



**TRANS  
URBAN**

# OPEN CALL SUMMER SCHOOL FOR POLITICAL AND PLAYFUL EDUCATION 2025

## **CITY OF PLAY**

01. May – 27. July

‘The city as a playing field’: With this idea, the city-connecting urban art and cultural programme City of Play is launching in the programme cities of Mülheim an der Ruhr, Duisburg and Essen as part of the FISU World University Games to announce the international sporting event. In collaboration with local and regional cultural professionals, universities and international artists, the project negotiates and stages public space as a place of play. In doing so, it creates a link between art, culture, sport and science, between urban space and sports venues, between the Ruhr region and the world. The central component of the local City of Play programme in Essen is an international summer school.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL FOR POLITICAL AND PLAYFUL EDUCATION**

17. – 23. July, Essen

What is the relationship between the right to the city and art? Where are the interfaces between activism and artistic practice? And what artistic strategies and media do I use to appropriate public space in order to place messages in it?

The summer school for political and playful education invites you to hack public space. Seven international artists from different disciplines will teach the 1x1 of urban intervention in five six-day workshop modules. Starting with an exploration of public space, it is examined, negotiated and ultimately becomes a space for art intervention. Using the media of the body, writing, digital tools, installation and the lock pick, the participants develop in-situ works that are embedded in the everyday lives of city dwellers, irritating, disturbing, thought-provoking and questioning.

For its artistic interventions, the Summer School seeks out the urban pulse and immerses itself in Essen’s subway system. In the midst of the urban reality of life, in the hubs of transit, spaces of discourse and possibility are created. From Essen Central Station, the underground line U11 and Rüttenscheider Straße, which runs above ground, will become a playing field for political and playful education.

The Summer School will be accompanied by a diverse supporting programme with city talks, walks, lectures, film screenings and a music programme presented by regional and international guests. In conjunction with an exhibition in public space on the theme of play in art, a 10-day overall programme of the City of Play in Essen will be created. The school’s own summer camp will take place at a very special location in Essen’s city centre, transforming the empty parish church of St. Gertrud into a campus.

We look forward to immersing ourselves in a creative process of play together with you.  
Your CITY OF PLAY team!

Euer CITY OF PLAY Team!



## 1. SUMMER SCHOOL LOCATIONS

The Summer School programme is designed as a parcours. The artistic interventions and actions will take place on the Ruhrbahn subway line 11 from Essen Central Station to Messe Essen / Grugapark. Both underground in the subway stations and trains as well as above ground in the surrounding public space of the central stops.

The supplementary project exhibition on the theme of 'Play in Art' extends the route stations of the trail. Text, image and projection media will be installed in shop windows in the lively Rüttenscheider Straße, on advertising pillars and in empty spaces in the urban fabric. Under the title 'Playground', the project exhibition will be combined with a modular container architecture, which will be staged as a programme, production and mediation space on the square in front of the trade fair.

The parish church of St. Gertrud in Essen's city centre will become a campus. People will live, work and sleep together here.

## 2. PARTICIPATION IN THE SUMMER SCHOOL

The Summer School is based on five workshops. The workshops provide a practical approach to the respective topics and fields of work. Around the workshops, there is an extended range of formats for theory and methodology, for exploration and for comparing the content of the workshops.

Participation in the Summer School takes place in a workshop. You must choose a module. Please indicate a first and second priority when registering (see below).

A maximum of 10 people can take part in each workshop. A participation fee of 50€ must be paid in advance.

## 3. WORKSHOPS

The conceptual frameworks proposed for each workshop show different scales of interaction with the urban landscape as well as practical configurations and artistic means: linking creative practices with the right to the city/play.

The following workshops are available. All workshops will be held in English.

### ► WORKSHOP A

#### **Between Action and Words. From observation practice to 'queer vandalism'**

We are bodies. As such, we traverse spaces in which we are alternately or simultaneously guests, inhabitants, occupants. As a body occupying a space is always a political fact, multiple bodies in a space determine a power dynamic. How do we behave in contexts where the dynamics of maintaining power depend on privileges of class, race, gender? Starting from some practices of observation of reality, we will try to analyse some performative

devices that attempt to hack these dynamics. We will share online and textual materials to activate questions on how we are and how our bodies are. We will try to expose ourselves through a practice of fly-posting in public space. Language: English

**Directed by: Sara Leghissa** // [www.saraleghissa.com](http://www.saraleghissa.com)

#### ► WORKSHOP B

##### **The Art of Between**

Brad Downey from the United States of America and Igor Ponosov from Russia lead a programme inspired by their unlikely friendship, helping participants explore self-identity through collective artistic work rooted in everyday life. The programme draws on clichés and the polarizing political dynamics between their respective countries and broader national identities. Within these themes, the artists encourage students to fully express themselves, creating a space where the boundaries between art, politics, and daily life become fluid and open to interpretation. Language: English

**Directed by: Brad Downey and Igor Ponosov** // [www.braddowney.com](http://www.braddowney.com) and [www.igor-ponosov.ru/english](http://www.igor-ponosov.ru/english)

#### ► WORKSHOP C

##### **Systems of Misuse**

This six-day workshop invites you to reimagine the urban environment through the lens of 'misuse'. By repurposing public systems, everyday objects, and digital tools that surround us, we will challenge our perceptions of their typically unseen aspects and amplify the role of personal agency in the face of these larger systems. Misuse will be a starting point and the lens with which we critically examine our surroundings to playfully subvert them. Over the course of the workshop, participants will be guided through three interlinked modules that interrogate and repurpose the infrastructures of our daily lives. Language: English

**Directed by: Evan Roth** // [www.evan-roth.com](http://www.evan-roth.com) Guest: Rachel Uwa // [www.schoolofma.org](http://www.schoolofma.org)

#### ► WORKSHOP D

##### **Imagining a social contract. A performance based interrogation of public space**

We pass through public space, acting out a contract of autonomous compliance, trusting others to do the same. The public sphere is a controlled field of impersonal encounter, within which at times manifestations of tension converge. Collectively, eyes and ears tethered to individual electronic devices, the public body desires to be only peripherally present. Public space is not social space. It is the contemporary space of anxiety, wrought with identifiable contradictions. It belongs rather to a consortium of vested parties, each with its own self-interest and dependence on controlling narrative. Shifting to a field of inquiry, rather than a demand for production, we will gather to imagine one's own agency outside the field of expectation. What are the practices where a collective public conceives its own desire of socio-spatial formation? What are the places or situations where we imagine in ways unanticipated, where we might engender synergistic collective pleasure? How might we make use of our bodies within this intention as material to work with? Language: English

**Directed by: Ann Messner** // [www.annmessner.net](http://www.annmessner.net)

#### ► WORKSHOP E

##### **The Unruly City: Mapping Urban Resistance**

How do cities resist control, and where do we find spaces of autonomy within them? This workshop explores the tensions between order and disorder in the urban landscape, using collective mapping, fieldwork, and creative documentation. Participants will engage in site explorations, critical discussions, and experimental storytelling to uncover hidden layers of the city and reimagine urban life beyond regulation.

**Directed by: Adam Kraft**

#### 4. FORMALIA

##### ARRIVAL:

16.07.2025 // Check-In: 13:00-18:00

17.07.2025 // Check-In: 10:00-14:00

##### DATE SUMMER SCHOOL:

17.07.2025 // Start Summer School: 14:00

23.07.2025 // End Summer School: 19:00

##### DEPARTURE:

By 24.07.2025 at the latest // Check-Out: until 13:00

##### LOCATION:

Summer School Intervention space: Essen // city centre, from the Central Station along line 11 to Messe Essen / Gruga.

Summer Camp: St. Gertrud Church, Rottstraße 36, 45127 Essen

##### WORKSHOPS AND MATERIALS

Printing workshop

Wood workshop

Material will be provided by the project

##### ACCOMMODATION AND CATERING – Summer Camp

It is possible to stay overnight in Essen. The accommodation is in the former St. Gertrud parish church in Essen city centre, which is close to the Central Station. It has its own enclosed area and a garden. A large kitchen with adjoining dining room and sanitary facilities are available there.

The large event hall becomes a communal dormitory. Here you can set up your tent and air mattress. You can also camp in the garden. The area is spacious, offers plenty of room and has a very special charm due to its architecture.

We eat together on site every evening. The Summer Camp's own cook prepares vegetarian dishes.

##### WHAT THE ACCOMMODATION OFFERS

- Sanitary facilities
- Internet
- Large communal kitchen
- Dining room
- Workshop rooms
- Garden
- One hot meal a day (19:00-21:00) is prepared daily by a team of cooks together with the Summer School community.



St. Gertrud church, Essen

**PLEASE BRING**

- Camping equipment (tent, sleeping bag, sleeping mat)
- Towels

**REGISTRATION INFORMATION:**

You can register via the following link by 30 June 2025 at the latest, providing some personal information: <https://forms.gle/9Wck3ncS5p1vz4co9>

One week later, by 6 July 2025, you will receive confirmation of your workshop allocation & SummerSchool participation.

To participate in the Summer School, a participation fee of 50€ must be paid as a donation after confirmed registration.

**CONTACT**

Margrit Miebach and Mathieu Tremblin: [summerschool@trans-urban.de](mailto:summerschool@trans-urban.de)

We look forward to your registration!

*The City of Play is commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and developed and realised by the TRANSURBAN project team in collaboration with the curatorial team around Stefanie Klingemann, Alain Bieber, Mathieu Tremblin and Georg Barringhaus.*

**Project managers**

TRANSURBAN

ComeTogether Projekt e.V.

Hansaring 94, 50670 Cologne

Represented by the board Georg Barringhaus & Hermes Villena

**Research partners**

Ecole Supérieure d'Architecture Strasbourg

Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Department of Design

**Project artists**

Ann Messner

Sara Leghissa

Brad Downey & Igor Ponosov

Evan Roth & Rachel Uwa

Adam Kraft

**Further links**

FISU World University Games

TRANSURBAN - Urban Art in NRW

[www.rhineruhr2025.com](http://www.rhineruhr2025.com)

[www.trans-urban.de](http://www.trans-urban.de)