

# **City of Play mobile exhibition: a selection of urban interventions**



There is a potential player in each of us. But play can only be an emancipatory framework if it serves everyday people, and is not solely the prerogative of the rulers. To become transformative of their surroundings, play should infuse the daily lives of people, providing space and time for finding agency—this moment when players can once again think of themselves as subjects in control of their actions. As Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga said, “play is a struggle for something or a representation.”

To extend the transformative power of play beyond the framework of representation, citizens should engage in creative urban practice as amateur players—a game where professional players are the urban interventionists.

In this way, they identify the grey areas of urbanism, rewrite the rules of conventional usage, and develop practical knowledge of desire paths. Through symbolic and pragmatic experience, they immerse us in novel, sensible configurations that contribute, through empathy, to redefining our habits and encouraging our ability to act on our immediate environment.

‘Art in and within the city’, if not solely the product of authority, can be perceived as a game, as much as an initiation into citizen participation practices. Reciprocally, play as urban creation activates a political reading of spaces. Urban intervention is a playful way to address the Right to the City.



2008, Tomáš Moravec: Moravec installed a modified, standardized Europallet over the tram tracks of Bratislava (Slovakia), allowing him to ride through the city and change his spatial perspective on the urban landscape.



2008, Brad Downey: Downey stuck two pieces of rolling colored tape over a rotating billboard in Berlin (Germany), resulting in an “Auto-Created” graphic sculpture as the tape began to unroll over the surface, covering the posters with colors.



DAGEGEN WILFT KEINE BEKOR

MEHR ALS EIN FÜRCHEN

Danziger Straße

30

2010, Brad Downey created “The Perfect Throw” in Essen (Germany). Using a bike locked by a chain to a lamp-post, he had it lifted along the length of the post and removed, only to insert it back from the very top into the “middle” of the bike frame, producing an insolvable brainteaser for the bike’s owner.



2011, Vladimír Turner transformed a giant rotating billboard next to Prague highway (Czech Republic) into a DIY merry-go-round, with Vojtěch Fröhlich, Ondřej Mladý, and Jan Šimánek hanging on swings at each corner.



2012, LIKEarchitects with Ricardo Dourado performed a series of “Fountain Hacks” in Guimarães (Portugal). The urban intervention involved transforming various public fountains into temporary spaces for leisure and pleasure, open to citizens’ appropriation, with water games as a framework.



2017, Yolanda Dominges organized a race entitled “Las Primeras” (The Firsts) in Malaga (Spain), where a group of women ran together, all wearing the number 1 bib, so that their win became a collective achievement rather than an individual success.



2017, Igor Ponosov removed and reorganized black and white pavement stones to create a chessboard in the corner of a shopping mall in Prague (Czech Republic), where he played chess games with passersby.



2017, Deana Kolencikova transformed a railway crossing in the Řeporyje district of Prague (Czech Republic) into a race track for pedestrians and cars using simple racing flags.



2018, Deana Kolencikova in collaboration with the local funeral shop, awarded medals and wreaths (with the phrase of Coubertin in golden letters: 'The most important thing is not to win but to take part') to the losers of the local midwinter run in Kiewit (Belgium).



The most important thing is to have fun

643  
MIDWINTERJOGGING

CM. Hoe gaat het met  
848  
Midwinterjogging

2019, Deana Kolencikova organized the “Shortest Run in Asia” in front of the once-largest shopping mall in Southeast Asia, in Kaohsiung (Taiwan). Runners were invited to run back and forth for two hours on a 5-meter-long lane—a random piece of urban design that already existed.



2021, Aïda Gómez turned concrete bleachers into the “Gradas feministas de Manoteras” (Feminist Bleachers of Manoteras) in Madrid (Spain). Each step was painted to represent the steps taken by early feminist women to achieve political milestones, selected from conversations with neighbors in the Manoteras neighborhood based on their life experiences.



**CUIDADOS COMPARTIDOS**

**DIVERSIDAD CORPORAL**

**PARIDAD LABORAL**

**DIVORCIO**

**EMANCIPACIÓN**

**SALUD REPRODUCTIVA**

**REPRESENTACIÓN POLÍTICA**

**DERECHO A VOTO**

**EDUCACIÓN**



## **In order of appearence**

Tomáš Moravec. Pallet. 2008. Bratislava (SK).

Brad Downey. “Auto-Created”. 2008. Berlin (DE).  
Thanks: Jérôme Fino.

Brad Downey. The Perfect Throw. 2010. Essen (DE).  
With support from Museum Folkwang.

Vladimír Turner, Vojtěch Fröhlich, Ondřej Mladý, Jan Šimánek.  
“Kolotoč” [Merry-Go-Round]. 2011. Prague (CZ).

LIKEarchitects with Ricardo Dourado. “Fountain hacks”. 2012. Guimarães (PT).  
In the frame of Guimardes European Capital of Culture.  
Photography: Dinis Sottomayor, Francisca Sottomayor.

Yolanda Dominges. “Las Primeras”. 2017. Malaga (SP).  
Sponsoring, documentation: AAMMA, Andalusian Association of Women in Audiovisual Media.

Igor Ponosov. “Double Game”. 2017. Prague (CZ)  
In the frame of Cultural Hijack.  
Photography: Mathieu Tremblin.

Deana Kolencikova. “3...2...1...”. 2017. Prague (CZ).

Deana Kolencikova. “The Losers Take it All!” 2018. Kiewit (BE).

Deana Kolencikova. “Shortest Run in Asia”. 2019. Kaohsiung (TW).  
Photography: Michaela Dutková. Thanks: the runners.

Aïda Gómez. “Gradas feministas de Manoteras” (Feminist Bleachers of Manoteras). 2021. Madrid (ES).  
Production: Madrid Street Art Project. Thanks: the neighbors of the neighborhood of Manoteras,  
Somos Tribu Hortaleza, Asociación de Vecinos de Manoteras, Batucada Marakanai,  
the Hortaleza District Board.