

8th International Art and the City Conference (Nicosia, 10–13 Jun 26)

Nicosia-Cyprus, Jun 10–13, 2026

Deadline: Dec 31, 2025

Tijen Tunalı

Since its inception in 2019, the Art and the City conference has traveled across several cities—including Tours, Berlin, Aarhus, Amman, Göttingen, and Nice—facilitating an ongoing exploration of art's role within the urban environment. In 2026, the 8th iteration of the conference will take place in Nicosia, at the University of Cyprus.

The conference seeks to foster an interdisciplinary platform where scholars can engage in dialogues and collaborations that examine the intersections of art, aesthetics, and urban politics. The aim is to illuminate critical aspects of urban art practices, such as street art as artistic rebellion, the aesthetics of social movements, urban communities and commons, public art and authoritarianism, urban aesthetics and spatial justice, politics of urban heritage, art activism in urban spaces, and eco-art and urban ecologies at large. This diverse focus allows for a rich examination of the ideologies, relationships, meanings, and practices that emerge from the interaction between art and the urban landscape, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of urban life, art, and social transformation.

The role of art within urban spaces involves complex spatial and temporal dynamics that give rise to aesthetic, dialogical, and political interactions. On one hand, art catalyzes urban development, city branding, and tourism. On the other hand, it plays an instrumental role in urban activism, advocating for social change through movements such as the “right to the city,” anti-gentrification struggles, and urban social movements with their spatial, ideological, and ecological agendas. Such movements have been extensively analyzed from politico-aesthetic perspectives, encompassing plural forms of resistance against authoritarian regimes, contests over public space, and issues of social and structural inequality and human rights. Yet, there remains a need for a more specialized framework within contemporary art practices—one that places urban spaces and their social urgencies at the core of artistic production.

2026 Theme: Art, Urban Ecologies, and the City

The 2026 edition, themed “Art, Urban Ecologies, and the City,” invites scholars and practitioners to reflect on the interconnections between artistic practices, ecological thought and action, and urban space. As cities face environmental crises, climate change, and transformations of public space, we will explore how art can imagine, critique, and intervene in the ecological dimensions of the urban condition. Urban ecologies encompass not only environmental concerns but also the social, material, and affective interrelations that sustain urban life, inviting a rethinking of art's place in shaping, contesting, and caring for the urban environment.

Within and beyond this yearly theme, we invite scholars across the arts, humanities, and social sciences to reflect on the following interdisciplinary areas of inquiry:

Urban Ecologies and Sustainability

- Artistic strategies that cultivate ecological consciousness, resilience, and collective agency within the urban sphere.
- The potential and challenges of art, architecture, and curatorial practices engaging with urban ecologies and sustainable design.
- How artistic interventions address entanglements between human and non-human actors, built environments, and the politics of the commons.

Public Space, Participation, and Socially Engaged Art

- How art redefines and contests public space, fostering participatory, inclusive, and transformative forms of engagement.
- The potential of socially engaged art to build new modes of collaboration, citizenship, and urban imagination.
- Art's capacity to empower marginalized voices and communities, activating alternative urban experiences and imaginaries.

Social Movements, Democracy, and Activism

- Artistic narratives emerging from processes of gentrification, social reorganization, and struggles over the right to the city.
- The aesthetic and affective dimensions of urban social movements and their commitment to participatory democracy.
- Art as a critical practice of resistance and solidarity within urban social and ecological struggles.

Urban Surfaces, Graffiti, and Cultural Heritage

- The governance and contestation of urban surfaces—from walls and facades to infrastructures—as sites of aesthetic negotiation, civic regulation, and creative intervention.
- Empirical and/or theoretical and critical perspectives on graffiti and street art as forms of visual theory, spatial critique, and alternative urban historiography.
- How art preserves, reimagines, and reinvents historical narratives and cultural heritage within urban contexts (in Cyprus, the Eastern Mediterranean, and internationally).

Digital and Ephemeral Practices

- The role of digital and interactive technologies in shaping new modalities of artistic engagement with public space.
- Transient and ephemeral artistic practices in processes of urban transformation and dialogue.

By bringing together artists, theorists, architects, curators, and scholars, Art and the City 2026 seeks to advance dialogue on how art—whether as intervention, critique, or a form of care— participates in shaping urban ecologies and imaginaries today. The conference is particularly interested in regional and geopolitical contexts and their theories.

The conference will also feature keynote speakers from both art practice and academia (TBC), offering diverse perspectives on the intersections of artistic research, urban ecologies, and contemporary theory.

Interdisciplinary Scientific Committee 2026

Konstantinos Avramidis, Architecture, University of Cyprus
Andrew Hewitt, Art and Design, University of Northampton

Mel Jordan, Center for Post-digital Cultures, Coventry University

Sacha Kagan, Sociology, Leuphana University

Panos Leventis, Architecture, Drury University

Oleksandra Nenko, Sociology, University of Turku

Jeffrey I. Ross, Criminology, University of Baltimore

Petr Vašát, Sociology, The Czech Academy of Sciences

Tijen Tunalı, Art History, Leuphana University

Submission Guidelines

Contributors are invited to submit abstracts of up to 500 words, accompanied by a brief 100-word biographical note. Tijen Tunalı (ttunali.artandthecity@gmail.com) and Konstantinos Avramidis (avramidis.konstantinos@ucy.ac.cy), with the header '8th Art & City Conference' by 31 December 2025.

Important Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline: December 31, 2025

Notification of Acceptance: February 28, 2026

Registration Deadline: April 30, 2026

Conference fee

A minimal conference fee will cover catering for coffee breaks, lunches, and the conference dinner at a local tavern.

The fourth day of the conference (June 13th) will feature an optional excursion designed to engage participants with the city of Nicosia, continuing the Art and the City tradition of contextual engagement.

Publication

Previous Art and the City conferences have resulted in special issues in esteemed journals and edited volumes with leading academic publishers. Building on this rich tradition, the 2026 edition will not produce formal conference proceedings; instead, selected papers may be invited for future publications emerging from the conference.

In particular, papers offering critical perspectives on graffiti and street art will be considered to contribute to an edited volume within the Routledge Advances in Graffiti and Street Art Research series.

8th International Conference

Art and the City

Art, Urban Ecologies, and the City

10-13 June 2026

Nicosia, Cyprus

<https://artandthecity.sciencesconf.org/>

Reference:

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(accessed Dec 29, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/51041>>.