



ZEG

**Amsterdam
&
London**

Letter from the ZEG Network



“Urgent and kind - exactly what the world needs right now.” That’s how one of our returning audience members described ZEG Fest in Tbilisi. In summer and fall 2025, we tested whether that same spirit could take root beyond Georgia’s borders.

The answer came in two sold-out events: Amsterdam on August 29 and London on October 18. The ZEG Network’s first gatherings outside Tbilisi proved that the hunger for spaces where people can think beyond the immediate crisis isn’t limited to our corner of the world. Each event carried the DNA of our Tbilisi home while adapting to new questions, new urgencies, new communities.

Both events validated our assumption: people are hungry for spaces that incubate new thinking for our collective zег: the day after tomorrow. Not solutions for next week’s headlines. Not hot takes for today’s algorithm. But the kind of slow thinking that forms true connection, lets humans wrestle with hard questions and creates a sense of opportunity in a world

that so often feels overwhelming.

We exist because today our societies are losing control of our collective narrative. Politicians write our stories. Tech companies decide what we see. Algorithms determine who we hear from. The ZEG Network is our answer: spaces where we reclaim what’s ours, where the very personal becomes universal, where complex questions get the time they deserve.

Our goal isn’t to bring together people from polar opposite sides - it’s to gather people willing to sit with competing ideas. To challenge themselves to look for their own blindspots. To be scared and optimistic in the same breath. To protect complexity when everything around us is increasingly designed for dumbing down.

We believe that stories can change the world and that human connection transcends algorithms. Thank you for helping us build not just events, but a movement for the day after tomorrow.

The ZEG Team

ZEG on the Road: Amsterdam & London



AMSTERDAM - August 29, 2025 | De Balie | 200 attendees | SOLD OUT

LONDON - October 18, 2025 | The Old Finsbury Town Hall | 300 attendees | SOLD OUT

Our first ZEG outside Tbilisi launched at **De Balie**, Amsterdam's leading cultural center. From the European struggle against algorithmic control to the streets of Tbilisi where protesters face AI-powered surveillance cameras, this three-hour evening brought together journalists, artists, technologists, activists and thinkers to explore how technology is rewriting the rules of power and what it means for the rest of us.

While Amsterdam offered aha moments, radical insights, and unexpected connections in an intimate evening format, London expanded the experiment. In partnership with **The School of Communication and Creativity at City St George's, University of London**, the full-day event mapped how power op-

erates across time, space, and systems, revealing connections we don't usually see. Conversations explored the day after tomorrow: where resistance isn't just about fighting back, but about reimagining how we build the future.

In Amsterdam, around ten speakers confronted the mythologies of tech innovation in a single powerful evening. London brought together thirty speakers across fifteen sessions including panels, masterclasses, and live journalism performances. But both events shared the same DNA: participants were invited to bring their questions and ideas. Their voices were part of the conversation, helping to shape where the discussion went.

What Made It Work



Both events proved that ZEG's magic isn't about scale or format - it's about creating the right conditions for genuine connection. Whether it was Amsterdam's intimate three-hour evening or London's full-day exploration across parallel sessions, the same spirit animated both gatherings: a refusal to perform for each other, and a commitment to wrestling with hard questions together.

During one of the parallel sessions in London, there was a moment that captured ZEG's essence. Photographer Rena Effendi, when asked about attendance, said: "Don't worry - ZEG is basically a kitchen conversation. Even if

there's one person, we'll just talk. If not, I'll go to someone else's talk." An hour later, she was surrounded by people leaning in, absorbed in what sounded like something important being worked out in real time.

That same spirit animated Amsterdam's single-track evening. When a young technologist posed a difficult question about whether healthy global communication was even possible for three billion people, the conversation that followed painted both devastating truths and unexpected hope. No soundbites. No easy answers. Just the kind of wrestling with hard questions that defines ZEG.

Key Moments



The big takeaway from Amsterdam:

We've fundamentally misunderstood the battle we're fighting. While we've been scrambling to respond to each crisis as it hits, the new generation of tech oligarchs who blend Silicon Valley power with authoritarian ambitions, have been systematically building the infrastructure for a post-democratic future.

The Broligarchs: "I think what I did wrong as a journalist and academic was to buy into the lies of the folks we now refer to as the broligarchs, the men who told us that we had to move fast and break everything, and that the casualties were just the product of progress," said Julie Posetti in Amsterdam. She described how from 2008 to 2013, she spent years training journalists to embrace social media, writing about "the Twitterization of journalism", words she now regrets.



Reframing Privacy: Perhaps most powerfully, Chris Wylie in Amsterdam reframed the entire privacy debate: "Privacy is your ability to decide how to shape yourself in different situations on your own terms, which is really core to your ability to be an individual in society. When we surrender that power, we don't just become more visible to corporations, we lose the very possibility of self-determination."

The Architecture of Control: Chris painted a devastating picture using Facebook as an example. Imagine Facebook as a building, he said. When you enter, you wave away all your rights. Once inside, you are directed into the room designed just for people like yourself. "Now, if we actually designed that building physically, it would not be lawful," Chris said, and yet "we allow our entire digital architecture to use the logic of segregation in construction." His conclusion: "The solution to political problems is always political. It's not technological."



Algorithms, Family, and Distance: In London, Ryan Broderick of Garbage Day explored how the internet's rabbit holes reached his Trump-voting father. A story about algorithms, family and the distance that grows between us.

Blindspots: One of our live journalism performances, delivered by Natalia Antelava, built on Coda's deep dive into battles over rewriting history and colonialism. The story focused on blindspots that we all carry when it comes to our identity and the way we allow it to shape society. The frame was organically picked up by other speakers, who searched for their own blindspots

no matter whether they spoke about technology, future of labor or power.

Moral Courage: Kumi Naidoo's presence in London altered the tone of the conversation. As one attendee reflected afterwards: "His presence alone shifted what felt possible in that room."

Dark Money and Resistance: London brought together investigative journalists tracking dark money, philosophers challenging us to see what we've been conditioned to ignore about surveillance, and historians mapping how these patterns repeat across time.

ZEG Supra

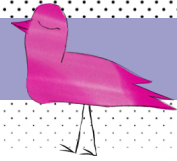


When the ZEG Storytelling Festival launched in Tbilisi in 2019, the team had never thrown an event before. With no framework for choosing speakers, no best practices to follow, we came up with one simple criteria: "Who do we want to have dinner with?" It worked - and it made dinner the centerpiece of every ZEG.

The ZEG Supra is our twist on a Georgian feast where food, wine, and conversation flow for hours. In Amsterdam, 80 attendees experienced this oldest storytelling tradition

hosted by celebrated chef **Tekuna Gachechiladze**. As one Dutch participant reflected, watching it unfold with this particular mix of people wrestling with these particular questions, felt "like a small act of resistance" against the digital fragmentation of our age. In London, 100 guests sat down for dinner, also hosted by Chef Tekuna. Tekuna is a storyteller working in a different medium, and her philosophy on food is an insight into the anatomy of resistance: you can only fight for the future if you know what's worth keeping from the past.

ZEG in Quotes



"We live in strange times. YouTube knows what will keep me watching, Facebook knows what will enrage me. In this world, what is there to grasp? To anchor oneself to? This is where ZEG comes in. People are beginning to recognize that following algorithmic recommendations isn't neutral, it's a choice to surrender agency. Some are ditching platforms and seeking out challenging conversations" - **ZEG attendee.**

"It was a phenomenal event - loved the combination of story, video and live music particularly. Plus the panels. Felt very very 'wholesome' and was just so pleased to have 'accidentally' found you. More please - sooner!"
- **ZEG London attendee.**

It's the first time I've ever been in a space which owns the fact that it's about storytelling. I find myself professionally code-switching all the time between my creative identities, and so to have a space in which suddenly I don't have to give the multiples... I'm engaged in narratives, whether that's me as an actor, doing my best to intervene in cultural spaces, or when I'm at the barricades in Egypt, or in relation to issues in the cultural silences that exist around Palestine. We are at a moment of massive shifts in narratives, hegemonic narratives, and the point of focus that we have for the stories that we tell changes who we are able to become. It changes our solidarity. And it reveals territories to be curious about."

- **Khalid Abdalla, ZEG Speaker.**

"I am grateful for today that in this room we have people from all over the world come together to speak and connect and hopefully think about ways that we can make changes in the future."

- **ZEG London attendee.**

"I am really grateful for reconnecting with the power of storytelling live. Initially, I wasn't entirely sure when there were some stories told and there was some piano tinkling in the background and I thought, this isn't going to work for me. And I found myself completely captivated by it and thought it was much more powerful being live, like at theater performance or music performance. And, you know my neurons and my synapses were turned towards the stage which doesn't always happen, so I appreciate that." - **ZEG London attendee.**

"When people gather in person not just to listen, but to talk, to discuss and to challenge some idea, something unique always comes out of it. And these kinds of events, I think, create the kind of collective blindspot awareness. And myself and I'm sure lots of people today will go away with something new that they found out about the world or about themselves, and I am really grateful for it. Thank you." - **ZEG London attendee.**

"I go to a lot of book festivals, and despite being a publisher I admired the lack of book stalls, the sense of issues not author ego, the strong and delightful audio visual and musical cross overs."

- **ZEG London attendee.**

Building the Network



ZEG Amsterdam and ZEG London pilot events were the first step in building a network where conversations in one city become investigations in the next, where storytellers across disciplines find each other.

For ZEG to work, we need the space and we need storytellers who bring their full, complicated selves - whether on stage or in the audience. But, as ZEG

co-founder Keti Ebanoidze insists, "what we need more than anything else is listening - and that means everyone in the room." In an era designed to fragment our focus, to pull us in seventeen directions at once, it was humbling and inspiring to meet 500 people across two cities who chose to give their undivided attention to hard questions - listening to each other's stories, not performing for each other.

By the Numbers

Amsterdam

200 attendees (sold out)

3 hour evening event

10 speakers from multiple countries

80 guests at the Georgian Supra

3 volunteers

London

250 attendees (sold out)

Full-day event

30 speakers from multiple countries

15 sessions, panels, masterclasses, and live journalism

100 guests at the Georgian Supra

10 volunteers

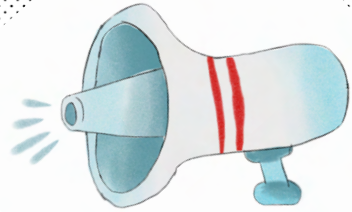
Combined Impact

500 total attendees across both cities

2 sold-out events in **2** months

40+ speakers representing journalism, activism, technology, arts, philosophy, and more

Impact



ZEG Network is not just a network of events, we are building a movement and a growing community of thinkers. The very heart and soul of ZEG lies in human connection, which often makes it difficult to trace and measure the impact in numbers. Yet, there are signs, tangible and measurable, that show why we do what we do.

- Both Amsterdam and London created platforms for stories that needed to be heard beyond their immediate contexts. Armando Iannucci's observations about tech bros found their way into the Evening Standard, one of the United Kingdom's best read papers.
- Julie Posetti's admission about "buying into the lies of the broligarchs" and Chris Wylie's reframing of privacy as fundamental to self-determination became the basis for VoxEurop's coverage of Europe's tech oligarchs.
- Journalists from Coda Story, our parent company, are following up on 4 story ideas that came out of conversations at ZEG both in Amsterdam and London. One of them is likely to become a subject of a new investigative series.
- Present at the London event were commissioning editors of major British publications. Two of them have followed up with us saying that they are now working on stories around tech capture following Capture live journalism and the discussions that followed

- A leading executive of a major US publication was present at our event in Amsterdam. We have since been in conversation with him about coming to our annual festival in Tbilisi and he has told us "I brought up some of the insights from your incredible Amsterdam gathering at our editorial meeting this morning. It has made me think about our approach to the coverage of Big Tech"
- Following the London event, four of our speakers who had never met each other before are now collaborating on new projects

The true power of ZEG lies in connecting issues and people in new ways. While we are not able to disclose details of some of the names and projects in writing without breaking trust, we do have the permission to provide more details to our partners in off the record conversations.

Perhaps most importantly, both events proved that ZEG's methodology - its refusal to dumb down complexity, its commitment to sitting with discomfort, its trust in the power of authentic storytelling - works beyond Tbilisi. The 500 people who attended across both cities came for what one attendee called the "wholesome" quality of genuine connection.

Volunteers



Our volunteer program is an integral part of ZEG's DNA. In Tbilisi, we work with 60+ volunteers each year, thoughtfully matching their tasks with their interests and assigning them as main points of contact for international participants. This creates a unique exchange system - our guests get the unusual opportunity to experience Georgian culture through the eyes of its youth, while our volunteers find friends and mentors among the speakers. Many of these relation-

ships have lasted way past the festival.

For Amsterdam and London, we started small but with the same spirit. Our volunteers served as bridges between speakers and audiences, bringing that same energy of genuine connection. As we expand the ZEG Network beyond Tbilisi, we plan to grow this program, building communities of young people who help shape these conversations in each city we visit.

Why the Day After Tomorrow & What's Next

If you couldn't be in Amsterdam or London, the conversation doesn't end there. The questions travel, evolve, connect to the next story we report, the next city we visit - a continuous loop that crosses borders and disciplines. Our journalists at Coda Story are already working on reporting out the ideas sparked in both Amsterdam and London.

That's what we are building with ZEG Network: a community resisting the flattening of the world into binaries: us and them, victims and perpetrators, right and wrong. Spaces where we can all be many things at the same time - contradictory, uncertain, evolving.

There's something profoundly hopeful in asking what happens the day after tomorrow? It nudges us out of the panic of today and the uncertainty of tomorrow, inviting our imagination to wander into possibilities instead of getting stuck in worry. When we look two steps ahead, we open a window onto fresh ideas: new ways to solve old problems, unexpected alliances, and creative pathways that never occur to us when we're caught up in the moments fire drills.

But this isn't just a whimsical exercise, it's a strategic necessity in an age where authoritarians plan years in advance, planting seeds of control that only surface much later. By imagining the day

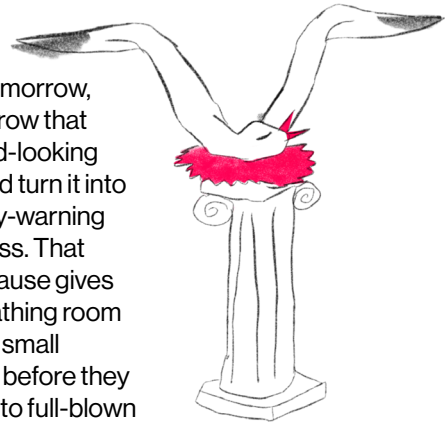
after tomorrow, we borrow that forward-looking lens and turn it into an early-warning compass. That extra pause gives us breathing room to spot small signals before they swell into full-blown crises.

In this space beyond the immediate, we gain both the confidence to act and the optimism to believe that we can protect our communities and shape a future defined by resilience rather than reaction.

What Amsterdam and London showed us is that when you do that, when you create spaces for people to think beyond the immediate crisis, something shifts. People begin choosing intention over inertia, rowing actively against the current rather than drifting with it.

Real change won't come from thinking just one day ahead. It will be shaped by those willing to imagine the day after tomorrow, and then work backwards to make it real.

We have so much more planned. We hope you'll join us for ZEG Fest 2026 in Tbilisi and more ZEG city events we are planning around the world.



Partners & Supporters

ZEG Amsterdam and London would not have been possible without:

De Balie (Amsterdam)

**The School of Communication and Creativity at
City St George's, University of London**

Luminate

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For more information and updates:

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