal, uncensored films capture everyday life and culture, now preserved in a digital archive by the team of Neda Milanova, Tihomir Stoyanov, Kevork Vanlyan, and Bogomil Dimitrov.

September 7, Sunday

National Academy of Arts, Academy Gallery, 1 Shipka St.

- **10:30 – 19:00**
    - Exhibition The Beginning//Le Debut. Strengthening the Torrents and Afforestation. Felix Vozhly. Petar Mandjoukov" by Alexander Ivanov
    - Audio-visual exhibition "Chinari" by Linda Barbara Karl Vaculka

NDK, behind Pilon and in front of A4

Craft program

11:00 – 18:00

- Weaving on horizontal loom – Elitsa Maksimova
    - Inspired by Bulgarian traditions dating back thousands of years, Elitsa Maksimova creates colorful woven art that carries forward the spirit of one of humanity's oldest crafts.
- Knife-making – Anton Anastasov
    - What began as a hobby in 2015 grew into a passion, and since 2022 he has been working professionally, forging knives entirely by hand — from blade and handle to sheath. A member of the National Chamber of Crafts, Anton specializes in composite steels and unique handcrafted blades.
- Copper-smithing – Reneta Hristova
    - Reneta transforms simple metal into beautiful jewelry, drawing inspiration from nature. Visitors can meet her and take a free coppersmithing lesson, experiencing the magic of this traditional craft.
- Kalofer lace – Bulgarian center for shuttle and sewn lace
    - We invite you to a demonstration of Kaloferska lace knitting with the Bulgarian Center for Shuttle and Sewn Lace. The center is a non-profit association that preserves, studies, and promotes the traditions of shuttle and needle lace in Bulgaria, organizes the Kaloferska Lace Festival, and will host the XXI World Congress of OIDFA , the most prestigious international event in the field of lace. The organization brings together masters, researchers, and partners from Bulgaria and abroad, contributing to the preservation and development of the unique Bulgarian lace art and the establishment of Kaloferska as a cultural center.
- Basketry – Maya Yancheva
    - From the series "Shipka Fest '25 Visits Sofia" and the theme of continuity, we present the craft of basket weaving, master Stanko Kirov, and his students. Stanko is one of only five professional masters in Bulgaria, an international award winner, and nominated in 2025 in the Ministry of Culture's "Living Human Treasures" system. During Shipka Fest '25, his student Maya Yancheva will give demonstrations and teach visitors the craft.
- Weaving belts on a nomadic loom ("on a crust")– Elena Yana, Maya, Divna Ivanovi
    - Elena Ivanova and her daughters – Yana, Divna, and Maya from Egalnitsa will give free bark-weaving lessons on a nomadic loom, sharing skills they recently honed with master Sofka Dimitrova.
- Kene and the frivolite – Yordanka Nikolova, SedyankaTa

Workshops with Specific Times

- **12:00 – 13:00** – Wet felting – Boudicca Birch
- **11:00 – 14:00** – Bulgarian embroidery – Trufka Dimitrova, Sedyanka (embroider a bookmark)
- **11:00-15:00 -** Demonstration of frivolité - Yordanka Nikolova, SediankaTa

- **11:00 - 15:00 -** Demonstration of Kene - Yordanka Nikolova, and Ivanka Genova, Shipka
- **14:00 – 17:00** – Finger knitting – Stanka Bozhinova, Sedyanka
- **15:00 – 17:00** – Candle making – Deyana Takieva
- **16:00 – 17:30** – Making toys from recycled materials – Nellie Borisova

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Film program

- **11:00 – 22:22** – *A film by children for children and adults*
    - Director: Maria Stoyanova
    - Short, fantastic, 25 min, 2023
    - The film was realized by the team of Cinema for the Little Ones and the children of "Cinema for the Youngest" at KinoKlas
    - The year is 2222. Empty and lonely is planet Earth. It is no longer fit for life. People have strangled her with garbage. On a small asteroid in space, a group of young scientists are developing a new generation of robots. They dream of cleaning up their home planet and returning life and people to it.
- **12:00** - "The Wall of Infinity," directed by Taco Mladenov, documentary, 20 min, 2020.
    - The film follows the ascent of three Bulgarians—Tako Mladenov, Nikola Levakov, and Stoyan Todorov—of the 1,600-meter west face of Fitz Roy (3,405 m) in the Patagonian Andes.
- **13:00 p.m.** – Sharing about Erasmus, volunteering with European Solidarity Corps and Open Mind project – Tirsa Montgomery

Musical and artistic program

- **20:00 Doors Open**
- **20:30 – 21:30** – ETHNOLOGICAL project – Konstantin Kuchev (BG), Saeed Beyran (Iran), Pavel Stoychev (BG)
    - The Ethnological Project brings together traditional and original music from Iran, Afghanistan, India, and Bulgaria, weaving diverse traditions into a captivating musical journey.
- **21:30 – 21:45** – Fire Artist (in front of the hall)
    - Experience a stunning solo fire show by the talented artist Prema, who has been practicing fire arts for 17 years. Combining her passion for fire with contemporary dance, Prema creates a mesmerizing performance that blends movement, expression, and elemental energy.
- **22:00 – 23:15** – SURBAHAR Live Band
    - Founded by Pavel Stoychev – musician, composer, and sound engineer from Sofia – Surbahar has been evolving since 2002. The project blends acoustic

and electric instruments with modern electronic forms, creating a style that flows between ambient, chill, ethno, world, jazz, IDM, and trance.

SUPER 8 CINEMA CLUB, 42 Dunav St.

- **20:30** – Screening of a short film by Neda Milanova, music and sound design by **Saturated Pixels** - Lyubomir Brashnenkov and Angel Dodov. Footage from the archive of the Bulgarian poetess Stanka Pencheva

08.09. Monday

NDK, A4 Hall Singles

Craft program

10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

- Weaving, master Elitsa Maximova
- Knife making, master Anton Anastasov
- Copper smithing, Reneta Hristova
- Kalofer lace with the Bulgarian Center for Shuttle and Sewn Lace
- Basket weaving, Maya Yancheva
- Weaving belts on a nomadic loom (“na koria”), Elena Ivanova, Yana, Maya, Divna
- Making wax candles – Deyana Takieva
- **10:00-14:00** Bulgarian embroidery, Embroider your own bookmark, Trufka Dimitrova, SediankaTa
- **13:30** Communicating from the heart – a craft for every day with Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
    - with Radi and Silvia, “Tochka Zapetaya”
- **14:00-17:00** Finger weaving, Stanka Bojinova, SediankaTa

Workshops

- **14:00 – 16:00** – Non-Violent Communication workshop – Radi & Sylvia (“Full stop, comma”)
- Singing workshop, devoted to the beauty of the Bulgarian song with Desislava Petrova

Film program

- **11:00 "The Unequal Soul//Beyond Measure**", Sofia Stoycheva – screenwriter and director of the film
- Documentary feature, 109 min., 2023, producer - Martichka Bozhilova - Agitprop
- with the support of the National Film Center and the Sofia Culture Program - Mobility.
- The documentary "The Unequal Soul" **is a film about foreigners** who carry Bulgaria in their hearts - an emotional story about people of different nationalities who have turned their interest in Bulgarian and Balkan folklore into their passion and way of life. Their heart dances every time they catch up in the dance, when they sing a Bulgarian folk song or play the complex uneven rhythms. They live with this music - they fall in love, love and suffer, from it they draw inspiration and strength for difficult moments in life. They have brought not only our folklore tradition to their distant countries, but also a piece of the unequal Bulgarian soul.

Music program:

- **20:30 – 22:00** – Soulfia
    - Soulfia is an open international project blending authentic musical styles from the Balkans to the Middle East. Rooted in a philosophy of tolerance, unity, peace, and prosperity, Soulfia celebrates diversity through sound.
- **22:15 Closing of the festival**